



PERSPECTIVES

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF TASTE AND ESTHETICS



Editorial

Cruising through the 13th year of operation, RAK Porcelain have much to be elated about as we are not just a successful business model but a brand that our customers are proud of. Besides impressive growth, we have impacted people's lives at an emotional level which cannot be quantified. Our innovative offerings are revolutionizing dining tablescapes and inspiring people to dine well thus connecting with them personally.

In the 7th edition of 'Perspectives', we present you snippets of RAK Porcelains trails around the world. Delving deep into culinary trends and fads that vary regionally and how imperative it is for the HORECA industry to offer experiential dining today.

At the onset, we are pleased to share with you that the 'HIDE' series of RAK, designed by Gemma Bernal Won the Red Dot Design Award for product design this year adding yet another laurel in our endeavor of excellence in design.

We are excited to launch, 'Suggestions' which was the cynosure at the recent shows. These novel shapes were developed with fine attention to detail and each series is completely ergonomic. This splendid range is beyond the beauty which meets the eye as we try and remove plating limitations to serve as a canvas for food styling variations and lead culinary professionals to express their creative brilliance.

It never ceases to amaze me how our products have time and again served as a canvas to present gourmet artistry.

In this issue Celebrated food artists like the veteran Peter Sikorra, Head Chef at Hotel Grand Elysee, Hamburg and young rising star Chef Mathieu Van Wetteren of Apdikt Restaurant, Luxembourg offer us an insight into their gastronomic expertise.

As the summer sizzles this season, we soar up into the Wetterstein mountains reaching Schloss Elmau, for a tete-a-tete with the hotels most difficult guest - Dietmar Muller Elmau. His pen-



chant for interiors, Indian elephants and RAK Porcelain's tableware is a must read!

Steering to lavenderful Provence at The Hostellerie Berard and Spa, we meet Head Chef – Jean Francois Berard, whose 'OCD' – Obsessive Culinary Disorder has worked wonders to earn him the coveted Michelin star. Also know how our tableware is nurturing future talents at the Culinary Arts Academy Switzerland.

Chef Jessie spills the beans about influences on Filipino dishes from the Far Eastern corridor. Be awed by the US\$ 140 million project, as we interview Charline Padgett F&B Director of The Strat in Vegas, she believes that our tableware is an extension of their excellent cuisine and we couldn't agree more.

Epicureans have lots to relish as we explore the goodness of aged meat, learn about the masterful combination of wine and food at The Wine Bar George in Disney Springs Orlando and articulate upon the hedonistic pleasures of chocolate culinaria!

Through "Perspectives" we intend to take you on an exclusive journey into the world of culinary trends and share the stories of the innovators and trendsetters who shape the Industry.

Wishing you a joyful reading experience, until next time.

Yours Sincerely,

Renu Oommen

Chief Marketing Officer of RAK Porcelain

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BIRTH OF A COLLECTION

SUGGESTIONS

A collection which gets back to basics

Gemma Bernal has continued her cooperation with RAK Porcelain by designing the original Suggestions collection, which led her to revisit her own notion of creation. This time round, she has focused on seeking out the functional before thinking about the aesthetic. This has resulted in a distinctive range, which is nevertheless extremely elegant.





The creation of tableware is inspired by art as well as by the food on which it is served. Elegance and style have long guided choices in a kitchen where appearance has slowly become an essential expression of the profession. But in similar fashion to other areas, habits are first made to be broken. These elements fully complete a beautiful table setting, especially when their design is left to the inventive spirit of Gemma Bernal.

For this new collection, the designer has embraced a new creative challenge. To give dishes and plates a new, more pragmatic approach while leaving space for stylish and unique lines. The functional side has been highlighted to make this porcelain collection even more useful to chefs. To achieve this goal, their input proved highly valuable; moreover, their behaviour in the kitchen was also carefully studied. Originality is also a key component, resulting in a dynamic re-invention of tableware, much to the delight of customers.

Gemma Bernal has agreed to tell us how the unique Suggestions collection was born. Among the various elements are pieces with shapes that are both soft and irregular. The tableware is all that is needed to create a different style on each table. It offers an invitation to enjoy lunch; the opportunity to pluck food from a plate has never been so tempting and trendy...



This time round you have chosen to work differently. Could you please explain the process? Did you have to guide your creativity in a different direction?

The Suggestions collection is not just the outcome of several years of reflection. I spent a long time pondering and, above all, observing functional problems which could arise during service. I took cooking classes with professionals on a regular basis in order to obtain information which would serve as the basis of my creation. I continued to gather more material until I finally decided to start the design of this new collection and bring it to life. The common theme was not formality, quite the contrary. It responds to the everyday needs in the kitchen and takes into account the information collected from chefs. The aim of Suggestions is to provide them with a set of tableware which can form the basis of what may be offered in the future (Editor's note: the collection is destined to be further developed, in view of the positive feedback from chefs).

With this new collection, you have decided to combine the practical and aesthetic qualities. How is this combination original? Is it not already inherent to tableware?

Having designed tableware for so many years, the various techniques have obviously merged in my design approach, both from an aesthetic and functional perspective. But this quest is also a source of enthusiasm. It's like a touch of salt that adds all its flavour to my creations.





Staged

Suggestions represents a genuine evolution, moving away from the tableware usually selected by chefs. Did you have the urge to break from these traditional choices or is it the outcome of a change in the way people eat in restaurants?

Clearly, all the pieces in the Suggestions collection are linked together by a central theme that is not based on form but function. Actually, I did not intend to break with anything at all. Moreover, there was no sentimental foundation in my decision. However, if certain pieces affect people in an emotional way then all the better! This is how Suggestions was born and I hope that the next pieces to be added will address other observations.



Swirls

Create



Shared



Shaped





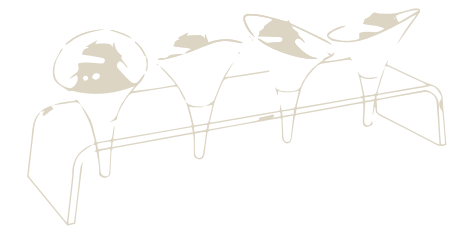
Appeal

GEMMA BERNAL

Gemma Bernal, a native of Barcelona and award-winning multidisciplinary industrial designer, has been creating street furniture, lighting, toys, appliances and dinnerware for 40 years. Sought after to address conferences and participate in exhibitions around the world, she is also an internationally recognised academic. She teaches at various higher education institutions in Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico and India, while transmitting her passion to future generations of designers at the University of Barcelona.



Gemma Bernal



Could this collection inspire some chefs to re-imagine the presentation of their dishes?

Obviously, with full knowledge of the design process, a chef who has the pieces in this collection will use them creatively as a physical medium for his culinary expression. Hence the name of the collection: Suggestions - it offers new ideas in terms of presentation for chefs.

What are the original pieces of the collection? You have especially created compartmentalised dishes in order to separate the different types of food...

Yes, there are pieces in the collection that allow you to separate the main course from the side dishes. Others are very functional in their design. Actually, it is as though a long-term brainstorming session had been conducted, from design to creation, giving birth to a collection where none of the nine pieces has a formal connection to the other. The Suggestions collection consists of these pieces.

Which type of cuisine did you envisage for the Suggestions collection?

I believe that the cuisine is the central theme and we must welcome it with open arms. The common point between the various elements that makes up the collection is demonstrated by the explanatory journey of the collection, through my sketches and the whole reasoning that justify why each element is as it is.

www.gemmabernal.com



Swirls



Picked

la bonne cuisine



HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

HÔTEL GRAND ELYSÉE

Urban getaway - the Grand Elysée, Hamburg

Escape the routine of everyday life and explore a new city for a few days. Europe has an unbeatable quality, an amazing ability to transport visitors from a picturesque Adriatic city to a metropolis close to the North Sea in a few hours by plane. Discover the delights of Hamburg while staying at the Grand Elysée.

The excellence of the Grand Elysée invites travellers to escape from their cocoon, providing guests with high-quality services and an ideal location in the Rotherbaum district of Hamburg. Its student district, famous for its university and the neighbouring museums, complement its ideal location. Innumerable canals weave their way through the city and the banks are lined with cafés and shops. Moreover, the city seduces its visitors with a wealth of cultural highlights. Using the hotel as a base, the most obvious

destination is the city centre to appreciate its shopping districts. The five-star hotel is a 15-minute stroll from the hustle and bustle but, above all, it is a premium holiday destination.

“So that each generation can feel at home”

Le plus grand hôtel 5 étoiles privé d'Allemagne cultive une harmonie des décors pour une ambiance qui reflète le cœur et l'âme même de ce complexe de It

is the largest private five-star hotel in Germany and exhibits a harmonious and stylish décor, creating an atmosphere which reflects the heart and soul of the 510-room hotel complex. The Grand Elysée has just celebrated its 35th anniversary and its director, André Vedovelli, likes to point out that the establishment is above all a family hotel, "so that each generation can feel at home".

From the moment you step into the lobby, the tone is set. Embraced by the large open spaces, guests are given a sense of freedom. Both vast and well lit, the interior hosts several small indoor gardens. The



Theo's awarded best steakhouse in Hamburg

rooms are airy (30 m² minimum) and the 17 suites are even more spacious and skilfully proportioned, capturing a feeling between cosy and classy sophistication. The hotel complex has 30 conference rooms, an art gallery and a sauna with swimming pool and solarium as well as a beauty and fitness area. Let us not forget the fitness room situated under a fully glazed rotunda and bathed in light.

“The international flair that reigns in the hotel coupled with the limitless creativity are the most interesting aspects of my job,” states André Vedovelli in a video interview conducted by Watchado. Driven by his innovative ideas, he received the Top50 Hôtellerie 2019 award for his inspiration and ingenuity, both in terms of accommodation and the tables at the Grand Elysée.



Excellence is not the exclusive privilege of the hotel service offered by the Grand Elysée. The Palace also has five restaurants and two bars. In a unique setting, each establishment is committed to serving a particular type of cuisine, offering the most popular gastronomic treats currently making waves in culinary circles. The Park is dedicated serving to breakfast and brunch. The Boulevard Café invites you to relax for a brief moment and enjoy a light meal. Spaghetti and pizzas are on the menu at Piazza Romana, accompanied by traditional salads, while the Brasserie Flum, named after its architect, plunges its guests into an authentic Parisian atmosphere and spoils them with a menu filled with French delicacies.

