

HAWKSWORTH RESTAURANT
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ARTS & LIFE

entrée A DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FOOD & DRINK

Metro's 20 best restaurants

A look at the standout establishments for taste, innovation and a memorable dining experience

BY MIA STAINSBY
VANCOUVER SUN

Vancouver's restaurant identity began, I'd say, with Bishop's, back in the mid-'80s. John Bishop pioneered the idea of showcasing fresh, local, quality ingredients instead of copycatting the grand cuisines of Europe.

Now, local and fresh go without saying in the better restaurants. Today, these are standout restaurants for food, for innovation and melding different aspects of dining out so well.



BAO BEI

163 Keefer St., 604-688-0876
www.bao-bei.ca

I love the oxymoron of modern old-style Chinese restaurant — it's a little pearl in Chinatown. No voluminous family-style plates of food here; instead you'll find small plates, like my favourite, the sesame flat bread, braised pork butt with Asian pear and pickled onions (shao bing). Dishes are mostly under \$10; cocktails are also new world-old world, mixing Chinese herbalist ingredients into the hip cocktail culture.

Nicos Shuermans runs a mini-empire of totally cool food businesses and all showcase his savvy food instincts. His three-Michelin-star training shines at Chambaz, the most elegant of them. The food confidently embraces Belgium, Morocco, France and the West Coast. Find bliss in his lamb tagine.

C RESTAURANT

1600 Howe St., 604-681-1164
www.crestaurant.com

C fired the first shot in the green seafood revolution. The dog-gone approach doesn't deter the restaurant and chef from acclaim with dishes like blueberry salmon gravlax with dirty martini pearls, sweet cicely and tarragon emulsion. With mains priced upwards of \$30, it's definitely haute cuisine. À la carte or tasting menus for \$84 or \$175.

CAFE REGALADE

2836 West Fourth Ave., 604-733-2213
www.caferegalade.com

It's simple French bistro food but also, simply delicious. The chef worked for one of France's top pastry chefs (Olivier Bjaard) as well as Joel Robuchon and so put calorie concerns aside and plunge ahead. The French country-style breakfasts draw lineups for good reasons.



L'ABATTOIR

217 Carrall St., 604-568-1701
www.labattoir.ca

Blood-curdling name. Angelic food. Dishes edge towards refined cooking but the feel of this place is bistro. Never pedestrian, a chicken salad arrives as cubes of chicken mousse with papery cauliflower, pickled cauliflower tossed with hot mayonnaise and garnished with light-as-air shrimp crackers.

The chef was cooked at the highly reputed Fat Duck in England as well as Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Market at Shanghai in Vancouver.



ERIC ERNST / PNG FILES

HAWKSWORTH

801 West Georgia St., 604-673-7000
www.hawksworthrestaurant.com

An A-list chef, dazzling food, surprisingly good value. What are you waiting for? Hawksworth's food has an effortless quality that comes together coolly and confidently. Fantastic ingredients, culinary wisdom, glamorously elegant room — it's a gem. Highly recommended: the 48-hour beef short rib with black pepper jam, shrimp salt, honeydew and green papaya.

best Chinese food outside of China (some say in the world), this would be a good place to start.

MAENAM

1938 West Fourth Ave., 604-730-5579
www.maenam.ca

With four mentions in the *New York Times*, you could say Maenam has been duly noted. Angus An picked up a few Thai ideas when he cooked at the one-Michelin-star Nahm Thai restaurant in London and his Thai food stands above others in its freshness, finely balanced sauces and quality of ingredients. It's modern but authentic.

Vongerichten's. His restaurant chefs follow his recipes religiously, he sees them courtesy of Skype, and the proof is on the plate.

PEAR TREE

4120 Hastings St., Burnaby, 604-299-2772

www.peartreerestaurant.net
Hailed several times as chef of the year in local media, chef/owner Scott Jaegar is a past contender at the prestigious Bocuse d'Or international competition. His food is not just lovely to eat but also to behold. His suburban restaurant is in step with the best in Vancouver.

LA REGALADE

2232 Marine Dr., West Vancouver, 604-921-2228

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TOJO'S

1133 West Broadway, 604-872-8050

www.tojos.com

Tojo Hidekazu's been cooking Japanese food in Vancouver since 1971. Chefs have their time in the sun and burn away to an ember, you'd think. Not this one. His consuming passion and finely tuned knowledge, skill and talent keeps him at the top. The restaurant is featured in *1,000 Places To See Before You Die* but really, this is a place to close your eyes and taste.

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