

## Five-Star Hotel Chef Searches For Canada's Next Up-And-Coming Toque



Chef David Hawksworth of Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star **Hawksworth Restaurant** in **Vancouver** is looking for Canada's next up-and-coming chef. And lucky diners in Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver will be able to sample the creations of these rising kitchen stars in a series of one-of-a-kind benefit dinners this summer and fall.

The noted Vancouver restaurateur established the **Hawksworth Young Chef Scholarship**, a nonprofit culinary foundation that helps talented Canadian chefs under the age of 28 take their careers to the next level. Aspiring toques from across Canada will participate in a series of regional heats — *Top Chef*-style competitions that will be judged by a handful of the country's leading culinary personalities. The winner of the 2014 Hawksworth Young Chef Scholarship will receive a CAD\$10,000 (\$9,200 USD) prize, as well as a stage at a top international restaurant.

The rising culinary standouts will also join their judges to prepare several gala fundraiser dinners. On June 22 in Calgary, **Model Milk** will host the first of these events, featuring the restaurant's chef-owner Justin Leboe, along with Hawksworth. Toronto's **Luma** hosts the next dinner on June 24, with Anthony Walsh (corporate executive chef and partner at Oliver & Bonacini Restaurants) joining chef Hawksworth.

The final gala dinner will be held September 28 in Vancouver at **Hawksworth Restaurant**, featuring the 2014 scholarship winner, as well as guest chefs Mark McEwan (head judge of Food Network's *Top Chef Canada*), Scott Jaeger (The Pear Tree Restaurant in Burnaby, British Columbia), Normand Laprise (Four-Star **Toqué!** and Brasserie T! in Montréal) and Walsh alongside Hawksworth and his chef de cuisine, Kristian Eligh.

Chef Hawksworth took a break from overseeing his busy kitchen at Five-Star **Rosewood Hotel Georgia** to talk about the scholarship competition, gala dinners and what's trending in Vancouver's culinary scene.

### **Why did you decide to launch the Young Chef Scholarship?**

The idea for the Hawsworth Young Chef Scholarship was born out of what I saw as a lack of support for young chefs. While I was cooking in London, I learned of The Roux Scholarship, in which winners of this competition received a huge career boost. I wanted to provide that opportunity to young Canadian chefs. The Hawsworth prize is more than just the dollar amount; it is also about networking with the Canadian chef judges and learning through the international stage we facilitate.

### **How do you select the contestants?**

Each contestant is required to create a dish with the ingredient list we provide, prepare the dish and send in a photo. My chef de cuisine, Kristian Eligh, and I narrow down the applications to 10 for each regional heat.

### **How does the competition work?**

In each regional heat, the 10 competitors are given two hours to recreate four identical plates of the dish they applied with. Judges score based on how they work in the kitchen, cleanliness, timing, if they stay true to their application, as well as presentation and taste.

The top contestants move onto the final round of competition in Vancouver. Here, the finalists have 2.5 hours to create four plates of a main dish and four plates of a dessert. The catch is that they are given a black box [of mystery ingredients] only moments before the timer starts. The finalists must use all the ingredients at least once in their recipes. After the judge's scores are tallied, we announce a new winner of the Hawsworth Young Chef Scholarship.

### **Tell us more about the culinary scene in Vancouver. What's trending?**

The push for local and sustainable food is stronger than ever. [Diners] are increasingly concerned about where their food is coming from and increasingly aware of their own health. They want to be assured that they are receiving a high-quality meal with high-quality ingredients. At Hawsworth Restaurant, we try to ensure our dishes are light and still full of flavor, by staying away from using lots of butter and cream but instead incorporating notes of light acidity.

Another trend is the popularity of foraging and using those ingredients in recipes, even extending to the bar program. The team at Hawsworth Cocktail Bar always strives to use the freshest herbs, fruits and vegetables in their cocktails. Our cocktail menu naturally changes along with the seasons of British Columbia.

### **Do you see any of those same trends in your work with the young chefs?**

Yes, I have seen these trends, especially in new restaurants as well as established restaurants that have new young chefs taking charge in the kitchen. With the Calgary and Toronto regional heats taking place soon [June 22 and June 25, respectively], I'm interested in seeing what the contestants do and also talking to them about their direction on cooking and designing dishes.

### **What was the idea behind the Hawsworth Young Chef Scholarship gala dinners?**

The dinner series idea originally came to us after we confirmed our judges for our inaugural competition. We realized the amazing sum of talent that was coming together to celebrate these young chefs competing and thought it would be an exciting way to end the day by cooking together, while guests know they are supporting the foundation.