Theo's, Hamburg's best steakhouse, is one of the most significant success stories in the establishment, showcasing the skills of head chef, Peter Sikorra. "At Theo's, it's not just about great steaks but also the irresistible charm of a grand hotel," the jury pointed out last April. A real triumph for André Vedovelli, director of the Grand Elysée Hotel Hamburg, for whom the prize is particularly important: "Nine out of ten diners at Theo's are from Hamburg! We are very proud of this fact because we want to be a great hotel for all residents of Hamburg and their guests. By focusing on aged dry beef, we are catering to the taste of dedicated meat lovers."

The Grand Elysée Hotel is one of the top destinations and it is easy to succumb to the temptation of a spontaneous night or two at the hotel. The Park-South room is highly recommended for its French balcony and view over the Moonweidenpark, while the tranquillity of the Garden room will seduce its guests, not to mention the pleasure of sleeping with open windows. Which room tickles your fancy?



Interview

PETER SIKORRA CHEF AT THE GRAND ELYSÉE HOTEL

What brought you to the Grand Elysée?

Ah yes... how I got to the Elysée... I was a chef de cuisine in a fish restaurant here in Hamburg, a 70-seater. It was a gourmet restaurant, with fourteen, fifteen Gault-Millau points... I was in love with food, did the cooking myself, standing at the stove, and was in very, very close contact with guests. That means going directly to guests to find out where the zeit-



geist is in terms of dishes. One day, Eugen Block walked into the restaurant with some guests and had a meal. When he had finished – the plate hadn't even been cleared yet – he came into the kitchen and we chatted about the dishes, how I had put them together, how many grams, why, how much sauce, how it was served. He said to me: "We have the same culinary philosophy, the same serving philosophy." The conversation lasted maybe half an hour, and as he was leaving the kitchen he said: "I can see a day when we will be working together."

He started coming to the restaurant more and more often, once a week, twice a week. It took him two years to find the right arguments to persuade me to come and work at the Elysée.

What did you do beforehand?

What did I do beforehand? I trained here in Hamburg, in a very traditional restaurant – or rather a club – together with Restaurant Sellmer. The club has 900 members – all men. The only female member is the Queen of England. Up to 6 p.m., only men were allowed into the club, and women were allowed in after 6 p.m., it was very traditional, the whole thing; and then I went off to do my military service. When I left the army, I had already got my first job as a commis chef. After a second commis position, I entered the world of fine dining and worked in a number of star-rated restaurants. The second or third job I took was also a very traditional restaurant in Hamburg. I started there as a commis chef and completed my training there eighteen months later. Three months after qualifying, I was still working there when I was offered the post of assistant chef. After that, things kept going up and up for me. I got to know various people and I was very much in demand at that time. Everyone wanted me and bit by bit I took on various positions: sous-chef, sous-chef, chef de cuisine, chef de cuisine, and everything went up, up, up, and, yes,



as a young man, it maybe all happened a bit too quickly. You have to try to understand everything rationally and for me cooking was the only important thing. Then it was what I was doing and how I was doing it: I had a vision of how I wanted to put dishes

together, how sauces should be cooked and so on... and everything else was just a little too much. A lot was taken off me, but some day, you naturally go into management and that came easily to me. You sit down and look for points in time – what you are doing and when, what's happening and where – and at the end of the day, we've also been very successful here at the Grand Elysée.

Where does your passion for cooking come from?

Both my parents were working at that time and so I grew up at my grandmother's. My grandfather had his own slaughterhouse and we had our own farm, with hens and geese and pigs, and we had a huge garden, where we grew everything – that's where I grew up. As a chef and butcher, my grandfather naturally understood a lot about food, he attached great importance to quality, and my grandmother had to cook for him. I picked potatoes in the garden in the daytime and then we did the cooking together. This is how I learnt where I came in the scheme of things and how flavour comes into things, and from there I started thinking more and more about cooking. One day, I went into the kitchen when I was a child, a teenager, and started cooking. And after that, it was like this: when my parents came home from work, I had the dinner ready and they seemed to like it. Nobody moaned about it anyway.





How would you describe your culinary identity, your culinary direction, your culinary philosophy?

I hate staying still, I never rest on my laurels and I never say: “Right, now you’ve accomplished something and you now can leave it be,” I always want more. And now diners are on the culinary road, they travel all over the world and naturally expect a restaurant to have a specific diversity of international flavours, so I spend my holidays all over the world. Up to 6 p.m., my wife decides what we do on holiday but after that, I take control and decide what hotels, what restaurants we are going to eat in. This is how I do things, completely open-minded, absorbing what is important for my cook’s soul and then trying, naturally, to make my own cooking philosophy more perfect, more rounded, without being overly influenced by the guests. The word ‘zeitgeist’ is always hovering somewhere over cooks’ heads; and cooks can be influenced by guests who do a lot of travelling around the world, they can get bogged down and lose their way a bit. I don’t do that. I have my own philosophy, I travel all over the world, I can talk to guests about it. That’s what happens at the end of the day. A guest asked me the other day: “Do you know how to cook a bouillabaisse?” To which I

replied: “Yes, I do.” “You know, I was in Nice and I went to the Negresco and at lunchtime we sat on the terrace and I had a bouillabaisse and drank some Rosé de Provence, it was wonderful! Can you cook it as well as that?”

I said: “No, I can’t cook it as well as that, I can cook it better.” Because I’ve also been to the Negresco; I might have been there in the afternoon, I tried the bouillabaisse as well, I know what the boys cook, but the way I see it, my bouillabaisse is much, much better. When a guest comes and says: “I ate something, cook it for me,” we can’t do it because we cooks always, always cook from the stomach. We have the food, we hold it in our hands, and when there is a symbiosis between food and cook, you get love on the plate, and love on the plate means a real treat for guests.

What does a day in the life of Chef Sikorra look like?

In the morning, I’m generally in the office by about 8:30, I do office work until ten o’clock. Then I go to purchasing, look at everything, go to production, into the restaurants, check what the boys are doing: are they any good? do they need a little motivation, do

you have to do a bit of mollycoddling? do you have to do this or that? At eleven, my head chefs arrive and I sit down with them, we have a coffee, talk about yesterday: what was good? what was maybe not quite so good? Then they go to their kitchens and do their job. From 12 to 2:30, nobody knows where I am. Even I don’t know, and then I show up in the restaurants and check out “operations”: is there a lot, a little to be done? I look at the dishes: would you change anything on the plate that was maybe good up to yesterday? Fine, but we chefs are creative, we are restless, and so I’m also on-site: when there’s a banquet, I’m in attendance, I’m in Theos, in the brasserie, in Piazza Romana. That’s how my morning looks. At 2:30 p.m. I eat with all the head chefs. We talk about what was good, what wasn’t so good. We discuss menus, banquets and what’s new, but we also talk about boxing, women and Formula 1, that’s also a part of it. From 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., there are meetings, but also conversations with guests, consultations, and from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., nobody knows where I am. Then I’m moving around the restaurants and checking on the chefs over their shoulder: what are they doing? How is their cooking? This way, I can keep perfecting my menus, my dishes that are put together and cooked here and of course constantly perfect them and make them better.

Can you describe the Grand Elysée in a few words?

Yes, it’s a five-star hotel with a very, very vibrant food culture, an uncomplicated food culture, an atmospheric food culture, and this is because we have no fear of the unknown. We are not snooty with the guests, we know what we have to do. We work in a service industry and the word service implies a willingness to serve, but it doesn’t mean we kowtow to guests. Instead, we meet our guests on an equal footing and know how to guide guests to help them.

Ok, another one, crockery. Does porcelain play a notable role in the presentation and tasting? What about “Tischkultur”?

This plays a key role today and that is the bottom line. We have developed a philosophy: what is the overall effect on guests, should the plate be laden or not? Do you need to cook three purées? For me, it’s not about that, I like these simple, uncomplicated dishes, and porcelain is not just the plate, it’s also the side dishes, and so on... The whole thing is presented together. I prefer dishes with one main component, where you cook a sauce with a great garnish, with a seasonal influence according to the time of year. Plates for serving vegetables and side dishes are also key. These must be served so that the guests can savour them without being overloaded and understand what we cooks are saying with a dish: just because we can cook well and can put dishes together does not mean that what we do will have an impact on guests. The dishes and porcelain help and underlie the overall impact on guests so that we are successful at the end of the day.

How do you see the future, for the Elysée and personally?

Well, we are very successful, we are the largest privately run hotel in Germany. We have a lot of freedom here, we can do a lot of things and the future means having an impact on guests, guiding guests on specific themes. Very few colleagues focus on what is happening with the guests, when they come to the restaurant, what happens there. It’s also about time management: how fast, how slow can we cook? And when we do a lot of things right – and there are things in all processes that need improvement – I think the future will be very bright. We have a unique philosophy here. We don’t spread ourselves too thinly and each restaurant has its own philosophy. We have five restaurants, thirty banqueting rooms, northern Germany’s largest ballroom in a hotel with capacity for twelve hundred people and another twenty-nine rooms besides. At the end of the day, we have a thousand banqueting guests a day and over nine hundred in the restaurants, and of course there are still opportunities for improvement in the future, for making things a little better. I don’t see us as wildly creative, where we spread ourselves too thinly with the sheer variety of guests. I can’t be everywhere; you can’t let the people in the kitchens overtax themselves either. And if we can optimise things a little more, if we can make our philosophy a

little better, we will continue to develop. The overall group as such just grows and grows; and each time Stephan von Bülow, our Chairman, stands on the stage at our Christmas party and presents the figures for each individual business segment, we can see that we are continually moving upwards. There is never any stagnation and we never go backwards, we’re always on the up. This shows that by talking to each other about challenges – which there are – but also about reliability, which we must have, we work together well and support each other.

