

## ||| NEIGHBOURHOOD

## Halifaxes around the world

The last thing a hungry Haligonian expects to find on the streets of Copenhagen, Denmark is a little piece of home. Lifelong Halifax resident Moe Green was in Copenhagen for a few days' vacation in late September when he asked some locals to suggest a good place to eat.

"Several of them said, 'There's this really great burger shop right around the corner,'" Green recalls. "So I went and there was a shop called Halifax Burger. At first, I didn't think it had anything to do with our Halifax but then I walked in, and found out it had everything to do with our Halifax."

A waitress explained to Green that Halifax Burger's owners, Peter Ahn and Ulrich Dehler, had met in 2004 when both were studying at Dalhousie University as part of an MBA exchange program with the Copenhagen Business School. "As the waitress put it," says Green, "they didn't want to go back to Denmark and get a job requiring a suit and tie. And not wearing a suit and tie is something I can really relate to." The long-time civil servant laughs.

"That's very true," admits Ulrich Dehler, over the phone from Copenhagen. "We'd both had suit-and-tie jobs, and we both felt that it wasn't natural for us. Basically we thought that we could do a better job in terms of service and quality of food compared to many other places in Copenhagen."

The inspiration for their restaurant came from the memories of their semester in Halifax. "We had such a great time in Halifax," Dehler told me. "I've studied in Canberra and Peter has studied in London and we both agree that Halifax was our best experience abroad, for sure."

Dehler chalks that up to "tons of bars and a good library to study at," plus the fact that "the people were very friendly and extremely open." And it was here that he and his future business partner experienced what would become a critical aspect of their business philosophy: Haligonian-style hospitality.

"In Canada, and Halifax in particular, the service level is so much higher than it is in Denmark," says Dehler. "People there work for their tips and they work to leave people with

a good impression. We wanted to invoke some of that mentality."

And the name? "In Denmark, not a lot of people have heard of Halifax," explains Dehler. "But when you think of burgers, you think of North America, so we figured, hey—we met in Halifax, the best burger experiences we've ever had have been in Halifax and the word Halifax is very catchy."

Green fondly recalls the discovery as a sweet moment on what could have been a lonely night far from home. "It was just one of those quirky things," he says. "You're walking down the street in another part of the world and there's this connection to your hometown. It felt good." —ANGELA MOMBOURQUETTE

