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+ **Tags**
[Air Canada Centre](#) (1)
[Don Appetit](#) (53)
[Don Douloff](#) (15)
[food review](#) (1)
[Maple Leaf Square](#) (1)
[Maple Leafs Sports and Entertainment](#) (1)
[meeting space](#) (12)
[outdoor patio](#) (1)
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[restaurant](#) (13)
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Don Appetit! e11even's Kitchen Shines

July 23, 2013 posted by [Don Douloff](#)

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BY DON DOULOFF

I now have a new gold standard for salmon, courtesy of the kitchen at [e11even](#) restaurant. Named for the 11 points featured on a maple leaf, the restaurant is owned by [Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment](#) and located in the [Maple Leaf Square](#) complex, right beside the [Air Canada Centre](#), in downtown Toronto.



About that new gold standard: It was a fat slab of Irish organic salmon, ordered "on the lighter side of medium," cooked in the oven and served on a tiny wooden plank. Quite simply, I've never encountered such moist, delicate salmon. In fact, the flesh had an almost pudding-like

texture. Perfection.

Almost the equal of the salmon, in tenderness and delicacy, were a pair of double-thick lamb chops.

Nova Scotia lobster roll brought a mound of tender shellfish atop shredded lettuce nestled, correctly, inside a hot dog bun. A side of slaw and a mountain of Yukon Gold frites (tasty, but could be a mite crisper) complemented the sandwich perfectly.

Shrimp cocktail was just as it should be: firm, chilled, oversized shellfish (billed as "colossal" on the menu) paired with classic ketchup/horseradish dipping sauce.

Truly colossal, however, was the chop chop vegetable salad. Big enough to feed four, it featured 11 vegetables — among them, onions, corn, celery, broccoli, cauliflower and chickpeas — all bite-sized. Adding sweet crunch were candied pecans. Bringing everything together was an understated tomato/buttermilk dressing.

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Sheep's milk ricotta, whipped and seasoned with herbs, is another app worthy of attention. But do leave room for that salmon.

Providing the finale were a textbook key lime pie (puckery filling on fresh-tasting graham-cracker crust); another pie, this one a deconstructed confection of sliced banana, banana cream and sturdy graham-cracker crust studded with chocolate chips; and house-made Oreo-style chocolate wafers sandwiched around vanilla ice cream. Topping each dessert was a mound of whipped cream almost as big as a baseball.

The room is cavernous and will appeal to the corporate crowd as much as Leafs and Raptors fans and upscale concertgoers attending ACC events. The palette is deep-brown woodgrain, black and slate grey, with cleverly separated banquette areas lending privacy. A large and airy bar, just inside the front entrance, features a wood-inlay communal table and would be a stellar place to meet for a pre-game or post-concert drink.

In the good weather, crowds flock to the smartly appointed outdoor patio.

An upstairs private room accommodates 45 for sit-down meals and 80 for cocktail receptions.

For more information visit <http://www.e11even.ca/>.



Don Douloff has been a restaurant critic for over 25 years and, during that time, has critiqued almost 1,000 eateries. In 1988, he studied the fundamentals of French cuisine at Ecole de Cuisine La Varenne, in Paris, France. During his time in France, he furthered his gastronomic education by visiting the country's bistros, brasseries and Michelin-starred temples of haute cuisine. He relishes exploring the

edible universe in his native Toronto and on his travels throughout Canada and abroad.

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