grand-elysee.com



Brasserie Flum



CULINARY TRENDS

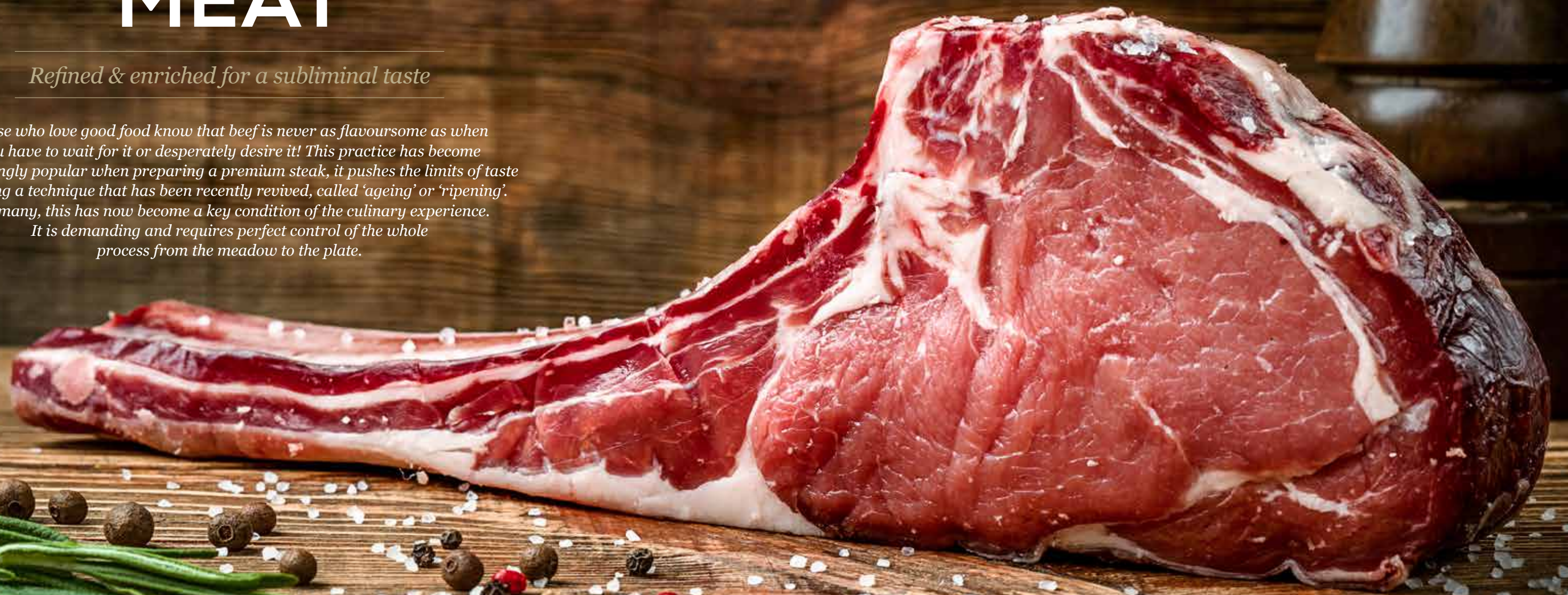
AGED MEAT

Refined & enriched for a subliminal taste

Those who love good food know that beef is never as flavoursome as when you have to wait for it or desperately desire it! This practice has become increasingly popular when preparing a premium steak, it pushes the limits of taste by using a technique that has been recently revived, called 'ageing' or 'ripening'.

For many, this has now become a key condition of the culinary experience.

It is demanding and requires perfect control of the whole process from the meadow to the plate.





Quality supersedes quantity! This approach has seduced more and more consumers of meat. The trend has spread to all western countries. However, in France, sales have fallen 12% over the past decade and there are no tangible signs of any recovery ahead. Has the vegan trend taken hold? Not necessarily, if one takes into account the latest consumer habits. Households have opted for quality over quantity and have cut down on the number of meals with meat.

One solution, to recapture the taste as well as the excellent texture, is to opt for ageing. This age-old technique now has many followers, from top chefs to amateur cooks. It is similar to the ageing methods used for wine or cheese, and provides consumers with access to foods that stand out from standard foods. However, one must have patience to achieve the right taste. For meat, it allows you to savour produce that is much tastier.

An ageing process over several weeks

All types of beef can be used for ageing; the meat can, in general, be consumed after 10 to 15 days. During this time the muscle fibres have relaxed and the fat is evenly distributed. The process has now been taken a step further and the ageing period has been extended to several weeks (commonly from three to six weeks). The objective is clear: to make the meat more tender, with more depth of flavour.

All that left is to master the know-how to achieve the desired result. Two techniques are used: dry- or wet-ageing. The latter is quicker and favoured by the food industry. It uses refrigeration and places the pieces of beef in vacuum-sealed bags. In contrast, the dry-ageing process is longer and the results are, according to aficionados, unparalleled in terms of texture and layers of flavour. It is no surprise that this technique is the one adopted by renowned butchers and chefs. The technique is very precise, requiring total control of all the variables, whether the rate of humidity, the temperature or the air circulation in the ageing cabinet. The process consists of drying the meat in the open air at a low temperature. The meat becomes dehydrated; the enzymes break down the tissue and tenderise the meat. In this way, the piece of beef loses its water and gains flavour. A crust forms on its surface, and when it is removed, it reveals a red meat with a soft texture that is easy to cut and has no fibrous tissue. The meat is succulent and has a delicious aroma.



Maturing meat

The finest experts of this technique go one step further by embellishing the meat in order to raise the taste to another level. Thus, during the ageing process, the meat can be mixed with herbs or placed in a cloth soaked in whiskey.

Success of ageing depends on the quality of the meat

The preparation of the meat using this technique is influenced by one major factor: the choice of cut. Experts in the meat ageing process are all in agreement over this point. The quality of the meat begins outside in the fields. In order to achieve a result at the height of your expectations, the animal should have lived a good life. This means no stress, with a diet based on fodder or grass to provide exceptional meat that is fully adapted to the process of ripening. The animal must also have a suitably high fat content to ensure the transformation.

The breed is the other key factor. Charolais and Salers (France), Wagyu (Japan), Angus (native to Scotland or the USA) or Rouge des Flandres (Belgium) are some of the most sought after for their beef chops, rib-eye, sirloin or T-bone. It is important to ensure that the meat is on the bone to have pieces which already carry taste. The flavour varies depending on the label and the provenance of the animal.

Fashion and taste rub shoulders!

For the consumer, the explosion of taste comes at a cost. Purchased at the butcher's or in the restaurant, this type of meat is more expensive. Due to the hype, you might say! Not necessarily, even if we must admit that, as with most trends, many people have jumped on the bandwagon. However, the search for authenticity and the desire to return to the origins of food are sufficient to explain the success of this type of meat preparation, where the taste not the quantity is the key. As such, food lovers are head over heels for the quality of these pieces of aged meat. Meat has re-discovered its origins; connoisseurs point to its nutty flavour that touches upon perfection, while the fat is just like butter.



The finest restaurants have also contributed to this craze by serving their customers new dishes. Some dining establishments have made it their speciality, such as la Table du boucher in Mons (Belgium) or the Moelleuses & Persillées restaurant in Bordeaux. Some of the top butchers across the globe have also jumped on the ageing bandwagon! Yves-Marie Le Bourdonnec, Hugo Desnoyer and Hendrik Dierendonck, to name but a few, have each developed their own ageing methods, working the meat with the precision of a goldsmith. There is no need to shout it from the rooftops to attract customers. This ripened meat reaches peaks of delicacy that is able to seduce the palate.

Once on the plate, these pieces of beef reveal their aroma. The star of the meal is clearly this ripened piece of meat either grilled or fried in butter, with just a hint of salt. Served with a side salad, the tasting can begin; there's no need for any further presentation or culinary distractions. For the perfect union, opt for a wine with body and character - such as a Médoc, Bourgogne, or the wines from the north of the Rhône valley (Syrah), as well as a Spanish or Italian wine. More than a fad, aged meat represents a trend, capturing a certain demand for more subtle quality - the sign of a rediscovered culinary pleasure. A pleasant return to our roots that has captured the imagination of foodies... It's just a question of taste!





HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

HOSTELLERIE BÉRARD & SPA

Lavish cuisine in the heart of Provence

Just a short walk from Bandol, on the Mediterranean coast, is the Hostellerie Bérard & Spa, a charming hotel in an enchanting location. The complex, which opened over fifty years ago, is nestled in the Provence (France) countryside.

Located at the heart of the terroir, the setting is breath-taking and offers holidaymakers the opportunity to dip their toes in the water, take advantage of the outstanding gastronomic delicacies or relax in the spa area of the hotel.



Interview

JEAN-FRANÇOIS BÉRARD

THE CHEF OF THE KITCHENS

The hotel offers two creative culinary experiences, a Michelin-starred gastronomic restaurant and a bistro. In both eateries, local dishes are truly honoured with seasonal products that capture the ambiance of Provence. An emotional experience is guaranteed with each meal. Guests can enjoy a culinary treat while savouring the moment.



Dining room



You promote the use of fresh produce from the terroir - which produce do you like to work with?

I do not have a preferred product. I create my dishes by using what the surrounding natural environment has to offer: a red mullet from La Ciotat, vegetables from our plot, herbs from our garden, figs from the Solliès, veal from Brignoles... the list goes on! You don't have to go too far to appreciate that our region is teeming with magnificent produce. These products allow me to develop an authentic, hearty, gourmet cuisine which, above all, is local and seasonal.

In fact, I draw inspiration from the heart of Provence and use my great-grandmother's recipes, which I put on the agenda. All you need is a fresh fish plucked out of the sea that morning in Sanary, a refreshing, tasty jus and two or three herbs. I want to create dishes filled with emotion and texture, cooked to perfection with perfectly chilled vegetables, without forgetting the jus - which is the essence of the dish.

Could you please describe your signature dish and latest creations?

Without a doubt, it has to be langoustine prepared with two different techniques. One part is made with Menton lemon tartare, the other with crispy tempura with cereals and a delicate green apple jelly for acidity, a cream of celery as a counter-balance to the sweetness, a whipped cream using traditional mustard, a quenelle of caviar, olive oil and cereal crisps. This dish helped me obtain my first Michelin star!

With my team, we also prepare suckling lamb from Provence. The saddle is stuffed with garlic purée and savory, the shoulder is coated in an Espelette pepper confit, the rack is prepared in persillade and the breast with offal confit, crushed lemon and black olives.



Do aesthetics play a role when you showcase these dishes? How does RAK Porcelain blend into your environment?

Traditionally, one is visually drawn to the plate. We tend to 'taste' with our eyes. If the plate is too full it gives a bad impression, even before you get a chance to taste the food. Therefore, you have to find a balance between harmony and aesthetics. Each and every day, I work on presentation with my team. With the energy and creativity of each team member, we are able to create breathtaking dishes by simply allowing our imagination to guide us. RAK Porcelain has helped us in this respect. The sophisticated aspect of their collections corresponds perfectly to the image of our hotel, leaving enough space for us to showcase our culinary creations.

You have two different dining options at your hotel. Why do you offer your guests this choice?

Indeed, our guests have the option to choose between a gastronomic restaurant and a bistro. The gastronomic restaurant characterises the image of the establishment. It has to offer three-course menus or more... In the restaurant, you can savour exceptional produce such as foie gras, truffles, veal sweetbreads, sole and turbot. The décor is refined and captures the style of the South, similar to the bygone days of my grandparents. Its ambiance reflects Provençal charm which perfectly captures the spirit of the hotel.

