

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

TEN FOOT HENRY

Ten Foot Henry's menu is built to make vegetables shine. The wide variety of dishes provide a hearty, satisfying meal, transforming veggie doubters into veggie believers. "Although I'm a true carnivore, I love what they're doing with vegetables at Ten Foot Henry, and that they draw from so many cultural and family influences to put an interesting array of dishes on the table," says Julie Van Rosendaal. The vegetable-focused meals are served family style. Try the fried potatoes with lime, jalapeño and green goddess dressing, or the Peruvian chicken with aji verde, which will satisfy the pickiest meat eater. Say yes to dessert—the coconut cake is fluffy and moreish. From start to finish, you'll have an exceptional experience through a variety of flavour profiles, whether you want to sit at a table and eat your way through the menu or perch kitchen-side to watch the chefs in action, and have a drink from the unique cocktail list (page 28).



Calgary's TOP 12 RESTAURANTS OF 2018

BY SILVIA PIKAL AND RACHAEL FREY

Our panel of judges had a difficult task this year due to the extremely high bar that is being set by Calgary's restaurants. There was much rigorous debate before they narrowed it down to 12 stellar examples of the very best the city has to offer. Each of these restaurants (presented in alphabetical order) are well worth the time and offer something new to visitors to Calgary—they are all original to our city. We invite you to see for yourself what our judges are raving about.



BAR VON DER FELS

After opening in autumn 2016, Bar Von Der Fels quickly became a staple in Calgary's foodie scene thanks to an impressive wine list and inventive menu filled with intriguing and unexpected dishes such as escargot poutine and moose tartare. "The kitchen is smaller than most walk-in closets but the food is exactly the kind I want to eat," says Julie van Rosendaal. The best way to experience this little hide-away is to come prepared to expand your palate for both food and wine—bring a few friends and sample as much as possible. "Every time I visit Bar Von Der Fels I learn something new," says Carmen Cheng. "I've been introduced to fabulous wines here after telling the owners or staff about my preferences. I've also been wowed by new-to-me ingredients and Chef Hendry's unique flavour combinations, such as pairing fresh peas with smoked marrow and goat curd (page 34)."

THE 2018 WHERE TO DINE AWARDS PANEL OF INDEPENDENT JUDGES

Carmen Cheng
Food Blogger, @FoodKarmaBlog

Elizabeth Chorney-Booth
Food Writer, @elizaboathy

Dan Clapson
Food Writer, @dangoodside

Linda Garson
Owner and host, Vine and Dine, @vineanddine

Patricia Koyich
Hospitality Instructor
and Former Restaurateur, @foodieforsure

Ryan Massel
Blogger, @immr fabulous

Mike Morrison
Blogger, @mikesbloggity

Gwendolyn Richards
Food Writer, @gwendolynmr

Cindy Stewart
Guest Service Manager, Chef Concierge,
Westin Hotel, @stewart_cindy

Julie Van Rosendaal
Food Writer, @dinnerwithjulie



Anju Restaurant



Bridgette Bar



Bonterra Trattoria



Deane House

ANJU RESTAURANT

Situated at the crossroads of two of Calgary's best dining districts, Anju is an oasis for those seeking an exciting yet accessible take on modern Korean cuisine. Traditional Korean flavours and ingredients are combined with influences from around the globe for truly unique tapas dishes. "Anju introduced me to the spicy and flavorful world of gochujang," says Ryan Massel, "and they've been my sure-fire way to impress my guests when they visit (page 33)."

BONTERRA TRATTORIA

When you just want some classic, delicious Italian fare in a charming atmosphere with attentive service, Bonterra is the place that will bring it all together. Locals rave about the wild boar bacon carbonara and love the fact that a casual lunch or a memorable fine dining experience are equally possible in the dimly-lit dining room. In the warmer months, the trellised garden patio is a sanctuary where diners can escape from the hubbub of the city (page 32).

