

If other restaurant awards serve as the shopping centers and coffee shops of the genre, then the **BC Restaurant Hall of Fame** is the equivalent of the **Vancouver Club**. Its doors are not open to upstarts, nor to any flavour of the season, and no one gets congratulated on spec. To earn a membership you must have made a contribution to the British Columbia dining scene over the long term and to have proven not merely your personal pluck, talent, business acumen and integrity, but perhaps most of all, your skills at survival.

The new BC Restaurant Hall of Fame is currently the only Restaurant Hall of Fame in Canada and last night, the selection committee, chaired by **Bing Smith**, celebrated its second year with a banquet and an induction ceremony at the **Parkview Terrace** of the **Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre**.

The black clad crowd in attendance at the sold out event were the crème de la crème of the BC food and beverage industry's most successful and long standing members. In fact, looking around the room, it seemed that if you were a ticket holder and also under the age of fifty, you were either an inductee, an inductee's offspring, or one of the dinner servers. As Master of Ceremonies, **Duncan Holmes** quipped, " **Joe Fortes** (the lifeguard) taught Vancouver's children how to swim at the turn of the last century, and **Bud Kanke** (owner of **Joe Fortes**, the restaurant) taught Joe Fortes how to swim." And in another Holmes comment, "We were able to extend the hours for tonight's ceremony past the bedtimes of the inductees because they are were all warned to take a nap in the afternoon."

Even so, despite the collective maturity, seasoned wisdom and middle age spread evident in the room, it didn't follow that anything about the event would be staid or boring.

Duncan Holmes, honed his dry Australian wit (see top ten list below) and dusted off some hidden skills at Vaudeville to initiate the tone for the evening by warbling his introductory notes, Karaoke style, to a soundtrack from *Beauty and the Beast*. He then dispensed with the usual acceptance speech routine and instead, interviewed the award winners in what turned into a string of improv comedy routines.

Acceptance conversations ran the gamut from the price of onion rings, Chef **Karen Barnaby's** recipe for fried cod fritters, **Francesco Alongi's** interpretation of **Andrea Bocelli** with laryngitis, a little dubious Japanese translation, plus a few Tourism Board-like public relations pitches for the bounty that we haven't fully appreciated yet here in BC. "Did you know that no one in France is cooking as well as we are today in Vancouver?" We'll bet the French don't.

Come to think of it, during, after, and in between the presentations and the dinner courses prepared by Chefs **Bruno Marti** and **Blair Rasmussen** were plenty of those quirky attention cleansers that could neither be judged as good nor bad, but were certainly things we never expected to witness, namely ...

- Someone asking the kind and gracious **David** and **Manjy Sidoo**, co-owners of **Lumiere** what they did for day jobs. Yikes!
- The intensely private **Mrs. Ruys Paes-Braga** accepting the award for her husband (who is currently working in Lisbon) and being asked to recount the juiciest stories from Ruy's term as GM of the **Four Seasons Vancouver Hotel**. Double Yikes!
- Old photos of **Tojo** sporting a full head of hair.
- The man with the golden touch -- the dapper and eloquent **Anthony von Mandl**, displaying a new relationship with his own locks. (If he hasn't been called the "fair-haired boy of the Okanagan" before, he could be now.)
- **Harry McWatters'** best selling *Sumac Ridge Meritage* being referred to as "Sumac Rouge".
- Someone mentioning **Mike's Hard Lemonade** within five feet of Mr. von Mandl.
- Restaurateurs stopping by her table to kiss the forehead of *Globe and Mail* columnist **Alexandra Gill**.
- And in what should be known as the "Vincent van Gogh Award" for not being told how richly appreciated you were, how good you were at what you did, until after the business has finally killed you ... one more tribute to the dearly departed **Jean-Claude Ramond** and **Joel Thibault**.

Still, beyond the amusing, or in the case of the last one, sad bits, was the serious fact that for anyone toiling in the food services industries, these awards may be the most prestigious ones of all. The main consideration being that the inductees were all being recognized by peers in their own community, which put the honour beyond the reach of any private interests or business agenda. Those who were acknowledged have the satisfaction of knowing that the compliment came from a source who truly understand what their challenge is like, what they have had to do every day since day one in order to succeed, and what they probably had to sacrifice along the way. Nomination to the BC Restaurant Hall of Fame is a way of saying, "You're the kind of person who makes our industry, and by association we who work in it, look good." Given that, what bigger honour could there be than to have this particular group say. "You've done us proud."

Congratulations to all new members of the 2006 BC Restaurant Hall of Fame. Below, we have listed a complete list of this year's inductees. And for a little comic relief, above that you will find an excerpt from Duncan Holmes' opening address: "Top Ten Ways to Know You Are Eating in a Vancouver Restaurant♦♦?".

TEN WAYS TO KNOW YOU ARE EATING IN A VANCOUVER RESTAURANT

1. Tod Bertuzzi is off in a corner sulking.
2. You get to taste seared tuna, pine nuts, quince jelly, dulce, demi glace, sweetbreads and salmon roe . . . all in one mouthful. And you realize after you've swallowed it . . . that was it for the main course.
3. The restaurant was named after the letters you had left at the end of your last game of Scrabble.
4. Halfway through your meal, someone yells 'Action' and you realize you're dining on the set of Godiva's.
5. The people at the next table are trying to decide whether the '03 Osoyoos Zinfandel really pairs well with the Chilliwack farmed crawfish with the orange fennel sauce . . . And none of them have a clue what Zinfandel actually is.
6. The patio is full of people. And it's January.
7. You give your keys to the valet and ask him if he gets a chance, could he please walk your Jack Russell, whose name is Ashley.
8. The couple at the next table are talking about their wedding plans. Should they have lily of the valley with the bows on the pews. Or go for the miniature white roses . . . Both of them are guys.
9. Marc Crawford is in the washroom, looking in the mirror, and thanking God for his great hair.
10. At least one person in the restaurant is bitching about a column in the Globe & Mail.

2006 INDUCTEES OF THE BC RESTAURANT HALL OF FAME

PIONEER

Chick Chamberlain – *Tomahawk Barbecue*
Jeff Mooney – *A&W Restaurant*
Jean Claude Ramond – *Smoking Dog*
Joel Thibault – *Chez Joel*
Peter Toigo – *White Spot Restaurants*

ACTIVE RESTAURATEUR

John Bishop – *Bishop's*
Bud Kanke – *Joe Fortes Seafood & Chop House*

INDUSTRY FRONT OF HOUSE

Francesco Alongi – *Don Francesco's*
Ruy Paes-Braga – *Four Season's Hotel*

INDUSTRY BACK OF HOUSE

Karen Barnaby – *The Fish House*
Rob Feenie – *Lumiere*
Tojo Hidekazu – *Tojo's*

FRIEND OF THE INDUSTRY

Jurgen Gothe – *CBC Radio/ Georgia Straight*
Anthony von Mandl – *Mission Hill Family Estate*