The bistro allows guests to enjoy fresh and seasonal produce at a competitive price, while upholding the standards of a gastronomic restaurant. It is a cosy location where people can savour their food and not worry if they are talking loudly. Everyone must feel relaxed, just like at home.

Actually, I want all the guests to be at ease in both restaurants. We cater to all types of clientele: epicureans, connoisseurs, people who take pleasure in indulging in good food. Like all customers, they are looking for an emotional experience - they want to be surprised each time their spoon touches their lips!



"I have OCD - obsessive culinary disorder" says Jean-François Bérard (head chef at the Hostellerie restaurants), jokingly. This Michelin-starred chef has an unbridled passion for cooking which dates back to his childhood. Alongside his father, René Bérard, he learned the basics of Provençal gastronomy which, to this day, still inspires his culinary creations and choice of products. Actually, besides cooking, his other passion lies in his fruit and vegetable garden. He picks seasonal vegetables and herbs that allow him to create dishes with Mediterranean flavours. As the head chef of the two restaurants at the Hostellerie Bérard, his greatest pleasure was receiving his first Michelin star in 2006, just two years after first setting foot in the kitchen. Since then, he has strived to serve authentic recipes on a daily basis where flavour and creativity are the order of the day!

As a Michelin-starred chef, how do you manage your own and your team's mornings?

Each morning at 7.00 a.m., I go to the market in Sanary-sur-Mer. Then I collect produce from my fruit and vegetable garden. I pick herbs and vegetables depending on the seasonal offerings and the number of guests in the restaurants. At 9.00 a.m. I meet my team in the kitchen for the morning briefing and to plan for the day ahead. We check the deliveries and freshness of the products brought by our suppliers. At midday, we start serving...

My team is made up of professionals with extensive experience. I also instil in them a certain level of savoir-faire and motivation. Moreover, we all participate in the development of my culinary creations.



HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

SCHLOSS ELMAU

The Schloss Elmau Experience

Schloss Elmau lies in a unique location, above Klais in the municipality of Krün, within the Bavarian district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. At the foot of the Wetterstein mountains, some 100 km south of Munich and at 1,000 m above sea level, guests can enjoy complete seclusion in idyllic natural surroundings. The luxury hotel can only be reached via a private toll road.





Restaurant "La Salle"

The story in a nutshell:

Schloss Elmau lies in a unique location, above Klais in the municipality of Krün, within the Bavarian district of Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

At the foot of the Wetterstein mountains, some 100 km south of Munich and at 1,000 m above sea level, guests can enjoy complete seclusion in idyllic natural surroundings. The luxury hotel can only be reached via a private toll road.

Schloss Elmau was built between 1914 and 1916 by philosopher and theologian Dr Johannes Müller (1864–1949), with financial assistance from Elsa, Countess of Waldersee, as a “space for personal and communal life.” The architect was his brother-in-law Carlo Sattler. Prince Max von Baden, who described Johannes Müller as his spiritual guide and sought his advice before making any decision, presided over the opening of Schloss Elmau in 1916. Guests at Schloss Elmau were encouraged to put aside their egos, transcend self-awareness and directly experience “divine reality” by embracing the silence of nature, or through classical music and dancing.

In 1945, following the end of the war, Schloss Elmau was requisitioned by the US army and used as a prison camp for the occupants of a German military hospital. Later it served as a winter military training school. In 1951, Johannes Müller’s heirs leased Schloss Elmau from the Office for Restitution. Schloss Elmau initially reopened with 60 rooms during Christmas 1951, and subsequently with 150 rooms during Pentecost 1952, under the management of Bernhard Müller-Elmau and Sieglinde Mesirca (née Müller). Cultural life at Schloss Elmau returned and, to this day, artists consider it a mecca and a cultural and political meeting place.

In 2007, after 14 months of construction and planning work following a devastating fire, Christoph Sattler and Dietmar Mueller-Elmau took the opportunity to transform Schloss Elmau and reopen it as a Luxury Spa & Cultural Hideaway and a member of the Leading Hotels of the World. It has since been recognised many times over as one of the world’s finest 5-star superior spa hotels.

The Schloss Elmau Retreat was added in 2015, creating an architectural contrast. As a luxury spa retreat and cultural hideaway, Schloss Elmau is now also secularised and features different architectural elements. Guests can choose between two different hotels, each of which complements the offering of the other. The G7 summit was held at Schloss Elmau on 7 and 8 June 2015 with heads of state and government from the US, Canada, Japan, France, United Kingdom, Italy and Germany.



Family Spa



Thanks to the negotiating skills of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the aim of achieving the complete decarbonisation of industrial societies was agreed for the first time, laying the groundwork for the Paris climate agreement. Greenpeace praised the summit on Twitter with the message “Elmau delivered.”

Culinary offer at the Schloss Elmau Hotel: a unique variety

Luce D’Oro

The restaurant is run by Michelin-starred chef Christoph Rainer. His cooking style has its roots in French cuisine but mixes in eastern flavours for a light contemporary twist.

Fidelio

The High Thai restaurant, run by Virat and Vilai Kanjan, offers authentic Thai cuisine and is often referred to as the heart of Elmau. This gourmet temple was awarded 15 Gault Millau points in 2019.

La Salle

The world is welcomed into Schloss Elmau in a celebration of international themes and live cooking buffets. For breakfast, lunch with the family or an enjoyable evening, no wish is left unfulfilled at La Salle.

Kaminstüberl

Fondue-Restaurant

Thanks to its fantastic Chinese fondue or perfect cheese fondue, the Kaminstüberl restaurant is incredibly popular even in the summer months.

Tutto Mondo & Summit

At the family restaurant with views of the Wetterstein mountains, guests can indulge in Mediterranean dishes and steaks. 14 Gault Millau points in 2019 for chef de cuisine Stefan Haverkamper.



Ananda & Spa Lounges

An oasis of perfect calm, for adults over 16 only, for breakfast or light lunch buffet with dishes changing daily.



Ganesha Restaurant & Spa

Enjoyment and wellness for the whole family.



Tea Lounge

A cosmopolitan atmosphere with an open fire. Teas from all over the world. Fresh cakes and snacks. Separate winter garden. Open or closed. Protected or covered terrace. Spectacular views. Guests meet here.



Interview

DIETMAR MÜLLER-ELMAU

THE MOST DIFFICULT GUEST AT SCHLOSS ELMAU

Mr Müller-Elmau, you have been back in Elmau for 11 years, but before that you were a very successful businessman in the IT sector. Do you see yourself as a hotelier or as an entrepreneur?

I don't see myself as either – I'm a developer. I first developed hotel software and have now built and developed a hotel. A hotel that previously existed, burnt down and of which I have now rebuilt 80%. Formally, I'm managing director of the hotel, but I don't have the best understanding of hotel management, so I'm more like the hotel's most difficult guest and I have excellent people who run the hotel.



Family Spa

Let's talk about the elephant. How did you come to choose this symbol? A stag might seem more likely.

It was pure chance. I was looking for linen fabrics and went into a store in London. I found the fabric I needed there – it felt wonderful and there was an elephant on it. And I thought the elephant was a beautiful symbol of discernment and memory. In India, you can't enter a temple if you don't have these two abilities as a person. These two characteristics make a person. I decided to use this fabric everywhere – on the beds, pillows and as the sofa fabric. The elephant is therefore omnipresent and dominates, but there are also areas where it doesn't appear. The company that created the design is called Andrew Martin. The factory is in India and produces hundreds of metres of fabric for us every month. The fabric is the most

purchased item at Schloss Elmau and we are the largest Andrew Martin dealer. Our collaboration has provided the factory in India with a real boost. Andrew Martin had actually been considering closing the factory. The elephant is incredibly popular with our guests: everyone from the President of the United States to our carpenter wants this elephant! It has taken on a life of its own and become a part of Schloss Elmau. Almost every guest asks me "why the elephant?" If we'd used a stag, no one would be asking me that. I like India and its bold colours, and finding the fabric was a stroke of luck.



“The elephant is a beautiful symbol of discernment and memory. These two characteristics make a person.”

Is it an Indian elephant?

No, not at all. The Indian elephant-headed god Ganesha would be depicted sitting in front of a temple. His trunk would be pointing downward, and he would have a more contemplative pose. This one is Andrew Martin's own creation.

The interior architecture is very close to your heart. How much input do you have?

It's completely in my hands. I am responsible for all of the interior design and I also have a decisive influence over the architecture as a whole. The buildings are a project overseen by myself and my cousin, Munich-based architect Christoph Sattler. The buildings are our joint project. We chat and discuss the options, and we don't usually agree. In the end, we find a compromise, we both make concessions, because we don't get everything we want. It is precisely this compromise in the architecture that makes it so pleasing. People are not all the same. As a result, Elmau has a very homely character, because it is not perfect. It is coherent in its inconsistency, so people feel comfortable here.

Our guests are a very diverse group and come from all over the world. It's incredible that so many people from such different cultures and backgrounds appreciate it. I think that the more individual the architecture is, the more people like it. After all, each person is an individualist. Looking back, I can see that the recipe for success at Schloss Elmau was that, quite egotistically, I built it for myself and didn't try to design it to suit as many people as possible. That would have made it anonymous. Schloss Elmau does not have an anonymous or commercial hotel atmosphere – it is designed for living.

You have hold of the reins when it comes to the architecture. To what extent do you also have a say in the cuisine?

As far as the culinary concept is concerned, of course I have my own preferences. I spend a lot of time talking with my people, just like with the architects. It's always a dialogue. Everything that contributes to the ambience, from the napkins to the crockery, needs to suit Schloss Elmau and I need to like it. RAK Porcelain is a very good fit at Elmau. I like the beautiful colours and the individual shapes. We have some here, as well as in my hotel in Berlin. To answer your question, everything that the guest sees and hears needs to be checked with me. I don't decide what goes on the menu.

Were you born and raised at the castle?

Yes, I was born at Schloss Elmau and grew up in a house nearby. I actually don't like referring to it as a castle. Although "Schloss" means "castle", it was only given the name because it has a tower. To me, it's more like a monastic building. I'm not sure how else to put it. "Schloss" is just a name.

What is your earliest memory of Schloss Elmau?

It's of the high ceilings and the spaciousness of the property. It makes a very strong impression on a child. Actually, you become spoiled by it because you can't bear confined spaces. My grandfather's brother-in-law was an architect and designed the layout more than a century ago. Schloss Elmau was not built as a luxury hotel – it had another purpose. Everything had a simple, minimalist design, but from the very start it had a spacious elegance and openness. When I rebuilt it, I wanted it to be even more spacious. Fewer rooms, but each one is bigger. The spa areas and bookshop were a new addition.

