

EAT & DRINK



LIKE A CHEF

Chefs work hard, play harder, and many eat and drink with as much gusto as, if not more than, we “civilians” do.

When they aren't hitched to their own kitchens, chefs stray into the territory of their culinary peers during off-hours. It's partly to take stock of the “competition,” at times to draw culinary inspiration, but more often than not, simply to enjoy being on the receiving end of the service side for a change and have some fun away from the ball and chain of their own restaurant.

So when chefs dish on their favorite bars and restaurants, we listen. Here's a list of the places that earn their hard-earned money after a shift or on that rare night off. We'd be wise eaters to follow in their clog steps. —BY PETER SZYMCAK



Chef Hamid Salimian, Diva at the Met, Vancouver, BC, is one of the city's foremost practitioners of molecular gastronomy—think cotton candy pizza, foams, and plates with painted sauces. The Persian chef represented Canada at the World Culinary Olympics and Bocuse d'Or.

What is your "go to" comfort food? Kabab kobideh. There's a small place on Denman Street, Mediterranean Grill, where they cook to order and have a great spice:fat:meat ratio. You see lots of Middle Eastern cabbies and limo drivers lined up out front, so you know it's good.

Best place for a late-night bite? Tsui Hang Village at Davie and Granville. It's open until 4 a.m. and actually has decent Chinese food. I tend to get the eggplant hotpot.

Shot and a beer after work with the guys? For years and years, we've gone to the Granville Room. I guess I'm getting old, but I love the mix of old school music and cold beer, and the service is great—they really do remember your name.

Cocktails? Three-way tie: The Refinery on Granville Street, L'Abattoir in Gastown, and West restaurant. In each place I just ask the bartender to make me whatever they feel like, and it's always killer.

Cheap and fast lunch? Thai Basil off Davie Street is fresh, bright, and tasty. It's also family-run and a terrific value.

Romantic dinner? La Belle Auberge in Ladner. The food is classic French, and the setting is beautiful: a heritage house filled with antiques.

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in the

Pacific Northwest right now? The Pear Tree. Chef Scott Jaeger never serves something until he has the execution completely nailed, and I'm always blown away by the amazing, modern dishes.



Chef Justin Wills, Restaurant Beck, Depoe Bay, OR, is upping the coastal cuisine ante, playing to a crowd of in-the-know locals and guests staying at the Whale Cove Inn. When he's not searching for sustainable seafood and locally foraged ingredients, he spends his free time with his wife and young son, and enjoys making forays to Portland to sample the city's fare.

Best place for a late-night bite? When we are in Portland, we like going to Oba for their late-night happy hour.

Cheap and fast lunch? Mio Sushi on Hawthorne or Pho Van.

Best place to go with the whole family? Biwa is awesome. We even took our three-year-old with us, and he slept in the booth while we had omakase [chef's choice]. Also, Hopworks [brewpub in Portland]. It's very family friendly, and the beer and food is great, too!

Where's next on your to-go list? Canlis in Seattle.



Chef Jason Stoneburner, Bastille, Seattle, WA, sources

produce from his own rooftop garden at the restaurant in the Fremont neighborhood. He's also a big supporter of the Ballard Farmers Market, which takes place year round in front of the restaurant, and is an avid surfer.

Where is the best place to tank up before hitting the waves? I drink tons of coffee on the drive to the coast because I'm trying to maintain my buoyancy, but afterwards I enjoy lots of Dungeness crab and beer at Brady's Oysters in Aberdeen, Washington.

What is your "go to" comfort food? It changes, pizza to izakaya—but lately it's been udon at Showa in Fremont.

Lunch? The tofu rice bowl at Revel is flavor country.

Romantic dinner? Boat Street Cafe yields a home run every time.

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in Seattle right now? La Bête maintains a great balance of creativity without smoke and mirrors.

What other restaurant does a good job of using the bounty of local produce? Emmer & Rye stays true to sourcing locally and produces tasty food.



Chef Matt Batey, Terrace, Kelowna, BC Overlooking Lake Okanagan, Mission Hill Family Estate is the site of Terrace restaurant, home of hands-down one of the most beautiful, panoramic backdrops in the Pacific Northwest. Chef Batey serves immaculate dishes that showcase local ingredients, seamlessly pairing with the winery's all-encompassing philosophy of perfection—in its architecture, winemaking, and cuisine.

He also loves to travel the region in search of food and drink excellence.

Best place for a late-night bite? Frites and aioli at Waterfront Wines [Kelowna].

Cocktails? L'Abattoir in Gastown [Vancouver].

Cheap and fast lunch? Noodle Box [Victoria].