BRIDGETTE BAR

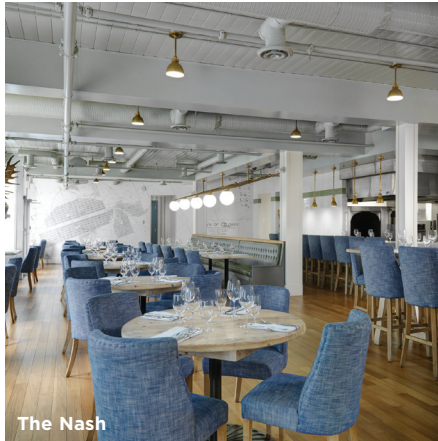
Bridgette Bar excels at offering options for both snacks and a full dinner with a carefully selected drinks list. Try the addictive garlic bread filled with cheese curds, or the large plates that offer everything from rainbow trout to wood-roasted duck. "Bridgette Bar is a shining star in the Calgary culinary scene," says Linda Garson. "You can revisit and try something different every time that's guaranteed to be delicious, creative and well-presented. And always great service—with an excellent beverage program too (page 25)!"

DEANE HOUSE

The sister restaurant to the renowned River Café, Deane House is located in a beautifully renovated historic home with several different rooms and moods, from the garden room overlooking the front yard to the upstairs library with a private bar. Dan Clapson describes the service as "slightly more casual" than River Café, but with "an equally elegant atmosphere. Chef Jamie Harling is one of the most passionate chefs I know." The menu is an exploration of Canadian regional cuisine with a focus on ingredients local to western Canada (page 26).



Foreign Concept



The Nash



Rouge



Pigeonhole



River Café



Suzette Brittany Bistro

FOREIGN CONCEPT

Flavours, ingredients and culinary ideas from across Asia are transformed in the hands of Foreign Concept's award-winning chefs. "The hospitality and calibre of the staff at Foreign Concept is top notch," says Carmen Cheng. "The dishes are grounded in authentic Asian flavours but modernized with their cooking techniques and elevated ingredients." Even a simple fried rice dish shines with house-made five spice Chinese bacon, white kimchi, onsen egg, shaved cremini mushrooms and citrus truffle vinaigrette (page 30).

PIGEONHOLE

Pigeonhole focuses on sharing plates that are creative and eclectic. The charred cabbage is Instagram-famous and raved about by many of our panelists, including Dan Clapson, who says it's a great example of how the simple technique of charring can make the most humble of all vegetables shine. "Pigeonhole is one of those restaurants that really pushes the envelope when they're creating dishes," says Clapson. "A must-try for an avid food lover visiting Calgary (page 26)."

THE NASH

Executive chef Michael Noble took what succeeded at NOTaBLE—gourmet comfort food, excellent service and a wood-fired rotisserie—and brought it to the historic National Hotel in Inglewood. "I am a big fan of this restaurant," says Patricia Koyich. "The service is what seals the deal!" You can order the famous rotisserie chicken with The Nash's own spice rub, or try one of Koyich's favourite meals here—the hangover breakfast pizza at brunch with merguez sausage and sunny side eggs (page 26).

RIVER CAFÉ

River Café on Prince's Island Park is a welcome haven from bustling city life. The patio, surrounded by greenery, is popular for leisurely summer brunches while the cozy, cabin-style décor and roaring fireplace provide an ideal winter retreat. The menu focuses on seasonal fare from Canadian farms, ranches and waters. "In a time where regional Canadian cooking has become quite the trend, River Café still remains a leader in that realm, having strived for a hyper local and refined dining experience since the 1990s," says Dan Clapson (page 26).

ROUGE

Housed in a historic home in Inglewood with intimate dining rooms, Rouge's French-style cuisine utilizes herbs and vegetables from the restaurant's own garden. They also have a stellar wine list providing top-notch wine and food pairings and knowledgeable staff (be sure to ask for recommendations). "The restaurant is very cozy and a wonderful place to celebrate a special occasion or go to have a memorable meal," says Cindy Stewart. "One of my favourite meals is the bison tartar to start and then the Rougie duck breast (page 28)."

SUZETTE BRITTANY BISTRO

Inspired by the seaside region of Brittany in France, Suzette specializes in a dish called galettes—a savoury buckwheat crepe stuffed with ingredients such as the classic French ham, Gruyère cheese and egg, or the Moroccan merguez, potato, mustard cream and tarragon. A casual vibe, local ingredients and an executive chef who was raised in Brittany complete the authenticity of this charming bistro (page 30).