What is your vision for Schloss Elmau? Are you considering other locations internationally where you could repeat this concept?

We opened the Orania in Berlin last year, which is based on the Elmau concept. We not only copied the style and the culinary concept, but also reproduced the cultural offering. We don't just want to provide our guests with a beautiful environment and something good to eat, we also want to offer them something for the mind. We call it "food for thought." At Schloss Elmau, we have several libraries and host around 220 concerts each year with the most famous musicians, both classical and jazz. We do it all for art and culture. Our Cultural Hideaway is the only one of its kind in the world. It's not easily copied. The Cultural Hideaway has grown over the course of more than 100 years based on the passion for music in our family. We are basically a cultural business with a hotel, spa and restaurants attached. If we could find a location with a landscape as beautiful as that at Schloss Elmau and yet still centrally located, I could imagine building another hotel. I travel all over the world, but I'm yet to find such a place. I've just returned from a trip to China and Japan.

What do you consider the most exciting development in the hotel industry?

For me, the most exciting development is that it is much more difficult to find staff than it is to find guests. If you have a good product and you are a good host, guests are easy to find. But always having enough staff is difficult. We are a relatively isolated country; unfortunately it wasn't previously possible to recruit our staff from all over the world and there is a severe skills shortage. Hopefully the immigration law will rectify this issue. We need to be able to more easily employ workers from Indonesia, China, Japan, India, America and so on. Hopefully Germany is opening its doors. On the other hand, we also need to offer employees the same quality of life as our guests.





In the past, money was seen as “compensation” for work done but money is not enough any more. We need to offer leisure opportunities, apartments, etc. that are on a par with those enjoyed by hotel guests. There is an egalitarian relationship between staff and hotel guests. To achieve this, you need a management team that does not treat employees simply as subordinates. Some hotels are still very patriarchal but that doesn’t work these days. We need to provide more training. We wouldn’t be anywhere today without developing our own talent. And, last but not least, you need to offer young people an international network. Young employees want to travel, so we also promote international exchange. As a hotel, we are always integrating other cultures. Hospitality and a welcoming approach to other cultures are fundamental to our existence and we in the hotel industry need to reflect this.

What effect did the 2015 G7 summit have in terms of international awareness?

The G7 summit mostly gained attention within Germany. Internationally, it is less significant, except in the country in which it is held. The German media reported around the clock, there was a brief report on CNN, and that was it. The picture of Merkel and Obama on the bench is one of the photos of the century though and will be a lasting memory. It is in Obama’s book and will be in the book about Merkel. It’s a symbol of German-US politics of the time. If I’m talking to a guest about G7, their reaction is always the same: “Oh yes, the bench.” The image appeared on the front page of the 100 largest newspapers around the world that day.

Do you have a role model?

I have so many role models. But they are all unattainable. There are so many great people in the world and you ask yourself what you are actually doing with your time. Some can already play the piano perfectly at the age of 14 and are great artists, others are great politicians by the age of 20. They may not be role models as such, but there are so many people who inspire me. I admire the chancellor. She has an immense curiosity, openness and a sharp mind. She exercises considered judgement and recall. Incredible. That doesn’t mean that I always agree with what she does, but the way she does it is admirable. Mandela is great, Gandhi, Obama, and Willi Brandt too. There are always characteristics that I don’t share, but there is no such thing as perfect human so there’s also no perfect role model.



What is the most difficult decision you have ever made?

There have been many difficult decisions in my life. Including decisions I needed to make for family or financial reasons. The important thing is to make the decision and I’ve always done that. It is a privilege to be able to decide, as it means you have freedom of choice. It is not the decision itself, but implementing the decision that is difficult. For example, the decision to rebuild Schloss Elmau was not difficult but the rebuilding itself certainly was. Just as it’s easy to choose a life partner but living together can be very challenging.

After I graduated, I decided not to stay at Schloss Elmau. That decision may have seemed difficult to outsiders, but for me it was very easy to make, it was a relief. In the end, it was an enormous step to leave my roots. Selling my software company was also not a difficult decision: I never actually wanted to develop software, just like I never wanted to enter the hotel industry. I basically always do what I don’t want to. It is always chance.

“RAK Porcelain is a very good fit at Elmau. I like the beautiful colours and the individual shapes.”

Did you have a dream job as a child?

I am fascinated by astronomy and astrophysics, anything to do with space. What I like about science is that each question you answer raises new questions. Philosophers are always seeking answers but scientists are always looking for new questions. I find that much more interesting. I studied philosophy because I wasn’t good enough at maths and physics. Once a year, we host a seminar of the world’s most important mathematicians here at Schloss Elmau. I admire these people who address abstract problems that have remained unsolved for centuries. No sooner have they answered a question, they find a new problem. I find it fascinating.

It would also be a dream to be a great artist. For me, there is nothing more amazing than music.

Is that still a goal? You have followed very different paths in your professional life so far.

You only become a great pianist by starting at the age of four and putting your heart and soul into it. I was too lazy as a child. If I regret one thing, it would be that my parents didn’t force me to practise regularly. I also didn’t force my children and I knew they would criticise me for it. I regret not being able to play an instrument perfectly.

What have you learnt from your children?

You learn from children every day. They see the world through different eyes. They are much more critical but also much more relaxed. They have a different perspective. I share my children’s interest in what’s new or different. They have also taught me the courage and openness with which they travel the world.

What annoys you?

I get annoyed by carelessness, thoughtlessness and disrespect. I can’t accept that.

What drives you?

Making the best of every situation. Getting involved. I’m very politically engaged. Freedom drives me. I think that if you’re lucky enough to be born into an open society where you can thrive, you have an obligation to contribute to giving others the same opportunities. This hotel is my small contribution. You can enjoy maximum freedom here. Not only artists from around the world, but also politicians come to Elmau. Elmau is a meeting point for global politics and offers a setting for people to meet, argue and debate in a relaxed environment. That was essential for the breakthrough achieved at the G7 summit, which subsequently led to the Paris climate agreement. Difficult negotiations require a relaxed location that everyone is happy with. Then you already have one thing in common. Common ground unites us and makes the conversation easier when it comes to making difficult decisions. I am happy to invite such leaders to Elmau, making Elmau not just a luxury hotel, but a stage for world politics.

schloss-elmau.de



Spa Badehaus



Interview

MARIO CORTI

CULINARY DIRECTOR AT SCHLOSS ELMAU

“We work very closely with RAK.”



Mr Corti, how long have you been at Schloss Elmau?

It has been eight years now. I joined as executive chef, having previously spent 10 years with the Mandarin Oriental hotel group in Munich, Macao, Singapore and Hong Kong. I came to Elmau by chance – the hotel had just been renovated and rebuilt at the time. For me, playing a part in developing the hotel’s culinary concept was a very exciting challenge.

So you were involved from the start?

Not quite, but it was in 2010/11 when the hotel became really famous, including internationally, and started receiving awards. We had the opportunity to pave the way for the culinary style that Schloss Elmau offers today. It’s a great feeling and makes me extremely proud.

How would you describe the culinary concept at Schloss Elmau?

The concept at Schloss Elmau is the only one of its kind in Europe. In Asia and the Middle East, you can find hotels with lots of restaurants, but at Schloss Elmau we have created something that doesn’t exist anywhere else in Europe. Most of all in terms of the variety on offer. You have to remember that we have “only” 160 rooms but we have eight restaurants, five of which operate independently. We want every restaurant to be authentic in its own way. From our gourmet Thai restaurant and our Michelin-starred restaurant, to our buffet restaurant with live cooking, as you would find in Asia in particular. These authentic restaurants provide guests with an incredibly diverse range of options. You could stay here for a week and discover a new culinary experience every day. That’s how I would describe the culinary concept.

What will be next? How do you want to further develop the concept?

It is important to continuously develop, especially since we have a lot of regular guests here at Schloss Elmau. I see the culinary concept as something fluid that is continually evolving, and not as a plan that needs to be laid out step by step. For example, the Thai restaurant came about as the result of a spontaneous idea four years ago. We brought a team over from Bangkok to implement the idea and the restaurant is fantastically popular. New concepts come from a mixture of our team’s own ideas and what our guests tell us – we pay attention to what our guests want. After all, our guests come from all over the world and also visit restaurants around the globe.

Is it difficult to include new chefs who are already very successful in the concept?

How much input do they have?

It is not difficult to include a good, successful chef in the overall concept. Take Christoph Rainer, who before coming to Schloss Elmau had already held two stars for a number of years. When I bring someone

like him to Elmau, I need to make sure that he has the structure and conditions to allow him to succeed. Success is never one-sided – we expect him to be successful but we also have to lay the foundations. My job as culinary director is to make sure that the right teams and resources are available. Success ultimately has to be a team effort, and of course we hope that Elmau will receive its second star in 2019.

How much input do you have in the tableware used?

Having the right tableware is very important. I don’t make unilateral decisions though – I involve the F&B team as well as Mr Müller-Elmau and our director when choosing new crockery or cutlery. It is important to me that as many people as possible can offer their opinion. Everyone has their own taste and if this fits the overall concept at Schloss Elmau, it ultimately leads to this unique creative atmosphere. We work with numerous well-known suppliers.



How did the collaboration with RAK come about?

We became aware of RAK about two years ago. We are always on the lookout for new ideas and we got talking during a networking event. We now work very closely together and we are using a full banqueting range. Our RAK porcelain was used for a major political event held at Schloss Elmau this week. We are very satisfied – we have a good dialogue and commitments are honoured, which is very important to us.

How do you deal with the issue of the shortage of skilled workers? Is it an issue at all in this stunning location?

The shortage of skilled workers is a major issue around the world. It’s something we also have to deal with, now more than ever before. However, it’s a high-level concern. We still have plenty of young people coming to us with enthusiasm for the industry because we have a good reputation, including internationally. Perhaps the rural location is also an advantage. Life in the cities has become so expensive that young people who have just finished their education can simply no longer afford to build a life there. The skills shortage in the hotel industry is a serious issue. We want to remedy the situation by training as many young people as possible and then keeping them on at Schloss Elmau for at least a year. That’s our aim and we succeed most of the time. We are continually recruiting young people, and we have a constant presence at hotel

management schools and trade fairs. We will only be able to maintain our high standards if we are able to attract dedicated people. The success of any hotel is based on a good team. That is quite clear.

How do you see Schloss Elmau in 2030?