Romantic dinner? Also in Victoria, Brasserie L'Ecole is awesome every time. The romance is in the food—there is love in that cooking!

What other restaurant offers a great view to pair with the food? As an avid motorist, Chuckanut Drive through Fairhaven [in Bellingham, WA] is a must. A good bowl of soup at the Calaphon Café with the adjoining book and cook shops make this a pretty regular destination.



Chef Spencer Santenello, Prospect Street Cafe, Bellingham, WA The Vermont-born chef landed in Bellingham via Hawaii, where he spent several years surfing and running a catering company on Kauai. He's adapted to his new surroundings—these days he mountain bikes and snowboards—and has Bellingham's foodies buzzing.

What is your "go to" comfort food? Eggs over-easy, rice, and ahi poke [raw Hawaiian-style fish salad]. Soy sauce ketchup and sambal are the condiments. I eat it in the a.m. before a day of shredding my downhill bike. Fish Express in Lihue, Kauai, has great ahi poke. If you are ever in Lihue be sure to check out Hamura's Saimin, an old-school Hawaiian-style budget noodle restaurant.

Best place for a late-night bite? The Prospect Street Cafe after hours when all the civilians have left. Great creative thrown-together meals!

Shot and a beer after work? The last shot I had came out my nose. Instead, I go for beer at the Grand, or wine at Temple Bar.

Lunch? Old World Deli, more than once a week. A Que Taco on Sammish Way. Graham's Store Bagels in Glacier when riding Mt. Baker or Glacier.

Romantic dinner? Cafe Juanita in Kirkland—romantic, refined, and fabulous!

Big breakfast? The Fork at Agate Bay—great food, service, atmosphere. In Seattle, Hi Spot Cafe.

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in the Pacific Northwest right now? In Seattle I usually eat at Joule or Revel—from food to concept, both are great.

Where's next on your to-go list? I need to try the Willows Inn (on Lummi Island) and Josh Silverman's newly opened noodle bar, Dashi (in Bellingham).



Chef Dale MacKay, Ensemble, Vancouver, BC Still fresh from his win on season one of Top Chef Canada, chef Dale MacKay stays busy as a single father and the opening of his second restaurant, an upscale pub, in downtown Vancouver this fall.

Best place for a late-night bite? GUU Japanese is right next door, which is pretty handy. I almost always have the kimchi fried rice. It is a favorite of many Ensemble cooks.

Shot and a beer after work with the guys? The Keg on Thurlow and Alberni at the moment. But, by the time this goes to print, my new place might be open, so I might have a new favorite.

Cocktails? The Keefer Bar. I like it when guests ask for recommendations from servers/bartenders/chefs. I feel that they get the best by doing that. So, when I go to the Keefer, I ask Dani [Tatarin, bartender/co-owner] what she thinks I'd like and go with that. So far, no disappointments.

Cheap and fast lunch? Always, always the chicken wings and the calamari at Phnom Penh Restaurant on East Georgia Street.

A big ol' breakfast? Deacon's Corner. Again, always, always the biscuits and gravy with sunnyside-up eggs.

Buying wine? Marquis Wine Cellars on Davie. I love the Pinot Gris, in

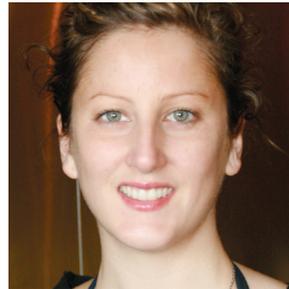
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—CHEF DALE MACKAY

particular, from Laughing Stock Vineyards in Naramata.

Favorite winter cocktail? Bar Manager Cho's new fall drink called simply "Hot Tea." It's got Bailey's, St. Remy Brandy, Cointreau, honey, and a pot of Earl Grey tea served tableside in a mug with a cinnamon stick swizzle. Yum!

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in Vancouver right now? Haworth. Chef David Haworth does a really good job of showcasing BC products in a clean, simple way that really brings out the best in the ingredients. Simple isn't simple, it's super hard. David is an excellent example of a great chef making simple look easy.

Best Italian. La Boca for simple, delicious Italian food. Clams and chorizo pasta with a glass of milk—and my son Ayden always have milk with dinner.



Chef Jane Cornborough, Refuel, Vancouver, BC, is diminutive of physique compared to her mentor Robert Belcham, the chef/owner of Refuel and a growing number of Vancouver restaurants, but don't let that fool you: she's a big talent in the kitchen. Her culinary career began at Mission Hill Family Estate in Kelowna,

Granville Island and cook them up at home with friends.

