

# The Chefs of the 55th Canadian National Meeting

### Cameron Ballendine, Maître Rôtisseur

Executive Chef

The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver



Executive Chef Cameron Ballendine, Maître Rôtisseur.

Executive Chef Cameron Ballendine's passport has as many stamps from exotic locales as an international cookbook has chapters – China, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Fairmont Dubai and France. Chef Ballendine has strutted his globetrotting cooking stuff for Queen Elizabeth II, former US presidents Bush and Clinton, members of the Saudi Arabian royal family, former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, the Sultan of Oman and Sir Elton John at the Four Seasons Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt. He has worked with Moët & Chandon and in the kitchens of Dom Perignon's Chateau de Saran with Chef de Cuisine Pascal Tinquad. His international expertise also includes a passion for Chinese cuisine developed during his time in Shanghai. During his career, Cameron has also had the opportunity to cook alongside world-class chefs such as Albert Roux, Jean Louis Palladi, Asfaque and Irfan Qureshi, and Edwourd Lubae.



However, as a former Victoria native and graduate from Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo BC, home is where your heart is, and the west coast of Canada has always been home. As a young cook, he dreamed of the day when he would be in charge of the kitchens in a historic hotel. Today, Chef Ballendine brings his global experience home to The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, combining passion for local products with an international flair, creating classic, simple and fresh food, both for hotel functions and at Notch8 Restaurant & Bar.



**Greg Van Poppel, CCC,  
Maître Rôtisseur**  
Executive Chef and  
Director of Culinary  
The Terminal City Club



Chef Greg van Poppel's career stems from a family rich in culinary tradition – both his father and grandfather are celebrated former chefs of Canadian Pacific Hotels. The third-generation chef quickly made a name for himself, beginning his profession in 1993 by completing his apprenticeship at the Canadian Pacific Waterfront Centre Hotel in Vancouver (now The Fairmont Waterfront).

Chef van Poppel worked through various progressive positions in Vancouver, including the Four Seasons Hotel, until returning to The Fairmont Waterfront in 1998 as Restaurant Chef. In June 2000, Chef van Poppel competed in the Bocuse d'Or Concours Mondial de la Cuisine Canadian Qualification in Winnipeg, placing top five in the country, before taking charge of the stoves of La Toque Blanche in West Vancouver.

In 2001, Chef van Poppel completed his Certified Chef de Cuisine designation and continued his career in establishments across Canada and abroad, including The Fairmont Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. In 2005, as Executive Chef of Calgary's iconic Fairmont Palliser, he oversaw three Sous Chefs and a kitchen brigade of 45 talented culinary professionals.

In 2010, Chef van Poppel took a much broader role in the overall operations of the Food and Beverage Department, providing direction to the outlets of the hotel, as well as contributing to the successful Fairmont Gold Lounge renovations in 2011.

In 2013, returning to his home town of Vancouver, Chef van Poppel joined the Terminal City Club as Executive Chef, where he provides direction to the culinary team and three restaurants of the club, in addition to a very busy banquet operation. In August 2015, Chef van Poppel again moved into a much broader role as part of the club's Executive Committee. As Director of Culinary and Restaurant Operations, Chef van Poppel not only continues his role as Executive Chef, but also provides the strategic direction for the club's food and beverage operations, while driving innovation and excellence in both club cuisine and service delivery.

**TERMINAL CITY CLUB**

**Ken Nakano, Maître Rôtisseur**  
Executive Chef  
MARKET by Jean-Georges,  
Shangri-La Hotel



For Ken Nakano, the award-winning executive chef of Vancouver's Shangri-La Hotel, celebrating the bounty of each new season is a concept deeply rooted in his thinking and it's a cornerstone of his renowned cuisine.

Chef Nakano grew up in a traditional Japanese household, where the garden was the driving force of his family's meals. Tending the backyard garden was one of his daily chores, and scavenging for local fiddleheads, coltsfoot and berries were the highlight of family camping trips with his cousins. Once the seasons changed from fishing and foraging for fresh ingredients to harvest time, he learned the arts of salt curing, canning and pickling from his mother.

