



# PERSPECTIVES

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF TASTE AND ESTHETICS



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## Editorial

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Dear Friends and Partners,

For RAK Porcelain, the year 2016 has started in an extremely positive way. Your interest in our new products has been overwhelming and I can say that the success of NEOFUSION is proven by a daily flow of orders coming in from all over the world. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the product development team in our factory. This talented ceramic engineers have not only worked on new shapes, but also created from scratch various new types of glaze. These allow chefs to use a different look and feel once it comes to the presentation of their creative preparations.

In this issue of Perspectives, you will meet with Senthil Kumar, head of production at RAK Porcelain. A team of 750 dedicated workforce are behind Senthil to deliver the high quality levels you have come to expect from RAK Porcelain products.

Additionally, we want to introduce you to some operators using our products. It is worthwhile to pay them a visit - either in Manhattan at Limani's, in Austrias Tyrol at Hotel Inter Alpen, at the exciting Terme Erding near Munich, or, when you're in Dubai, the At.mosphere restaurant in world-famous Burj Khalifa.

Around the world, all Emirates Airline lounges are equipped with RAK Porcelain. There, you will not only relax but



enjoy unique and delicious food prior to your departure. Another long time user of RAK Porcelain products is Másalto Café, torrefactors from Belgium. In this issue of Perspectives, you can read stories about people who are as passionate as we are once it comes to taste and function.

Last but not least, I would like to invite you to IKA, the Olympics for Chefs held in Erfurt Germany in October later this year. RAK Porcelain is the prime partner of the German Chefs' Federation organizing this event, bringing together over 2000 Chefs from 50 countries for a unique four-day competition.

Thank you so much for reading and sharing this latest issue of Perspectives. Since we are keenly interested in your opinion, please allow me to draw your attention to page 21. With a bit of luck, you may win a trip to the United Arab Emirates.

Yours sincerely,  
**Abdallah Massaad**  
CEO of RAK Porcelain

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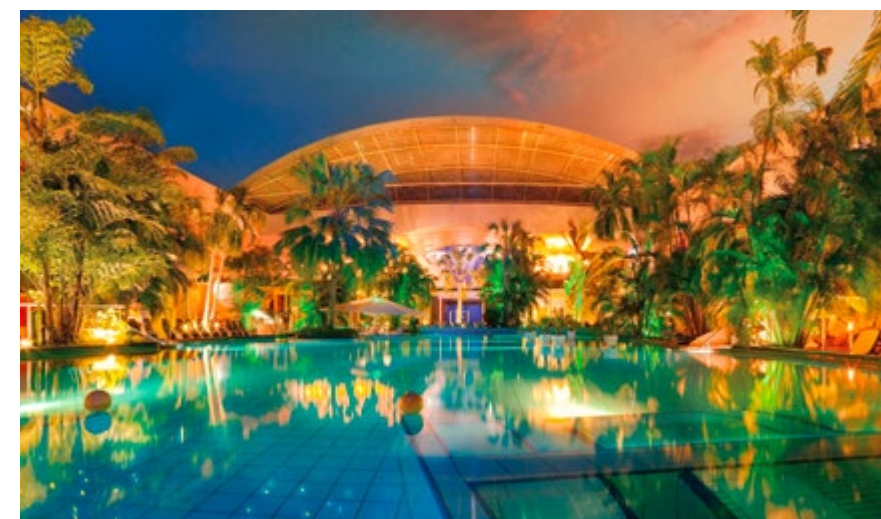
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RAK AROUND THE WORLD

# AT.MOSPHERE RESTAURANT DUBAI

*Dining with your head in the stars*

*Perched on the 122<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Burj Khalifa tower, at a height of 422 metres, At.mosphere is quite simply the highest restaurant in the world. There are not enough superlatives to describe this unique location, where the breathtaking view across the Arabian Gulf and Dubai is clearly an excellent reason for visiting! But it is far from being the only reason!*



Opening in January 2010 after six years of construction, at a height of 828 metres, the Burj Khalifa is the centrepiece of a vast urban project developed by Emaar Properties in the United Arab Emirates, which includes one of the largest shopping centres in the world, the Dubai Mall. One of the leading attractions in the area is its fountain, lit up by 6,600 lights and 25 colour projectors, where the water springs up towards the sky at a height of 275 metres, choreographed to world, classical and contemporary Arab music.

The tower's architect, Adam Smith, erected here what is still the tallest man-made structure using highly efficient and state-of-the-art engineering. It has various uses, including the first Armani Hotel in the world as well as Armani Residences, shops, leisure activities and a public observation deck called "At the Top", just above the At.mosphere restaurant and lounge.