Favorite winter cocktail? This is a new one that is going to keep me warm through the winter. Jesse Walters, barman at Refuel, created it for me. Stregga, St. Germain, gin, and egg white. I think we are going to name it "Chefs Ride," since Stregga means "witch" and it is the big joke at work, that the broom is my ride.

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in Vancouver right now? I don't know if I could pick one restaurant that excites me the most. There are definitely chefs that I find exciting and love collaborating with and are very inspirational to me. Chefs like Andrea Carlson (Bishops), Alvin Pillay (The Irish Heather), Ted Anderson (Campagnolo ROMA), and Adam Vaughan (Campagnolo).



Chef David Anderson, Genoa, Portland, OR Over the past 30-plus years Genoa, the landmark Italian restaurant in southeast Portland, has launched the careers of local star chefs like former co-owner Cathy Whims (Nostrana), John Taboada (Navarre/Luce), Tommy Habetz (Bunk), and Kevin Gibson (Evove). Today, chef David Anderson has taken up the torch, crafting five-course menus that change with the seasons.

Best place for comfort food? Grain and Gristle or Hopworks for a burger—always with blue cheese and of course, good beer.

Wintertime beverage? Beer, always seasonal, lots of hoppy styles and bocks right now.

Most exciting restaurant in Portland?

Castagna is still doing the most exciting food and maybe more so now. I'm excited to see the Woodsman. I also think ClarkLewis is really underrated.



Chef Allen Routt, The Painted Lady Restaurant, Newberg, OR His colorful career includes cheffing gigs in Napa Valley, New York, San Francisco, Miami, Las Vegas, and Washington, DC. But after a trip to Oregon's Willamette Valley, he decided to settle down in Newberg, Oregon. Since 2005, he and his wife Jessica (who oversees the front of the house and also makes pastries) have earned raves at their restaurant, housed in a beautifully renovated Victorian painted aqua, mustard, eggplant, and oyster white.

What is your "go to" comfort food? Steak and potatoes at Ringside in Portland.

Shot and a beer after work with the guys? Voodoo Martini Bar [Newberg].

Lunch in wine country? I like Red Hills Market. It's a great neighborhood market serving up local products and delicious house-crafted sandwiches.

Favorite winter cocktail? During the wintertime, my go-to cocktail concoction is Ransom Old Tom Gin with bitters, ginger, and lime.

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in the Pacific Northwest right now? I have heard a lot of positive feedback about Restaurant Beck on the Oregon Coast. I am really looking forward to trying it.

Where do you go to be pampered? The Herbfarm in Woodinville, WA offers quite an intimate, fine dining experience.

Where would you earn frequent diner miles? One place we always love going back to is Tabla Restaurant [in Portland]. And, when we're in the mood for sushi, Murata is one of our favorites. They always have very interesting daily specials and we love the omakase menu.



Chef Chris DiMinno, Clyde Common, Portland, OR Before moving west to become the executive chef at Clyde Common, DiMinno worked alongside renowned chef/farmer Dan Barber at Blue Hill at Stone Barns in New York.

Best place for a beer after work with the guys? APEX, which has 50 rotating beers on tap.

Cocktails? Other than Clyde, I love Teardrop Lounge.

Romantic dinner? Bar Avignon at 21st and SE Division.

A big ol' breakfast? Screen Door hands down. It's worth the wait.

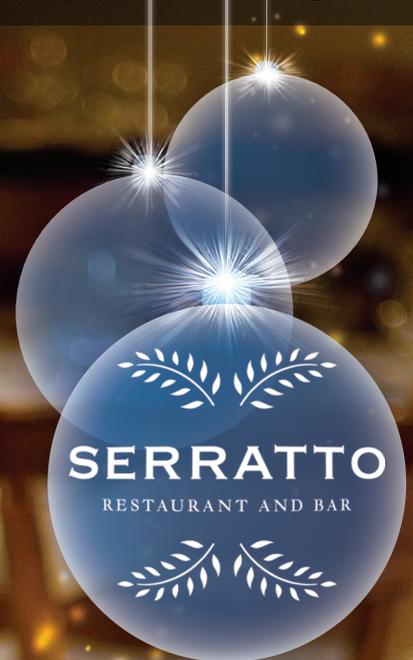
Gorging on Northwest shellfish? I love Laurelhurst Market's version of mussels frites.

Favorite place to buy wine? Pastaworks. They have a tailored selection of interesting wines.

What restaurant do you think is doing the most exciting food in Portland right now? Greg Denton at MetroVino.

Clyde Common is known for its communal table? What other restaurants do a good job of making diners feel comfortably social? Olympic Provisions, Olympic Meats, Le Pigeon are a few. 🍷

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