Little did he know at the time that his mother was instilling the importance of practicing a sustainable, seasonal approach to cooking – a lesson he has embraced and applied with an artist's sensibilities to create truly fresh, original and inspired cuisine. "Eating this way has always been part of my lifestyle," says Chef Nakano. "As a chef, I have a great respect for our local community; when we collaborate with farm partners and local producers, we can plan and create truly regional, seasonal menus."



**Peter Crook, Maître Rôtisseur**  
Executive Chef  
The Shaughnessy Golf  
and Country Club



For Peter Crook, Executive Chef of the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club, his cuisine showcasing the most flavourful foods of each season, prepared with originality and creative flair, has hit the “sweet spot” of the club’s discerning patrons and savvy Vancouver diners for more than 21 years. Born in Chislehurst Kent, UK, Peter and his family moved to Canada in 1976. It was here, inspired by his mother’s own “catering to the stars” (and especially her famous cheese pies), that the then 11-year-old Peter developed his passion for cooking.

Peter studied culinary arts at George Brown in Toronto, going on to win his first culinary competition at age 15 under his mentor Chef Freddie Kolar, followed by a memorable apprenticeship with Master Chef Fred Reindl at Café Jorgen’s at age 16.

Seasoned by Chef Reindl’s demanding tutelage, Peter went on to work at Toronto’s 4-Star Bristol Place Hotel under Executive Chef Dazvin and the 5-Star King Edward Hotel, again under Executive Master Chef Fred Reindl and Executive Chef John Higgins. In 1988, Peter worked at the Lyford Cay Club in the Bahamas under Chef Walter Probst followed by a year at the American Embassy Bahamas cooking alongside Executive Chef Vincent Lee.



From 1990 to 1994 Peter was Executive Chef and owner of Red Sage Gourmet Catering in Washington, D.C., before coming back to Canada to take his place as Executive Chef of Shaughnessy Golf & Country Club. Another career highlight came in 2006, when Peter represented Canada at the Winter Olympics in Torino, showcasing his talents by cooking for the International Olympic Committee and its many special guests.

Shaughnessy’s eclectic mix of club patrons, discerning diners and event celebrants has afforded Peter the unique opportunity to “be creative each and every day,” whether he is cooking for world leaders and international celebrities or wedding guests. Excellence and the unexpected always await you at Chef Crook’s table.



**Michel Jacob,**  
**Grand Officier Maître Rôtisseur**  
Executive Chef  
le Crocodile



Upon his arrival in Vancouver some 30 years ago, it was no surprise that Chef and Maître Rôtisseur Michel Jacob would open his own French restaurant, naming it in homage to the finest restaurant in his hometown of

Strasbourg – the three-star Michelin restaurant Au Crocodile. Chef/owner Emile Jung delivered a level of sublime quality and service that Michel aspired to deliver to his own customers – a restaurant that could match and achieve the culinary standards and service that remain the hallmarks of Au Crocodile even today.

As a young apprentice in Strasbourg, France, under Chef Johnny Letzer of Zimmer, Michel and his fellow chefs were often taken to restaurants to experience the local dining scene first-hand. One momentous day, Chef Letzer took the entire brigade to Restaurant Au Crocodile. Michel remembers a meal “like nothing I had ever seen or tasted before.” And it was at that meal that Michel Jacob set the standard for

his own culinary path, with Chef Emile Jung as his “inspirational culinary mentor.” Following his apprenticeship, Michel worked with Pierre Gaertner at the celebrated Aux Armes de France in Ammerschwir. Further travels took him to the famed Ashford Castle in Ireland (then owned by the Guinness Family); Lausanne, Switzerland; and stages in Belgium and Corsica.

