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JANUARY 2012

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Skillet Mac & Cheese

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## IN THE KITCHEN



The sophisticated Pearl Room at Hawksworth restaurant in the Rosewood Hotel Georgia, Vancouver.



The high-tech kitchen with punchy royal blue stoves by Garland is chef Hawksworth's dream work space.



Chef David Hawksworth.

# David Hawksworth

## The passionate chef brings modern Canadian cuisine to a Vancouver landmark.

Text by ANNA-KAISA WALKER | Photography by JANIS NICOLAY

**Some say a lady** should never reveal her age. But in the Hotel Georgia's case, the grande dame of Vancouver has a rich history to show off, along with a glamorous new look. Built in 1927, the hotel, which hosted Katharine Hepburn, Elvis and British royalty in its heyday, recently underwent a dramatic makeover and relaunched as the Rosewood Hotel Georgia, with chef David Hawksworth's new restaurant, Hawksworth, as the centerpiece. Its fresh take on fine dining marks a long-awaited return to the kitchen for the homegrown chef, who left his post at the city's award-winning West in 2007 to launch this new venture, which was years in the making.

Since it opened last May, foodies have packed the 110-seat restaurant. With four unique dining rooms under the same roof, diners can enjoy Hawksworth's modern Canadian fare in different environs. Designer Alessandro Munge created spaces to cater to any mood: there's the dark-panelled and sexy Bar & Lounge; the luxurious, shimmery Pearl Room; and the bright Art Room, with pops of colour courtesy of artist Rodney Graham's punchy installation; and, the private York dining room, which is designed as an homage to the building's Georgian revival architecture and showcases its original stained-glass windows.

Chef Hawksworth, who trained at Michelin-starred destinations like London's L'Escargot, is at the top of his game — Hawksworth was recently named one of Canada's top 10 new restaurants by *enRoute* magazine. In 2008, he became the youngest chef inducted into the B.C. Restaurant Hall of Fame. His eclectic menu reflects elements of Canada's multicultural heritage — a blend of European, West Coast and Asian elements. He talked to us about his new gig, his cooking style, and life at home.

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### CHEF'S CHOICE



#### Comfort food

"I love a steaming bowl of ramen noodles, especially on a rainy Vancouver day."



#### Junk food fix

"I've been known to enjoy the odd Kit Kat."

**Dinnerware** "For a more formal setting, I like plates like these." *Villeroy & Boch Dune dishes, William Ashley China.*



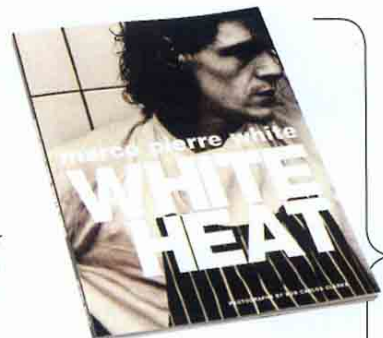
#### Unique gadget

"I've gone through a lot of blenders in my time, but the Vitamix is impossible to break — even for me! I make a smoothie with it every morning. Its excellent for the home chef." *Blender, Williams-Sonoma.*



#### Cookbook

"Marco Pierre White's *White Heat* really inspired me to take cooking seriously as a career, and to move to London in my twenties in order to work with him." *Book, Indigo and Chapters.*



## IN THE KITCHEN



An elaborate glass-walled wine cellar in the Pearl Room dining area holds up to 3,000 bottles.



TOP: The restaurant's Art Room, one of four different dining rooms, is fresh and modern. **Artwork**, Rodney Graham.  
ABOVE LEFT: The graphic black and white lounge feels timeless.  
ABOVE RIGHT: Chef Hawksworth in his kitchen.

### Chef Hawksworth's Grilled Halibut with Chimichurri and Salad of Herbs SERVES 2

David Hawksworth loves to prepare this quick and easy dish at home.

- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 100 mL extra-virgin olive oil
- Pinch of chili flakes
- 1 tbsp sherry vinegar
- Pinch of kosher salt
- 1 garlic clove
- 2 180-g fresh halibut fillets
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lime
- Kosher salt

1. Mix first 7 ingredients with a mortar and pestle until a fine paste forms. Taste for seasoning and adjust if needed. Set aside.  
2. Preheat oven to 320°F. Season fish with salt. Heat oil in griddle pan over medium-high heat and grill fillets for 30 seconds to make crisscross marks on the fish.



3. Cook fish for 8 to 10 minutes in oven.  
4. Squeeze fresh lime over the fillets.  
5. Divide herb paste between two plates and place a fillet on each. Finish with a side of mixed greens with sliced radish, cilantro and batons of chives dressed with fresh lime juice, olive oil and salt.

## Q+A

**House & Home:** How would you describe your cooking style?

**David Hawksworth:** Contemporary Canadian — fresh and innovative. It's light and clean with compelling flavour profiles and unexpected twists. It takes the best of local ingredients and the best of the melting pot of cultural cooking influences around us.

**H&H:** Your menu emphasizes local ingredients. How do you go about finding the best sources?

**DH:** We'll visit a few farms, but it's mainly about keeping our eyes open and talking to people. It's part of being a chef — you have to make sure you parse the best ingredients you can find.

**H&H:** What are some of your favourite ingredients right now?

**DH:** We have amazing white sturgeon caviar from Sechelt, B.C. We're serving it with tuna tartare on New Year's Eve.

**H&H:** How did the idea for Hawksworth come to be?

**DH:** It's always been a goal of mine to strike out and set my own destiny. For six or seven years, this space was empty. The whole time, I thought if I was going to put a restaurant anywhere it would be here. By chance one night, I ended up meeting Bruce Langereis of Delta Land Development, the Rosewood's owner, when he came for dinner at West. They happened to be looking for a restaurant partner. Three weeks later, the deal was signed.

**H&H:** What did the space look like when you first saw it?

**DH:** It was nothing but rubble. The entire building was gutted. I don't know how many times I walked back and forth through the space in construction boots, trying to envision the design. Alessandro Munge and I went on field trips to New York, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, so we could get on the same wavelength about the energy of the space.

**H&H:** The restaurant has four different dining rooms, each with its own decor and feel. Why did you decide to divide it up into distinct environments?

**DH:** The hotel had a

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## IN THE KITCHEN

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few walls that we couldn't move, so that was part of it. Alessandro wanted to make it so you'd have different experiences depending on where you were seated. So, it looks and feels completely different if you have your back to the wall looking at the street versus sitting in the Art Room looking at Rodney Graham's work.

**H&H:** Art seems to play an important role in the decor. How did you go about choosing the works?

**DH:** Rodney Graham is a friend; when I asked him to do an installation, he was all over it. And, I've always liked Damien Hirst's work; we have a signed silkscreen print of his *Big Love, Diamond Dust* in our bar area. It's a big heart covered in butterflies and real diamond dust. It's modern and fun, and really lightens up the room.

**H&H:** You and your wife, Annabel, are both in the restaurant business [she's in PR]. When you're at home, who does most of the cooking?

**DH:** It's pretty even, though lately we've been joined by our little guy, Heston, who is four. He makes a mean pizza margherita. Though he has said that steak is his favourite vegetable.

**H&H:** What's the first dish you mastered?

**DH:** Mac 'n' cheese; I loved it as a kid and now I make it for Heston. It's on the kids' menu at Hawksworth.

**H&H:** What's your favourite meal to cook for guests at home in the post-holiday season? Any tips on keeping it low-key?

**DH:** I like a traditional English Sunday lunch. Soups are nice, or maybe a beef bourguignon. Charcuterie is great, because you can just go out and buy it.

**H&H:** Who would be your dream guests to cook for?

**DH:** Jeffrey Steingarten [food writer at *Vogue*] or [British food writer] A.A. Gill.

**H&H:** What's next on your agenda?

**DH:** We recently opened Bel Café, named after my wife, also at the Rosewood. It's inspired by a Parisian boulangerie. We have sandwiches, soups, salads, great coffee, and of course, macarons. **EH**