

"La Mancha" (yellow cake with saffron, blackberry, honey) at Nadège Patisserie



Gallery (katharinemulherin.com), where many paintings and photographs offer uneasy cinematic tales of suburban noir. Mulherin focuses on emerging Canadian and international artists such as Mike Bayne (lonely shopping centers, liquor stores) and Cecilia Berkovic (laundromats, book obsessions). A short walk away is the **Stephen Bulger Gallery** (bulgergallery.com), an exhibit and retail/education hangout with 15,000 photographs that focus on a fertile documentary tradition. I browse an impressive photography-book collection and, later, watch a video installation, part of an ever-changing narrative cycle featuring emerging artists. It's not easy, but Bulger has managed to create something that is at once sophisticated and, yes, museum-like, and yet as casual as an artist's loft.

## Sweet Eats

When Jordan mentions that the **Red Tea Box** (696 Queen St. West) is the most unusual restaurant in the city, I'm sold—and duck in for a bite. It feels like shabby royalty sits down to tea with Buddha, which just so happens to be in an intimate space that

could double as your eccentric aunt's parlor. The midday crowd can overwhelm the tight room, but by all means, give it a try. Enter the red door and expect masterful pan-Asian fare with "tea bento" boxes that change each month. On the day I visit, the boxes feature fish pie with dill, ginger-cured salmon and an array of desserts, from scones to maple brown-sugar meringue cake.

Just across the street from Trinity Bellwoods Park, pastry guru Nadège Nourian recently opened **Nadège Patisserie** (nadegepatisserie.com). The corner bakery and café deliver the minimalist cool of Paris to the neighborhood, and it works. Pale hardwood floors line a space with stark white walls trimmed in black. A bar sports chrome and white-leather stools; the music is techno, and the catwalk-worthy young women who work the counter wear pink blouses and short gray skirts. Yes, it's a bit of a daytime scene, but the confections are sublime, including melt-in-your mouth French macarons (blueberry, peach and salted caramel) and chocolate tarts. Everything here is edible art.

And so I linger long into the afternoon, watching Torontonians do what they do best: create and inspire each other to make their slice of the world a little prettier and more meaningful—ready, as always, for their collective close-up. 🍷



(above and inset) The Stephen Bulger Gallery



## TravelDetails

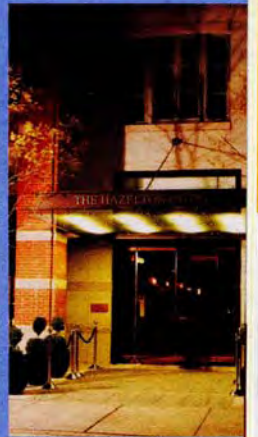
### WHERE TO STAY

**Fairmont Royal York** (fairmont.com/royalyork; from \$279). The grand dame of downtown, the 1,365-room behemoth still has many features from its 1929 debut, including travertine pillars and crystal chandeliers. The Fairmont has been featured in a number of films, including last fall's Helen Mirren and John Malkovich smash "Red" and Russell Crowe's "Cinderella Man." But despite this polished history, the hotel has an edge. Case in point: It launched a beekeeping initiative on the hotel's 14th story—sort of an outdoor condo for Toronto's bees. Says Executive Chef David Garcelon, who helms Canada's largest kitchen and whose menu employs plenty of honey, "You can't find a supplier much closer than your own roof."



Chef David Garcelon in the rooftop garden at the Fairmont Royal York

**Hazelton Hotel** (thehazeltonhotel.com; from \$520). All right, so it's over the top, but as hospitality eye candy, it is unmatched in Toronto. Located on trendy Yorkville Avenue downtown, the hotel is Hollywood North during the Toronto Film Festival. If the price tag for accommodations is too steep, consider getting a taste of the scene by visiting One Restaurant, helmed by chef Andrew Ellerby. Menu bliss: lobster spoons butter-braised with vermouth, and seared day-boat scallops with pork belly.



### MORE INFORMATION

seetorontonow.com

### GETTING THERE

Nonstop flights on Air Canada, Continental and United Airlines to Toronto from Washington Dulles International Airport and on Air Canada and United Airlines from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.