

DESTINATION VANCOUVER

FINE DINING ON CANADA'S OUEST COAST

➔ As it gears up for the 2010 Winter Olympics, Vancouver's restaurant scene is kicking into full gear. A two-week promo called Dine Out Vancouver draws many a tourist in January. Several local chefs have penned their own cookbooks and the city continues to cement a position among the gastronomic capitals of North America.

Italian chef Umberto Menghi is an institution in Vancouver. One of his restaurants, **Circolo** (1116 Mainland Street; tel: 604.687.1116) sits in the city's trendy Yaletown neighborhood and is a roomy gastronomic combo of Paris, New York and Tuscany. The place features spacious dining rooms, a garden patio, a long attractive bar and exquisite Jarra wood flooring from Australia. Circolo's red table wine, Bambolo, is produced on Menghi's own estate back in Tuscany.

Within spitting distance is the **Blue Water Café** (1095 Hamilton Street; tel: 604.688.8078), a modern seafood eatery located in a renovated warehouse. Japanese chef Yoshihiro Tabo presides over the separate oyster and sushi bar, and rumor has it whenever the Vancouver Canucks hockey team loses a match, they reserve one of the back rooms to eat here afterward. Fans of seafood should not overlook **C Restaurant** (2-1600 Howe Street; tel: 604.681.1164), which has a private wine attic, and 30-plus wines available by the glass, and **Coast Restaurant** (1257 Hamilton Street; tel: 604.685.5010), a lively place with very creative seafood dishes (panko-crusted sable crab and Indian candy cakes, anyone?).



O'Douls' (at top), Blue Water Café (left); C Restaurant (right) and West Restaurant.

For a complete wall of wine, **West Restaurant** (2881 Granville Street; tel: 604.738.8938) on Vancouver's burgeoning Granville Rise strip, offers patrons a colossal view of their temperature-controlled, floor-to-ceiling array of wine, complete with sliding bookstore ladders. West, which used to be known by its French spelling, "Ouest" (they changed the

name partly because taxi drivers could never find the place, and didn't know how to spell it) has won pretty much every award in the book. Chef David Hawksworth's delicious menu is heavy on local and products, and has an Asian bent.

Beer aficionados, take a detour at **Fogg 'n' Suds** (1323 Robson Street; tel: 604.683.2337), an informal local pub sitting atop Vancouver's ultra-fashionable shopping drag. The place offers more than

120 beers, including many Canadian brews unavailable outside the Great White North. It's a wonderfully casual upstairs bar to take in the day while peering out at Vancouver's version of Rodeo Drive, rain or shine. **O'Douls Restaurant and Bar**,

recipient of a host of wine awards and home to live jazz seven nights a week, is right across the street, in the **Listel Hotel** (1300 Robson Street; tel: 604.661.1400).

And speaking of hotels, Vancouver has no shortage of stylish places to stay. Yaletown is home to the trendy **Opus Hotel** (322 Davie Street; tel: 604.642.6787), a boutique property with vast windows overlooking the city. In Robson Square, the **Wedgewood Hotel** (845 Hornby Street; tel: 604.689.7777) counts among its best features

upscale Victorian furnishings and the chic Bacchus Restaurant and Lounge. For a quasi-South Beach experience, there's the **Pacific Palisades Hotel** (1277 Robson Street; tel: 604.688.0461). An all-suites two tower facility, the hotel also offers film and television production suites.

—GARY SINGH **WE**