The development of a hotel like Schloss Elmau depends heavily on the political conditions. I hope that we will have good culinary professionals from abroad, including from outside of Europe, from Japan, Korea, Peru and more. That’s very difficult at the moment. Working with professionals from all over the world helps our staff to improve. They learn more from one another every day, and that’s what we need at Elmau. Our guests expect it from us. The demand from our guests is there. A guest travelling to London will find a culinary paradise of authentic restaurants. In Germany, it’s still difficult to find a really good Chinese or Japanese restaurant, not because the people don’t want to work in Germany, but because they can’t get a work permit. We’re thwarting our own ambitions.

What drives you?

My main motivation is enjoyment of my work. We have a great environment here and an excellent team headed up by Mr Müller-Elmau, which is highly motivating. I’m generally not an ill-tempered person – I never have been. Our job is far too demanding to make life even more difficult with a bad mood. It’s the profession itself that drives me. We work

with exquisite produce and fine porcelain, we have wonderful guests and we are successful as a hotel and as a team. I think we are doing everything right.

Where do you go to recharge your batteries?

Taking a break to recharge is important. I have a great little family. They give me energy, and of course the area is ideal. It is perfect for leisure activities, which I



can also enjoy with my family. Even when work takes up a lot of time and attention, you also get a lot back in return.

schloss-elmau.de





CULINARY TRENDS

IS CHOCOLATE THE RISING STAR OF GASTRONOMY?

An invitation to subtle pleasures

Subtle sweetness or raw pleasure, chocolate easily has pride of place in our kitchens. However, this trend is gaining ground outside of gastronomy. For some chefs, chocolate is approaching omnipresence in their creations; they celebrate it by combining it with both sweet and savoury food. It is a union that can be adapted according to each individual's creative spirit.

The mere mention of chocolate is interpreted as an invitation to sample its unique flavour, while the delight of working with chocolate is more than just a guilty pleasure! From cocoa bean to the plate, finding the perfect food combination is a delicate exercise, requiring particular skill. There are many varieties,

each one with a specific taste that contributes to raising a dish towards a state of excellence. In other words, this noble food has the virtues of a virtually magical ingredient. Currently a real trend in culinary circles, incorporating chocolate into dishes is not a novelty. Used in its rustic form, cocoa was commonly utilised

in various Mexican, Italian and Spanish dishes. During the time of the Aztecs and Mayans, it was used as a spice and delicately sprinkled over food. Today, it is also used as a substitute food to replace salt, but must be added at the end of the cooking process.



A full appreciation of its multifaceted assets has become an art form in which the major chocolate houses excel. Their mission involves detecting the 'right' bean in order to draw specific flavours, while in the kitchen, the work of blending it with other flavours begins. However, this process differs, depending on the country. Trends and tasting habits are also factors which are taken into consideration. While dark chocolate has made a name for itself in France, milk chocolate is particularly popular in Japan and Switzerland, with sweet and smooth flavours being favoured in Belgium. There is a constant search for new flavours, to the point of creating spring-summer and autumn-winter collections. Ranking equal to fashion, chocolate has revealed its precious status, between softness and robustness.

Sweetness, the foundation of chocolate creations

For all enthusiasts, talking about chocolate conjures images of smooth and sweet pleasures. From a piece of chocolate to a gourmet dessert, its particular taste has unanimous appeal. Thierry Marx, now the head chef at Le Jules Verne restaurant, located on the first floor of the Eiffel Tower, provides an explanation which perfectly captures the emotion evoked by chocolate: "It is the treat of our childhood, offering relief from stress and complex flavours." This encapsulates the subtlety of the food, which nevertheless requires



a particular level of expertise to reach the summits. In addition to searching for the ultimate match made in heaven, his preparation techniques are precise and involve working at the ideal temperature. This type of approach has to be mastered.

If chocolate cake or moelleux are ever-present on the menu at the most prestigious restaurants, its aroma is also appreciated in the confection of unique dishes for a truly unforgettable tasting experience. Cédric Grolet, elected the best pastry chef in the world in 2017 and pastry chef at the Parisian palace hotel Le Meurice, has highlighted it in an iconic dessert which has become his signature dish: the hazelnut. The milk chocolate, placed in thin layers, covers a hazelnut ganache which itself contains a soft biscuit, a praline-hazelnut insert and a caramel fondant. A delightful gourmet dessert served for a taste of pure pleasure.

David Casiez, the new pastry chef at La Table du Clos in France, is also considered an artist in the way he skilfully creates chocolate desserts. You just have to taste his smoked chocolate which is carefully worked like salmon to be convinced! The flavours are taken to a higher level, offering new pleasures.

Savoury, the latest field of experimentation

For chocolate experts, there is only one small step between the art of dessert and a full menu. It is true that there are endless challenges to overcome in terms of preparation and experimentation. Even though the use of this ingredient in savoury dishes has become fashionable in recent times, combining different foods with different beans opens the door to many more culinary opportunities.

Pierre Caillet, Meilleur Ouvrier de France (Best Craftsman in France) and Michelin-starred chef at Le Bec restaurant in Cauchois Valmont, France, exploits this freedom and still raises eyebrows. He has also made chocolate his secret weapon, as he recently revealed in an interview*: "In the kitchen,



I create all types of dishes and chocolate was simply a natural extension of what I do." During the last culinary Olympics, he prepared a unique and original dish by serving a small chocolate shell. The sweet casing housed a ganache mixed with watercress. This delivered a herbaceous note approaching matcha tea, while the chocolate added a sweet and fragrant touch.



To achieve this result, the chef selected a product from Papua New Guinea with 70% cocoa and a strong aroma.

Regular dishes have also been adapted to showcase chocolate aromas. Adding a little chocolate to bread will enhance the flavour of foie gras. Its addition to wine sauces increases the taste of pickled or marinated game birds. Its influence also extends to fish, in particular the recipe for European sea bass with a chocolate and lemon sauce. This combination leads to an explosion of flavours, by blending the sweet accent with the citrus acidity.

The alliance of bitterness and sweetness

With its ability to enhance the level of flavour, the choice of chocolate is essential, with chefs having a marked preference for 70% cocoa. The level of bitterness can be exploited depending on the dish being prepared. Some ingredients, like mint or basil, combine naturally. Fruit has similar qualities. This composition enhances the



topping as much as the food itself, each ingredient using the characteristics of the other to create a gentle blend in cooking.

Chocolate and its aroma, born out of a small bean, has revealed a plethora of culinary qualities. Its fine scented nib instantly transports foodies to a whole new level of gastronomic experience. It is a flavour that subtly adapts to all palates, meandering between the world of fantasy and the extraordinary.

* Article published in the newspaper Paris Normandie – December 2018





RAK AROUND THE WORLD

APDIKT

A restaurant unlike any other

The flavour and originality of a dish are often a reflection of the creative spirit of the chef who concocted it. To say the least, Apdikt follows this orientation to the letter. The restaurant, located at the heart of Steinfort, in Luxembourg, is as unique as its owner.



Interview

MATHIEU VAN WETTEREN

OWNER AND CHIEF OF THE RESTAURANT APDIKT

„A union adaptable to the creative spirit in everyone.“

Cooking is first and foremost a story of passion. Does this phrase sum you up?

Yes, it's true, it's a passion. Once I started in this job, I never left it. This world fascinates me. It represents me well. Although I'm normally pretty straight-laced, I have my mad moments. And these two elements work together very well. Cooking helps me channel my energy. I can work for hours and hours while expressing my creativity in full.

Can you tell us about your restaurant? The atmosphere is quite unusual...

It's a former pharmacy. It went well with the concept of sustenance because food is the best medicine. So we endeavoured to keep the atmosphere. I like the old-fashioned style.



The establishment has a very distinctive history. It was once a pharmacy, and the new owner, Mathieu Van Wetteren, wanted to retain its character. Customers will first be surprised, and then rapidly won over. Customers is perhaps not the right word – guests would be more appropriate. From the moment they take their place at the table, the thirty-odd people present each night embark on a journey to a realm of flavours, with a single menu.

“Every evening, I take my customers on a voyage.” This is how Mathieu Van Wetteren likes to define the service offered at Apdikt. The chef, who earned his stripes at top-class restaurants, has been at the helm of his own establishment for the last two years. This has given him the opportunity to do exactly what he wanted: create his own cuisine. It's working, as the place is full every night of the week. A six-course menu is offered to just thirty or so customers, all of whom are delighted to take part in the feast unfolding before their eyes. The procession of dishes starts, with each mouthful heartily savoured. For Mathieu Van Wetteren, cooking is something that is lived as much as tasted. We met with this young and uncommon chef...



This unique aspect of the place is also reflected in your menu. You offer a single menu – a daring choice...

That's for sure! Everyone advised me against it. But I tend to do what I'm asked not to do. It's my rebellious side coming out (laughs). With this choice, I know exactly where I'm going. The main idea was above all to ensure absolute freshness for my customers. The produce arrives in the morning, we work on it during the day and in the evening it's plated up. This is what happens every day.

How do the customers react?

I have to admit that it was quite complicated at first. When I opened my doors, people were surprised, but they quickly got used to it. Now, because we're known, people come to the restaurant knowing exactly what they're getting. I opted for originality with this menu. I like being different, and at Apdikt we aim to be different from other restaurants. This is what pushes me to surpass myself every time. I have the opportunity to really create something that is not available anywhere else. So far, I've been able to make great dishes with very little. In my restaurant, you won't get caviar, you won't eat foie gras, you won't get any of the classics of high gastronomy. For me, this is what distinguishes a great chef. You need to be thinking constantly.

What produce do you like to work with?

What dish best represents you?

Fish. That's my thing. I don't have a signature dish, I'm still a young chef, I'm not making that claim. However, I love preparing scallop sashimi with yuzu vinaigrette and pickled cucumbers. All with my personal touch, which consists of adding a million elements.

Your restaurant has another original feature: you have an open kitchen. Why did you make this choice?

Firstly, it was to channel the dragon inside me, which has worked very well (laughs). It helps me keep my cool sometimes. But it was also to show complete transparency to our customers. I have absolutely nothing to hide. That's the way it works. In fact, I'm so in love with what I do that once I'm on a roll, I just go with it. There could be 30 or 300,000 covers, when I'm on a roll, I'm on my own. The customers are generally fascinated. One of them told my head waiter: “you can see he's doing it for himself”. Clearly, I do it for me! Plus, with the single menu, I know



exactly where I'm going, which means the kitchen is organised, without any shouting or stress. We wait for everyone to get on board and then I take them on a voyage for three and a half hours. Then I bring them back to port and say “see you soon”...

The restaurant is only open in the evening. Why?

