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Avant-garde Peruvian restaurant Central places first on second annual list



John Sawicki

Chef-owner Virgilio Martinez and Pia Leon of Central were recognized for their avant-garde Peruvian cuisine winning the top spot on the second annual San Pellegrino 50 Best Restaurants in Latin America 2014 list, which was revealed Wednesday night in Lima, Peru.



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September 4, 2014

By Lauren Mack
Writer

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Just five years after opening its doors in Lima's Miraflores neighborhood, [Central](#) has taken the top spot on the second annual [San Pellegrino 50 Best Restaurants in Latin America 2014 list](#), which was revealed Wednesday night in Lima, Peru.

Chef-owner Virgilio Martinez and Pia Leon were recognized for their avant-garde Peruvian cuisine inspired by Peruvian biodiversity. One standout dish is *chuño*, a frozen potato served with cushuro algae and mullaca root.

"We need to share this with the entire Latin America family," Martinez told The Daily Meal after receiving his award, which kept Peru in the top spot for a second year.

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Central jumped from number four on the inaugural list in 2013 (and number four on [The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)) to number one, surpassing another celebrated Peruvian restaurant in Lima, [Astrid & Gastón](#). Peruvian Chef Diego Muñoz now helms the kitchen at Astrid & Gastón, taking over from celebrity chef Gastón Acurio who, with his wife Astrid Gutsche, still owns the restaurant.

Astrid & Gastón, the contemporary Peruvian haute cuisine restaurant, which ranked number two on The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2013, took second place on the San Pellegrino 50 Best Restaurants in Latin America 2014 list. Acurio was also awarded the Chefs' Choice Award.

Argentina has the most restaurants on this year's list with 12, 11 of which are in Buenos Aires. [Tegul](#), number nine, took home the award for Best Restaurant in Argentina. Chef Germán Martitegui has created a signature eclectic style and menu that changes every two weeks at Tegul, one of Buenos Aires' more secretive restaurants (it ranked number 37 on The Daily Meal's inaugural 101 Best Restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2013).

Two additional awards were presented to restaurants in Argentina. The Highest New Entry Award went to [Tarquino](#), which placed number 16, and the Highest Climber Award went to [El Baqueano](#), which jumped 21 spots from last year to number 18 (El Baqueano ranked number 27 on The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean).

Brazil and Mexico each had nine restaurants on the list with São Paulo's [D.O.M.](#) moving down one spot to number three and São Paulo's [Mani](#) moving up one place to number four (D.O.M. ranked first and Mani ranked eighth on The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean). D.O.M.'s Alex Atala was also awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award.

There were eight new restaurants added this year: Tarquino, [Manzanilla](#) in Ensenada, Mexico (number 25; number 43 on The Daily Meal's 101 Best Restaurants in Latin America and the Caribbean); [La Picanteria](#) in Lima, Peru (number 31); [Gusto](#) in La Paz, Bolivia (number 32); [Rosetta](#) in Mexico City, Mexico (number 33) whose chef Elena Reygadas was also awarded the Best Female Chef Award; [Ambrosia](#) in Santiago, Chile (number 37) which was also awarded the One To Watch Award; [Amaranta](#) in Toluca, Mexico (number 41); and [Leo Cocina y Cava](#) in Bogota, Colombia (number 49).

The 2014 edition of the 50 Best Restaurants in Latin America also included a new award category, Best Pastry Chef, which went to Buenos Aires-based chef Osvaldo Gross.

Lauren Mack is The Daily Meal's New York City Travel Editor. Follow her on Twitter [@lmack](#).

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