



PRESS RELEASE

Pho Blue Basil officially opens in Downtown Belleville

Belleville, Ont., Aug. 7, 2025—Pho Blue Basil Restaurant officially celebrated its long-awaited Grand Opening on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025, at 230 Front St. in Downtown Belleville.

Mayor Neil Ellis and Councillors Margaret Seu and Garnet Thompson, MP Chris Malette, Lisa Comerford from the Belleville Chamber of Commerce, Victoria Watts, Business Growth and Retention Specialist from the City of Belleville and Danielle Hanoman, Executive Director of Belleville Downtown District BIA were present at the ribbon-cutting.

Pho Blue Basil owner Ba Linh Le was simply out for a drive in the spring of 2022, exploring Belleville, when he stumbled upon Downtown Belleville for the first time.

"I saw a beautiful stretch of Front Street, and right then and there, I fell in love—with the charm, the character of the buildings, the beauty of the area," Le recalled.

A few months later, retired and living in Mississauga, Le noticed a restaurant property had come up for sale on Front Street. Without hesitation, he called his real estate agent and bought it—sight unseen.

The building sat vacant for a while as Le considered leasing out the ground level and developing the upper floors. But in April 2024, he made a decision: he would open a Vietnamese restaurant on the ground floor.

"A thought popped into my head—why don't I just open a restaurant here? I knew I wanted to do Vietnamese, but I didn't have a recipe or anything," Le said.



Despite having no formal chef training, Le took on the challenge himself. He began experimenting with dishes, refining flavours, and meticulously documenting everything in spreadsheets—drawing on his strong background in accounting, finance, and business operations.

Since its soft opening in October 2024, Le said the restaurant is sustainable so far and adapting well to the ups and downs of the seasonal changes.

“There’s definitely more vehicle traffic and foot traffic now, compared to three years ago. The presence of the police community office on Front Street, along with a security company, has made a big difference. It’s given people a boost of confidence,” he said.

When asked what keeps him going through the long hours, Le offered the same answer he has given many times before. “It’s the joy you’ve been able to bring to people after they’ve had a really good meal. When guests gush about the food and the experience—that means more to me than money.”

For more information, visit DowntownBelleville.ca

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About Belleville Downtown District BIA

The Belleville Downtown District BIA is focused on evolving the collective ambition of our business community, BIA members, and staff to embrace change and build a stronger, more vibrant downtown.