

# ESSENTIAL

VANCOUVER

WHERE VANCOUVER ANNUAL 2015/16

FASHION On Track for Elegance

FIRST NATIONS Taking Charge

SIR! Luxe in the Fast Lane

ART Altered Reality

EATS Trendsetters

## URBAN *Angles*

ESSENTIAL LANDMARKS



SUPER SOUVENIRS

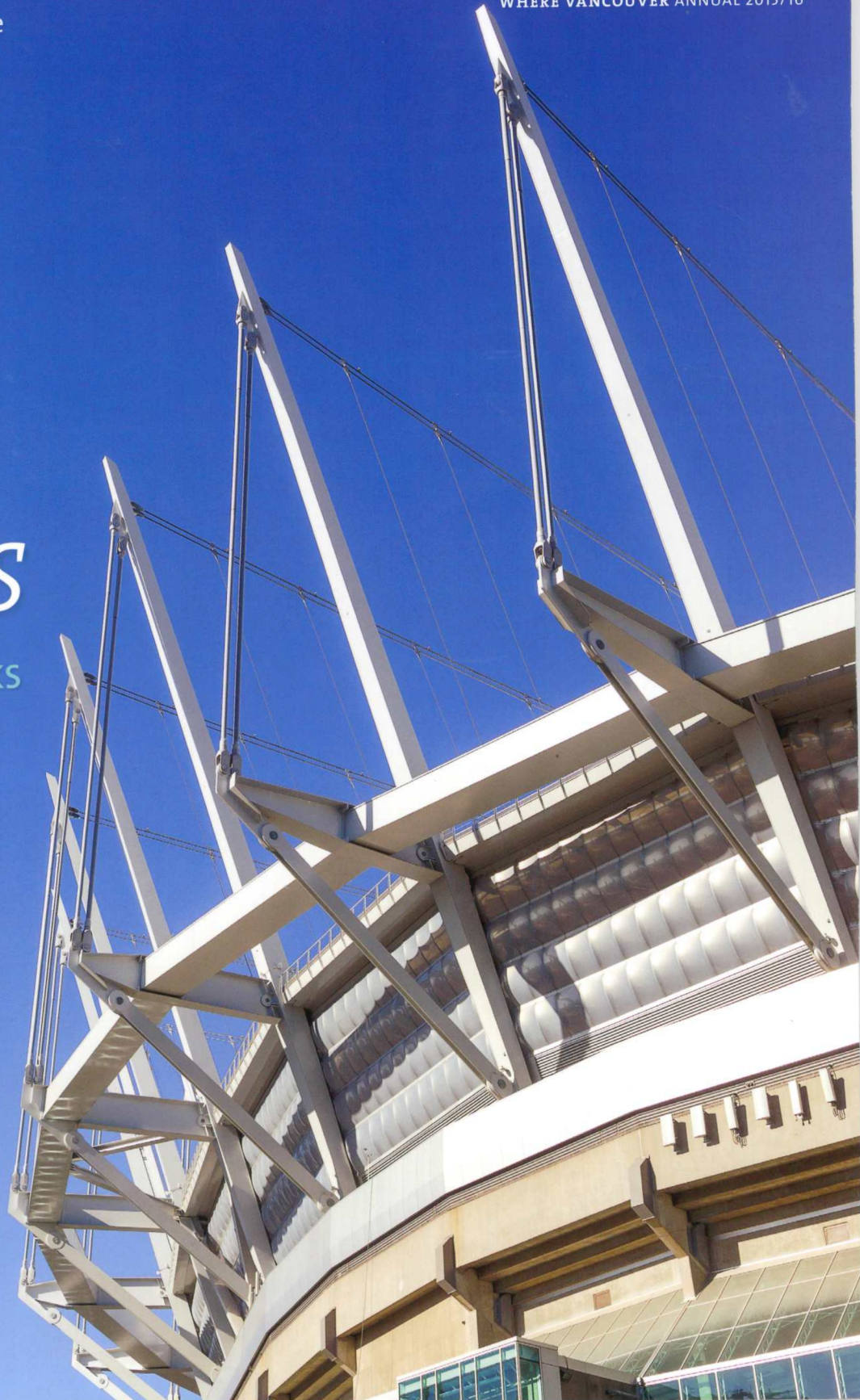
AIRPORT A-LIST

ASK THE CONCIERGES

EXCURSIONS

NEIGHBOURHOODS

ROSEWOOD  
HOTEL GEORGIA  
VANCOUVER







## TREND› Setters

Vancouver chefs shape how foodies think about what's on their plates **BY TIM PAWSEY + PHOTOS BY KK LAW**

To be a successful restaurateur in today's evolving and crowded arena requires more than just showing up or running a tight ship. Add a strong image, customer engagement, inventive ingredients, and plates designed to dazzle on Instagram or titillate on Twitter — and to win competitions. Vancouver chefs are a tight-knit group whose ingenuity and originality feeds this city's culinary soul. Yet a keenly competitive edge thrives within their chummy ranks. Besides stroking egos, awards pave the way for the latest trend.