Over the past 30 years, Michel’s understated, elegant restaurant, located in the heart of Vancouver, has earned a national reputation for superb French cuisine infused with innovative West Coast style, deftly served with impeccable attention to detail. It remains one of Vancouver’s most acclaimed and visited restaurants and the culinary jewel of the city.

## **Simon Bolsover**

Executive Chef

Bacchus Restaurant, The Wedgewood Hotel & Spa, Relais & Châteaux



Chef Bolsover is now Executive Chef of the Wedgewood Hotel & Spa, a Relais & Châteaux property. Simon will manage the culinary program at Bacchus Restaurant, as well as catering for private functions and in-room dining.

Chef Bolsover is part of an exciting new generation of European chefs that are crossing the Atlantic in search of challenging new environments and seasonal ingredients indigenous to the West Coast.

Simon was born in Yorkshire, UK, and most recently worked as Executive Head Chef at Seaham Hall Hotel & Spa, a luxurious, 5-star boutique property near Durham, UK. Prior to Seaham Hall, he was Head Chef at the celebrated Great Fosters Hotel in Egham, Surrey. With Simon's guidance and his drive for gastronomic excellence, this historic property achieved the highly coveted AA Three Rosettes. Simon also spent four years at one of England's finest hotels, Linthwaite House Hotel in the British Lake District, and felt privileged to have worked with the legendary Keith Floyd, award-winning chef, author and culinary celebrity. Simon embraced his time at this property, taking full advantage of the local and seasonal produce, and was awarded a third Rosette as recognition for his skill and creative talents.

Simon's career has also taken him to other Relais & Châteaux properties including Hartwell House in Buckinghamshire and a stage at the world-renowned Le Manoir aux

Seasonality dominates the creation of Simon's menus throughout the year, which in turn leads to a clean style and sophisticated interpretation of modern French cuisine. Simon's philosophy is founded on in-depth knowledge and understanding of food and sustainability. He believes in sharing his passion and motivation with his team. During his formative years, Simon worked as a Sous Chef at the Sherwood Inn, Muskoka, Ontario. It was during this time he developed a love for Canada and hoped to return one day with his family.



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## **Gennaro Iorio, Maître Rôtisseur**

Executive Chef

La Terrazza



Gennaro is the youngest of three partners who opened La Terrazza in 1998. Gennaro Iorio, Giulio Miceli and Iqbal Grewal met while working for the one of Vancouver's premier restaurant families – the Corsi's – all working together at Quattro on Fourth. Gennaro worked as Sous-chef, Giulio as Maitre'd and Iqbal as General Manager and Managing Partner.

Gennaro's restaurant career began in Trail, BC, home to one of the province's largest and strongest Italian communities. Gennaro himself has strong Canadian-Italian roots. He visits Italy often, and speaks Italian fluently as well as French.

Life in Trail prepared Gennaro for the hard work of the restaurant business. While working on his family farm at the young age of 16, influenced by years in his mother's kitchen, he opened his own pizza parlour. Realizing that cooking was his true passion, he moved to Vancouver where he studied at the Dubrulle International Culinary Institute (now AI). He then travelled to Naples, Italy, to continue his education, and while overseas completed a series of stages throughout Europe.

Arriving back in Vancouver a year later, he joined the kitchen brigade at Bishop's before eventually moving on to the Sous Chef position at Quattro.

That year, Quattro won their first award, a gold medal for Best Italian.

As a third-generation chef, Iorio calls the kitchen home, describing his cuisine as old school, married with the bounty of ingredients found locally and a young chef's modern approach to cooking. Today, the family orchard and farms in Trail supply many of the ingredients at La Terrazza. The farm's hens supply organic eggs; the ingredients for the antipastos are grown on the farm and canned on site, and the biscottis and Italian baked goods are produced and sent down to the restaurant by Gennaro's mother, a master baker. For Gennaro, cooking is very much a labour of love – love that imbues every dish of his celebrated Italian cuisine.

