

Canada: The land that the restaurant awards list forgot

Food miles

ANDY LYNES | SUNDAY 13 MAY 2012

The judges of this year's San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants steered clear of the world's second-largest country: not one Canadian establishment even made the top 100. The absence is partly explained by the strange lumping together of Canada with the great restaurant city of Chicago and the rest of America's Midwest for the purposes of judging.



Yet Canada has cutting-edge chefs working with superb indigenous ingredients such as spot prawns and sablefish (black cod) from the Pacific waters, excellent beef from Alberta and the delicate summer flavours of the Maritimes. These ingredients are complemented by world-class wines from British Columbia's Okanagan Valley and the Niagara area of Ontario.

With such gastronomic promise, it is no surprise that Canada has hundreds of restaurants worthy of praise.

* David Hawksworth has long been one of Vancouver's culinary stars, but can now claim to be its brightest with the opening of Hawksworth, Vancouver (001 604 673 7000; hawksworthrestaurant.com). The modern urban glamour of the interior is matched by beautifully presented dishes such as roasted Canadian striploin smoked oxtail, potato rissole and chioggia beetroot.

* West-coast produce gets a makeover at L'Abattoir, in Vancouver's meat-packing district (001 604 568 1701; labattoir.ca). Fat Duck-trained Lee Cooper serves Albacore tuna crudo with pork jowl and fava beans, and Dungeness crab and chickpea toast with light garlic custard and carrot pickles. A notably original drinks list is headed up by the Slaughterhouse cocktail (cognac, Elixer Vegetal, orange oils and green chartreuse mist).