So I can do my work thoroughly and meticulously. I'm a perfectionist. I also want the dishes to be just as I imagine them. To do this, I need time to prepare. We start in the morning at 10am and it's a race until 7pm. Including all sittings, we average 160 dishes a day. So the set-up work is huge.

Finally, you have worked in many top-class restaurants. Is it your ambition to earn a star?

If our paths meet, I'd be delighted, but I'll still be the boss, that's clear! If I had to have an aim, it would be to have two stars.

restaurantapdikt.lu





RAK AROUND THE WORLD

WINE BAR GEORGE

A Wine and Food Adventureland in Disney Springs

When you first enter Wine Bar George in Disney Springs at Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, you immediately sense that something is different – that this is a different kind of restaurant. First, you are in the only Master Sommelier-led wine bar in Florida. Second, the first space you encounter is the bar area, so you are obviously in a beverage-driven location.



"You're not in a restaurant just like the others."

"Wine and food masterfully paired"



From the large displays of both wine and wine glassware, along with the sign stating 140 wines by the glass and you realize your initial suspicions are confirmed. This is going to be a different sort of restaurant experience. Finally, you feel the warmth of hospitality that can only come from a staff dedicated to taking their guests on a guided beverage and food adventure, with opportunities for side trips to both the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Owner and namesake George Miliotes is widely regarded as one of the restaurant industry's best wine experts with awards from such prestigious publications as The Wine Spectator and others. And while Miliotes has created the masterful wine list at Wine Bar George, he has left the culinary side of the menu to Executive Chef Ron Rupert, who has teamed with Miliotes before.

Guests at Wine Bar George have the opportunity to explore seemingly endless food and wine pairings. Executive Chef Rupert and Miliotes have worked closely to create a menu that pairs with the extensive wine list.



With a desire to take their guests on an adventure with both the wine and the food, the choice of glassware and dinnerware to serve each of these becomes critical. Aside from the practical considerations inherent in the hospitality business, the glassware has to be able bring out the best in each of the wines, no matter what part of the world the wine may originate. Choosing Stölzle's 14 oz. Exquisit All-Purpose wine glass as the restaurant's workhouse wine glass, sommelier Miliotes knew from experience that it would offer the guest an opportunity to enjoy the nuances of each wine and still work in the back of the house dishwashing area. In addition, he knew the Exquisit 14 oz wine glass from Stölzle would give the guest the perfect pour of 6 oz. of wine, accentuate the strengths of each wine and look terrific when presented to the guest.

"When I look at a wine glass, the glass is the most important piece of ware in a restaurant because we are a wine bar. When people come in, they expect everything to be perfect, whether it is the temperature of the wine, the quality of the wine – and the glassware that it is served in. For the last 18 years,



Stölzle Glasses



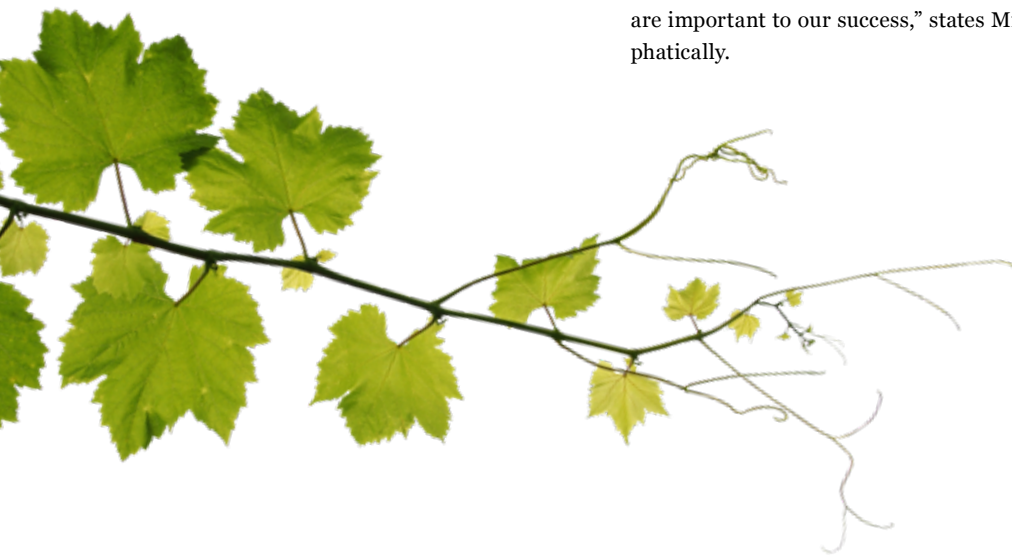
Roast Chicken



I've used nothing but Stölzle glasses. I feel the glass is superior on so many levels – the sheer rim, the shape, and being able to work with Stölzle to get it exactly right with pour levels and logos. All these are important to our success," states Miliotes emphatically.

When it came to what to serve the food on, Executive Chef Ron Rupert was equally enthusiastic about the wide variety of options from RAK Porcelain.

"When choosing plates that we use, RAK Porcelain has such a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and colors. We looked at our menu items and what kind of picture – much like a backdrop – do we want to present our food," states Rupert. Executive Chef Rupert chose a variety of RAK Porcelain's and Chef's fusion serving pieces, along with several Fine Dine accessories and Banquet line serving pieces, including Banquet flatware serving items. Wine Bar George also serves its coffee in RAK Porcelain's Barista series.



"A menu that represents both global and local cuisine."

Rupert continued, "We offer a menu that includes a selection of small plates, cheese and charcuterie boards, along with menu favorites like the large Roast Chicken dish which is perfect for sharing. George and I have worked together to develop a menu that represents both global and local cuisine. Guests can expect to experience food that is familiar, yet new all at once."



Executive Chef Rupert and John Marino



Guests who come to visit Disney can do no better than to take their adventure to Disney Springs and put themselves in the friendly hands of the staff at Wine Bar George. Once seated, the guest can expect to explore new wine and food delights, all paired in an easy to understand, enjoyable and very approachable way. For groups, Wine Bar George has a complete upstairs dining room available for larger function, along with a smaller, more intimate dining private room.

winebargorge.com





RAK AROUND THE WORLD

APICIUS

training the talent of tomorrow

The Culinary Arts Academy in Switzerland, a member of the Swiss Education Group, recently opened the Apicius lab. The new building is dedicated to learning culinary arts on the César Ritz campus in Le Bouveret (Switzerland). It provides the opportunity to train more chefs with the best tools available. RAK Porcelain is a partner of this initiative.



"Providing courses which are ever more advanced."



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For all fans of gastronomy, the name Apicius brings to mind the most famous Roman gastronome in antiquity, who was the author of the first recipe book in history. An excellent choice to celebrate the launch of the culinary training offered by the Culinary Arts Academy in Switzerland. The school has just inaugurated an iconic building with the same name, which is dedicated to all their training courses. For a budget of CHF 9 million (EUR 7.95 million), 6 million of which was dedicated to building work and 3 million to equipment and materials, there is now 1,570 square metres ready to welcome future graduates. Each of the six floors of the Apicius building on the César Ritz campus in Le Bouveret offers specialisations for specific culinary techniques. Its little extra is a herb garden on the roof. For Florent Rondez, CEO of the Swiss Education Group (SEG), this building is very meaningful as it makes it possible to provide

courses which are ever more advanced. "The building comprises seven kitchen units and two restaurants. It allows us to train 120 students at the same time, spread over every floor."

Several kitchens for expanding knowledge

The building was designed to develop the body of culinary knowledge, starting with new culinary techniques. Each space corresponds to a specific area of training. "This choice allows us to offer much more specific training modules, surrounded by customised utensils and equipment," states Florent Rondez. "Each kitchen thus presents a specific training goal adapted to the relevant student level."

Fish fumet and flame working hold no more secrets for the students, who have range cookers and other professional equipment dedicated to these tasks at their disposal. To achieve this approach, the school has developed partnerships with reputed companies and chefs, who regularly come and pass on their expertise.

Tableware, a major asset

RAK Porcelain was keen to be one of the sponsors that made this project possible. The company plays a special role in this new institution by supplying the tableware necessary for tasting and presenting dishes. This partnership evolves around several initiatives such as the creation of a range with European notes, featuring the names of European capitals on the porcelain.

The Chef Table kitchen on the 4th floor of the Apicius building has a complete service set. They are used to serve the food prepared by the students supervised by a big name in the restaurant world: Chef Franck Giovannini. This offers the opportunity to present exceptional dishes in an elegant way. As Florent Rondez points out: "Cooking is one thing, but presenting a dish to a guest is just as important."



This alliance goes both ways. It enables the school to showcase their recipes and it offers RAK Porcelain a full-size space to test its new creations. "It also gives us the opportunity to use our new ranges, which feature various shapes and designs."

Projects with an international scope

Currently offering training in the European culinary arts to students from all over the world, the school is expected to go international soon with the opening of a campus abroad. "This will allow everyone to discover local products, go shopping at the markets and learn methods of cooking from all regions of the world."

This outlook will be a new phase in making this training international. An added value that will be beneficial to every student: Each of them will learn about cooking, but they'll also learn managerial techniques with a view to joining major restaurant and hotel groups and to better meet employers' new expectations: "The role of a chef is expanding. They are closer to customers and tend to manage everything. This is a new development within the profession," concludes Florent Rondez.

culinaryartsswitzerland.com



A total of seven kitchens, spread over six floors





RAK AROUND THE WORLD

JESSIE'S RESTAURANT

Exceptional world cuisine in the heart of Manila

As grandiose as it is fascinating, Manila is a microcosm of the Philippines. A mish-mash of cultures and a blend of successful culinary genres can be found in her kitchen - the perfect place to share a unique moment. A broad range of recipes crafted by Josefina C. Sincioco, otherwise known as "Chef Jessie". As the head chef at three establishments, she combines the flavours of several continents, to the delight of her clients.

Manila truly has everything that a big city can offer. The capital of the Philippines is home to 1.7 million residents and, each year, it welcomes more than 6 million foreign tourists. A paradox which it maintains on the basis of one factor: authenticity. If you travel to the Philippines for its picturesque beaches, you'll be heading to the north of the island with your suitcases. However, the atmosphere in Manila is completely different, it's bubbling with life.



You'll be amazed by the incessant comings and goings and buzz of activity on every street corner in the city. Manila was previously dubbed the "Pearl of the Orient," a fitting name for the city. Its skyscrapers stand next to modern shopping malls, while relaxing cocktail bars provide exceptional meeting points. To enjoy it, visit the museum district to delve into the history of the island, a former Spanish and English colony. This diversity in its origins is also found in its cuisine. During your stay, take the time to enjoy a meal at one of the most popular restaurants on the island. That will be one of Chef Jessie's restaurants!

