



When *The Peak's* editor requested an article asking "Is Hong Kong on the World Map for Food?", I was smug. This would be the easiest story to write in the history of food writing, because surely Hong Kong is a food haven? My mind raced with statistics. A press release from WOM Guide, Hong Kong's bestselling foodie guide now on its third edition, had arrived just minutes before stating its members spend HK\$405 million a year on dinners. Rivals Zagat had just released their own little red guide to Hong Kong's dining scene, proving possibly that people were paying attention to our city's myriad options. In the last week alone, I had been to two new openings, and more were following over the next few days. "Hong Kong has big names, so what?" my editor batted. I dismissed the words as they fell from his mouth. He's fresh off the longboat from Singapore, I thought, what does he know?

That afternoon, I sat at my desk and plugged 'World's 50 Best Restaurants' into the keyboard. It is the name of a list launched in 2002 by *Restaurant* magazine, sponsored by San Pellegrino and waited for eagerly by the world's good food addicts. Feran Adria's El Bulli in Spain stole the crown, coming in at number one, followed by the UK's Fat Duck and France's Pierre Gagnaire. I scanned four to 50. Finland, Sweden, South Africa—in fact, all manner of unlikely locations were listed. Hong Kong, however, hadn't made that list.

So many people trumpet Hong Kong's status as a world food city, it's easy to believe the hype. Masses of new restaurants open each year to huge

PR fanfare, and sell glitz and location almost more than their menus. The Hong Kong Tourism Board touts the city as a 'Gourmet Paradise', and when acclaimed chef and food writer Antony Bourdain filmed his *No Reservations* show in Hong Kong, his opening lines were, "Hong Kong is one of the most food-centric, gastro destinations on the planet." But try finding good Greek food, top notch Latin American, or even some decent Singaporean.

WESTERN BIAS

Back to the list. At the bottom of the page, in small black type read, "Click here for numbers 51 to 100." I did. At number 52 was Nobu. But it was Nobu New York—the original. Number 64 was Zuma. Zuma London. Three Atelier Robuchons were listed, one in London (83) and then two in the US (85 and 87). Robuchon Hong Kong was nowhere to be found. In fact it wasn't until number 88, where Pierre was listed, that the words 'Hong Kong' appeared.



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