Leaders of the pack.

Above, left:  
Farmer's Apprentice.

Above, centre:  
David Hawksworth.

Above, right:  
Chris Whittaker.

Top, right:  
Tacofino Taco Bar

### THE TREND› Gourmet Chowder

On the very night before Forage restaurant opened, its chef Chris Whittaker and his team emerged victorious at the hotly contested Vancouver Aquarium Ocean Wise Chowder Chowdown. This event, now held in cities across Canada, promotes the use of purely sustainable and local — even “foraged” — ingredients. The contest attracts so many applicants that the field has to be narrowed ahead of time, with would-be contenders sending in their recipes for scrutiny as possible entries.

The win for eco-conscious and regionally fuelled Forage was an auspicious beginning. On this occasion, Whittaker took once lowly seafood soup to an entirely new level, with a delicious, creamy spot-prawn chowder and crispy chicharon, topped

with a perfect quail egg. The dish proved so popular on the restaurant menu that the chef entered it the following year, and won again.

Forage's chowder crown was usurped eventually by chef Ned Bell of Four Seasons Vancouver. A hit with judges and people's-choice wins, Bell's “Chowda” of smoked black cod, candied sablefish, Okanagan apples and corn quickly became a hot item at the hotel's flagship Yew Restaurant.

Chef Bell's other claim to fame, a cross-Canada bicycle ride, raised funds for his Chefs for Oceans campaign and also courted support for a Canadian National Sustainable Seafood Day. Ingredients that he encountered during that trip, such as Haskap berries from Nova Scotia or Ontario pickerel, show up occasionally on Yew menus.





### THE TREND > Fine Dining, Redux

Few chefs have collected as many laurels as David Hawksworth, whose namesake, luxurious stand-alone space in the Rosewood Hotel Georgia boasts a state-of-the-art kitchen, cutting-edge Cruvinet wine dispenser and glass-wrapped wine room. Vancouver born Hawksworth worked in the U.K. for celebrated chefs Raymond Blanc and Marco Pierre White. His penchant for detail and insatiable curiosity for unique ingredients help him hone a constantly shifting, seasonally driven menu. On the plate, the style is deliberately understated, steered by contrasting textures and a keen eye for colour, as in apple beet salad of pickled beets, caramelized honey, burrata, walnut and dill. Widely hailed as restaurant of the year since opening, including sweeps of the *Georgia Straight* and *Vancouver* magazine awards, Hawksworth blends global influences and sustainable sensitivity with unabashed, worldly panache.

### THE TREND > Casual, Sustainable

Not all winning plates come from upscale settings, nor have their roots in Vancouver. Bustling Tacofino Taco Bar arrived in Gastown's Blood Alley via Vancouver Island and Baja, where co-founders Jason Sussman and Kaeli Robinsong discovered the delights of Mexican street food, including fish tacos. The couple acquired an old catering truck and headed for Tofino, Canada's surfers' paradise on Vancouver Island's west coast, where their tasty tostadas and burritos were an instant hit. Four food trucks and three restaurants later, they continue to attract a devoted following for their

all-encompassing sustainable mantra and recycling initiatives, which garnered *Where Vancouver* magazine's 2015 Green Table Award.

### THE TREND > Local, Spontaneous

On a somewhat smaller scale, also sustainably driven, Farmer's Apprentice fine-tunes its menu every week, even daily. Chef David Gunawan and Dara Young shape their spontaneous, adventuresome fare as much as possible on organic ingredients sourced from close-by producers, according to what's fresh and seasonally available. At first virtually unknown except to insider foodies, Farmer's Apprentice garnered a string of opening-year awards, including No. 2 in *enRoute* magazine's Best New Restaurants for 2014, and Best New Restaurant in *Vancouver* magazine. The South Granville eatery brought attention to the benefits of working with small, heritage livestock producers and neighbourhood organic growers. The dinner menu features the likes of oyster mushroom with pear, granola and ikura; mackerel with beetroot, blood orange, samphire and pine nuts; and white spring salmon with clams, black trumpet mushroom and carrots. This casual haunt with its farmhouse feel serves a tasty and nutritious weekend brunch, with dishes such as sprouted heirloom-grain salad, Berkshire pork with buttermilk biscuit, and smoked steelhead trout.

Not content merely to mimic trends from elsewhere, Vancouver chefs choose to shape their own destiny. These talented toques have carved out a niche for the city as a bastion of sustainable cuisine and local, seasonal ingredients. ■

Top, left: Ned Bell.  
Top, centre:  
David Gunawan.  
Above, left: Yew's Albacore  
Tuna Crudo Citrus and  
Radish Salad with sea salt,  
olive oil and avocado.  
Above, right: Taco Bar  
salsas – roasted-tomato  
and cashew, salsa fresca,  
and pineapple-tomatillo  
with chips