Inspired international cuisine

It was her friends who pushed her to open her first restaurant to share her passion with the largest number of people. And yet her destiny was not set out in stone. With a little tongue-in-cheek, she explains that her "worst nightmare is the smell of onions being sautéed," and she still doesn't like it!

Josefina C. Sincioco has since opened three restaurants in different parts of Manila and developed a catering service for events. The most famous is the Rockwell Club. All types of cuisine are represented:

French, Mediterranean, Filipino and Asian dishes. It offers a unique experience which begins upon arrival. "I want each and every one of our guests to feel as comfortable as they are in their own dining room when they dine with us" explains Chef Jessie. The Club is both simple and elegant, just like at home.

One single priority: adapt to the wishes of the clientele

At Top of the Citi, the second restaurant, the atmosphere is different. Located at the top of a skyscraper in the financial district in Manila, the restaurant offers its guests an intimate space where they can rest between work shifts. The menu encapsulates this atmosphere and offers simple and delicious food. Here, the customer is king: "With long working hours, our guests are eager for some homemade food. We are also happy to cater for all their culinary desires. If they want to eat Siningang (a popular homemade soup), Arrozcaldo, etc., we make sure they get it. It is our way of alleviating their everyday stress."

The third location is the soul of Jessie's cooking. Chef Jessie's Place is located in a five-storey building where all the chef's business is handled. This new challenge also enabled her to set up a catering facility, in addition to the restaurant. However, one element in particular enhances the quality of the food served, irrespective of its origin: the RAK Porcelain tableware. "It is ideal for our type of cuisine - the style is simple yet elegant!" states Josefina C. Sincioco.

chefjessie.com



THE PHILIPPINES - A CULINARY ART INSPIRED BY COUNTLESS INFLUENCES

Filipino cuisine reflects the cultural diversity of the land. The country is made up of an archipelago of more than 7,600 islands and each one is rich in history, a particularity contributing to the culinary wealth of its dishes. Its cuisine is influenced by Asia, in particular Indonesia, China and Malaysia. Yet it also draws inspiration from its colonial past - Spain, Great Britain and America.

The flavours surprise, bewilder and even confuse palates familiar with Asian culinary aromas. Both rich and hearty, Filipino cuisine lends itself to a sophisticated blend of influences - a perfect combination of sweet and savoury flavours, incorporating notes of sour, bitter and even acidic flavours. Known for being high in fat, unlike other Asian recipes, it can be described as a fusion of culinary inspirations. However, two staple ingredients are key - rice and coconut milk. The first ingredient is served as a side dish, while the second is used to cook meat and fish. Vegetables are traditionally steamed.

FILIPINO SPECIALITIES SEDUCE THE WEST

Filipino restaurants are now popping up in all major cities from Paris to London as well as New York.

The opulence of the cuisine and the feeling of satiety after the meal are the common themes of any dish served at a Filipino table. At your next meal, allow your taste buds to savour traditional dishes such as Adobo, a delicious pork dish (sometimes made with chicken or beef) marinated in spices and cooked with soy sauce, vinegar and garlic. Are you seeking a little culinary competition on your plate? Then try kare-kare, a beef stew with spicy sauce. And what about dessert? How about halo-halo - a combination of crushed ice, fresh or crystallised fruits, sweet beans, coconut milk and tapioca, a refreshing and multi-coloured delicacy - the perfect finale to this Filipino culinary journey.





HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

THE STRAT

The Stratosphere is no more, long live The Strat!

The Stratosphere in Las Vegas is now called The STRAT. This hotel complex was acquired by Golden Entertainment in 2017 and has undergone renovation work for a year. The rooms, the casino and above all the restaurants: everything has been given a facelift to give The STRAT a new look. One of them is the tower - at 350 metres high, it's the highest point in Las Vegas. The establishment has a wide-ranging clientele drawn to its attractions, gaming tables and restaurants.





Interview

CHARLINE PADGETT

VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER OF THE STRAT IN LAS VEGAS

A lot of renovation work, a name change. Is this a complete makeover?

We are indeed in the middle of a very exciting development of The STRAT Hotel, Casino & SkyPod. We will be investing up to USD 140 million to carry out several improvements, specifically refurbishing the rooms and the casino floor, developing new entertainment offers and, of course, introducing various food and beverage concepts.

The food and beverage offer has been multiplied within a few months. How many restaurants does The STRAT offer now?

The STRAT currently has 12 restaurants and bars. Our philosophy is: if you treat your customers well, they will come back. We apply this simple principle to The STRAT, whether you dine at Top of the World, the STRAT Café, BLVD & MAIN Taphouse



“Making sure that all our restaurants meet customer demand is great fun. Taking care of our customers has absolute priority at The Strat.” Charline Padgett, Director of Food and Beverages at The STRAT, gives a perfect summary of the hotel’s philosophy while staying true to her own. For Ms Padgett, this is a clever reminder that she is a true enthusiast at the exclusive service of the customers of the hotel complex.

“What drew me to the food and beverage industry is its unpredictability,” she stated recently. It came as no surprise when she told us that the diversity of tasks as well as the multiple spaces to be managed within The STRAT are a driving force in her day-to-day work. This passion for her job, as well as her dedication, have rightly enabled her to grow and establish herself organically. Meeting customers’ needs, ensuring the welfare of the teams and maintaining good relations with suppliers are the challenges she takes up day after day. Her expertise makes her an excellent strategist in her executive positions, as Ms Padgett has also been Vice President and Assistant General Manager for a year.*



or 108 Eats. Whichever restaurant you choose in our establishment, the culinary range and the service are exceptional in all of them. We strive to meet our guests’ requests by offering them exactly what they wish with a large variety of food in a pleasant atmosphere.

Top of the World is the flagship restaurant. What modifications did it undergo? How has its menu and its cuisine changed?

As part of the renovation of The STRAT focused, the dining room of Top of the World was completely refurbished and its menu changed. The menu now offers the choicest cuts of meat and seafood, as well as fresh and seasonal products as side dishes. Among the specialities, we have a premium Creekstone Farms beefsteak from Kansas and a bone-in rack of lamb from New Zealand prepared with a basil and mint sauce. As for seafood, if I had to give you an overview, I would tell you about the swordfish with beurre blanc and citrus fruits topped with a sweet-and-sour peperonata, king crab from Alaska cooked in melted butter, Scottish salmon with slices of citrus fruit cooked in lemon butter on a fennel soubise sauce, scallops served with a cauliflower fondue...

There’s one thing, however, that hasn’t changed: the breathtaking panoramic view of Las Vegas.

Top of the world



How did you conceive its layout and decoration?

The decoration of the Top of the World dining room was inspired by the spectacular 360° view of the Las Vegas Valley. The tabletops of the new tables feature an original laminated surface that reflects the sky and emphasises the colour of the mountain peaks. The candlesticks are reminiscent of streetlights and capture the colours of the massifs. The blueish-grey covers of the new chairs and furniture distribute hues similar to the sky throughout the dining room. The refurbishment also included the lobby, improved lighting and a complete upgrade to the audio system.

Can the STRAT Café & Wok be considered The STRAT’s number 2 restaurant?

The STRAT Café (formerly the STRAT Café & Wok) is open non-stop. It offers excellent family cuisine and welcomes locals as well as hotel customers. Recently we also opened the BLVD & MAIN Taphouse, which offers a range of craft beers and delicious bistro food. It has a lively atmosphere where you can also sit down on a comfortable seat to watch the games and other sports events.

You opted for RAK Porcelaine tableware. What image does it convey in your establishment?

I’ve used many different dishes, but after careful consideration, it became obvious that RAK tableware would be perfect for our restaurants. RAK Porcelaine creates dishes that range from classic collections to more aesthetic ones, but are all intended for refined cuisine. Our tableware is nothing but an extension of our excellent cuisine.

www.stratrising.com

* Vegas Magazine – September 2018



Without a doubt, it is regarded as one of the most anticipated international gastronomic events and considered the benchmark for culinary innovation. IKA, otherwise known as the culinary Olympics, is preparing for its latest event. Organised by the Association of German Chefs (VKD), the event will take place in 2020 in Stuttgart and it's about to get a makeover. A genuine revolution has taken over this event which brings together professionals from around the world. Next year, the state capital of Baden-Württemberg will host 32 senior national teams and 20 junior teams from every continent. The opportunity is ripe for several changes.

The main difference is directly related to the organisation: For the first time, the event will be held concurrently with Intergastra, the leading trade fair for the hotel and restaurant industry. The excellent attendance numbers recorded at the previous event (IKA 2016), which attracted more than 28,000 visitors, will likely be exceeded - the forecast is on the rise.

A new rule for the competition

The other major change to this international competition, of which RAK is the premium sponsor, is directly related to the competition. A new task, replacing the cold platters previously demanded of competitors, could revolutionise its organisation. For the first time, visitors will be able to enter the "kitchens" to taste the dishes prepared before their eyes. Hans-Peter Tuschla, vice-president of the VKD, said this decision marks the end of an era and will spark new interest, as he stated on the Worldchefs website: "The waste of food is an important issue. This is something we want to actively reduce." The other reason was to increase transparency during the preparatory phase of the competition. This trend has already been embraced in some restaurants featuring an open kitchen. The idea has already been well received by the participants. The presence of visitors should make it possible to engage in open dialogue with professionals. This initiative is already destined to be repeated at future events, as its success should be evident and feedback is already favourable.



EVENT
IKA 2020

The countdown has begun!

In recent years, international culinary competitions have become major events for all professionals searching for recognition or seeking to develop their skills. Notable events include IKA, the equivalent of the Olympic Games for gastronomy. The next edition of this quadrennial competition will take place in Stuttgart from 14 to 19 February 2020.



Several categories allow teams to rise to the challenge

For the rest of the competition, the rules remain unchanged. Therefore, national teams have been divided into several categories with various challenges to tackle. The national competition will include the new Chef's Table competition, which will present seven different dishes for 12 guests. It will complement the Restaurant of Nations, which will prepare a three-course menu for 110 people.

The junior event includes the preparation of a three-course menu for 60 people and an IKA buffet with finger food, a main dish, seafood, game and desserts for twelve people.

The jury consists of 60 members from the various participating countries. Each juror has been selected by Worldchefs (World Association of Chefs' Societies) and has proven their qualities as a judge in other culinary competitions. After four days of judging, the title of Olympic champions 2020 will be awarded for each category during the last evening.





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