

An Ottawa Icon Takes Flight: Locally World-Famous Zak's Diner Now Open at YOW *Beloved ByWard Market institution brings all-day breakfast, burgers, poutine and classic milkshakes to Ottawa International Airport*

(Canada, 3 June 2026): SSP Canada, a division of SSP Group, a leading operator of food and beverage brands in travel locations worldwide, today announced the opening of Zak's Diner at Ottawa International Airport (YOW), bringing a legendary piece of the ByWard Market and a true Ottawa institution to travellers passing through Canada's capital city gateway.

A fixture of Ottawa's dining scene since 1986, Zak's Diner is known for its retro spirit, generous comfort food, all-day breakfast and unmistakable local personality. Now open in YOW's Level 2 South Pier, the new airport location gives passengers a true taste of Ottawa before takeoff, with a menu featuring diner favourites including Zak's Big Breakfast, burgers, poutine, sandwiches, salads, famous hand-spun milkshakes and a full bar program.

The opening supports YOW's continued investment in a more locally focused, passenger-centered terminal experience — one that reflects Ottawa's character, celebrates regional hospitality and gives travellers more choice before they board.

“We're excited to welcome Zak's Diner to YOW and offer travellers another authentic taste of Ottawa while they're passing through the airport,” said Joel Tkach, Vice President, Business Development and Marketing, Ottawa International Airport Authority. “Zak's is an iconic and well-loved local brand known for its fun atmosphere, comfort food, and unmistakable personality. Whether it's a milkshake before takeoff or a burger after landing, Zak's brings a little extra energy, nostalgia, and local flavour to the experience at YOW.”

Founded by restaurateur John Borsten, Zak's Diner first opened in ByWard Market and quickly became a go-to gathering place for locals, visitors, late-night diners, families and anyone in search of classic comfort food served with personality. From first dates in the '80s to family breakfasts today, Zak's has been the setting for decades of Ottawa stories. For many, a trip to the ByWard Market isn't complete without a stop at Zak's; now, by bringing this local icon to YOW, the new airport location offers more than a meal before takeoff — it offers a familiar “welcome home” for returning residents, a classic Ottawa send-off for departing travellers and a chance for families to share a pre-flight milkshake with the next generation.

The YOW location brings that same energy airside, with a design inspired by Zak's signature street-side diners. Travellers will find retro neon, turquoise seating, throwback diner details, bar seating, patio-style seating and a playful classic-car feature that brings a little extra wink to the journey. While airport hours follow the rhythm of the terminal, the spirit of the 24-hour diner is alive in the service, comfort food and generous hospitality that have made Zak's “locally world famous.”

“We've been part of the fabric of this city since 1986, serving everyone from late-night revelers to families starting their day,” said **John Borsten, Founder, Zak's Diner**. “Opening

at YOW feels like a natural next chapter. We're excited to bring our locally world-famous hospitality to the airport and keep the tradition alive for the next generation of travellers."

Jennifer Juul, Vice President Development, SSP Canada, commented, "Zak's is one of those rare brands that feels instantly familiar and unmistakably local at the same time. It has the warmth, humour and staying power of a true Ottawa institution, and that makes it a perfect fit for YOW. We're proud to partner with Ottawa International Airport Authority and the Zak's team to bring travellers an experience that is generous, spirited and rooted in place — the kind of airport dining people actually look forward to."

The menu offers broad appeal across dayparts, with breakfast served all day alongside diner classics and travel-friendly favourites. Highlights include the Zak's Big Breakfast, breakfast poutine, buttermilk waffles, eggs Benedict, the original burger, smoked meat poutine, Nashville crispy chicken sandwich, falafel wrap, chicken Caesar wrap and Zak's famous milkshakes made with premium ice cream. Made the old-fashioned way — thick, noisy and served with the extra tin on the side — the milkshakes remain a Zak's ritual all their own. The beverage program includes local and Canadian beer, wine and cocktails, including Ottawa's own Dominion City selections.

Zak's Diner is now open at Ottawa International Airport in Level 2, South Pier.

###

Further information:

Ottawa International Airport Authority

Krista Kealey
Vice President, Communications and Public Consultation
613.248.2050
krista.kealey@yow.ca

SSP Canada

Lana Cramer
Vice President, Corporate Marketing & Communications
240.882.0754
Lana.Cramer@foodtravelexperts.com

Zak's Diner

John Borsten
Founder, Zak's Diner
613.795.5679
john@zaksdiner.com

About Ottawa International Airport Authority

The Authority manages, operates and develops airport facilities and lands in support of the economic growth of Canada's Capital Region, generating more than \$2.2 billion annually in total economic activity in Ottawa and Gatineau.

About SSP Canada

SSP Canada is a division of SSP Group plc (LSE:SSPG), a global leading operator of food and beverage outlets in travel locations employing 49,000 colleagues in around 3,000 units across 38 countries. We specialize in designing, creating, and operating a diverse range of food and drink outlets in airports, train stations, and other travel hubs across six formats: sit-down and quick service restaurants, bars, cafés, lounges, and food-led convenience stores. Our extensive portfolio of brands features a mix of international, national, and local brands, tailored to meet the diverse needs of our clients and customers.

Our purpose is to be the best part of the journey, and our focus is on making every journey taste better – bringing great food and welcoming hospitality to travelers across the globe. Sustainability is crucial for our long-term success, and we aim to deliver a positive impact for our business while uniting stakeholders to promote a sustainable food travel sector.

About Zak's Diner

Celebrating 40 years as an Ottawa landmark, Zak's Diner is the city's ultimate destination for classic comfort, retro vibes, and world-class milkshakes. Founded in the heart of the historic ByWard Market—with 4 locations in town—Zak's serves all-day breakfast, premium burgers, and diner classics. Combining a nostalgic aesthetic with a vibrant, family-friendly atmosphere, Zak's Diner remains a beloved community staple where generations of locals and visitors gather for great food and unforgettable memories.