An amazing panoramic view



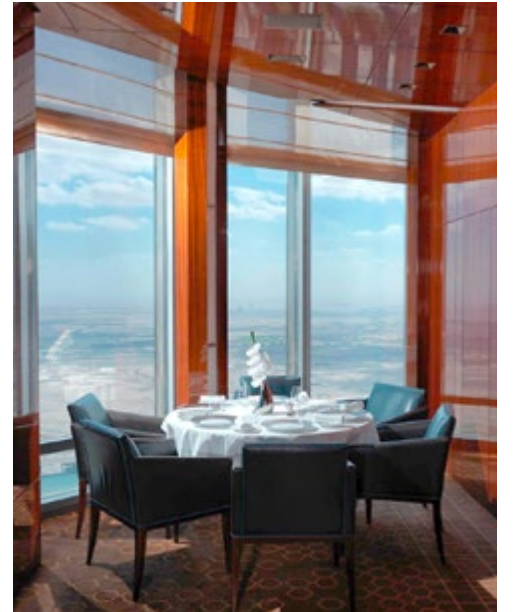
### Sensational from every point of view

Before you can dine with your head in the stars, you first need to enter a building weighing almost 500,000 tons, take one of the 57 lifts and maybe try to stave off vertigo once you reach the 122<sup>nd</sup> floor. Customers of the restaurant can then appreciate an exceptional view before exploring At.mosphere by going down a spectacular staircase which seems to hang in the air. All this is a thrilling journey that will whet your curiosity as much as your appetite. Opened in January 2011, this gem for fans of culinary excellence and aficionados of outstanding bars also offers a space reserved for private dining. Mahogany walls, sophisticated furniture and handmade carpets provide an elegant decor and offer a warm ambiance in which every detail has been considered by the famous designer, Adam Tihany.

### Capturing all the senses

As soon as you sit down at your table in At.mosphere, your taste buds are activated thanks to French chef Jérôme Lagard, who offers innovative cuisine based on high-quality products and divine healthy cooking. To create his menus, he delves into seasonal trends with the help of artisans and specialist farmers. Foie gras, caviar, truffles, oysters and lobsters are embellished in a modern cuisine and combined with the best products from around the world, such as Japanese wasabi, Australian wagyu beef, French cheeses, local fruit and vegetables... A real gastronomic tour of France and an escape to every continent! For a light lunch or tea, the lounge room offers a calm atmosphere with deep amethyst and velvet tones in its design. In this top-end space, the croque monsieur is a class of its own, the caviar and oysters are tasted in their natural state, the wagyu is eaten with foie gras, the cheesecake is slumming it with yuzu... At night, a trendy young crowd takes over the venue to sip extravagant cocktails to the sounds of soothing lounge music.

[www.atmosphereburjkhalifa.com](http://www.atmosphereburjkhalifa.com)





Interview

# JÉRÔME LAGARDE

*A culinary voyage around the world*

*With 25 years of experience across several continents in Michelin-starred restaurants, Chef Jérôme Lagarde has settled in Dubai to work for the highest restaurant in the world. This married and happy father of two likes to leaf through recipe books... but obviously prefers even more to be in the kitchen practicing his art, a fusion of his love for traditional French cuisine and modern techniques, offering dishes inspired from around the world and created exclusively from the finest seasonal products.*



At 41 years of age, you have learned with the best and travelled the planet thanks to your job. Where did this passion for cooking come from?

"From the age of 3, I used to follow my grandmother into the kitchen and watch her from my high chair, trying to memorize each ingredient that she used in her dishes. These tender moments shared with my family inspired a strong love for the art of cooking to which I went on to dedicate my life. After passing the vocational baccalaureate at Pardailhan hospital-ity training school, which is renowned for having trained some of the best French cooks, I worked with double and triple Michelin-starred chefs, including the legendary André Daguin, Michel Guérard and Dominique Toulousy. In 2001, after 13 years of hard work in France, I wanted to discover new cultures, new ingredients and new cuisines, and so I started my career abroad, spending time in the United States, Ukraine, China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Sydney. I am fascinated by the cosmopolitan aspect of Dubai and have been working at At.mosphere since 19 August 2014; it has opened new horizons for me. I am very satisfied with these experiences all over the world, which have all been extremely rewarding."



**How would you describe your culinary identity?**

"I would describe it as modern classical: I keep the authenticity of a dish while giving it a modern touch to spark our guests' interest. It is about expressing authentic flavours and that is why I appreciate the experience at At.mosphere, where I am able to create surprising dishes which get our customers to come back. While I try to develop new things and regularly change our menu, I have always liked cooking our two signature dishes: beef Wellington and truffle Pithivier. This second dish is particularly special: it is a round mille-feuille pie filled with rabbit, veal, duck, foie gras and truffles. We use artisanal Bordier butter for our pastry and prepare the dish "à la minute", which means when the client orders, never in advance, which takes about twenty minutes."



**At.mosphere is a very original restaurant, how do you meet its customers' high expectations?**

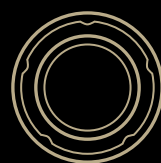
"At.mosphere is unique in the world because it is high up and offers a truly spectacular view of Dubai and because of its cuisine and lounge, which makes it one of the most unforgettable experiences in the world. We don't have the impression here that we are working: we are doing what we love the most; it's a very special feeling and an unbelievable opportunity. We make sure that our guests feel the same way. We bring them the very best products, searching across the world for the finest ingredients, some of which are even exclusive to At.mosphere!

I like creating new menus and am happy to be in charge of a team as passionate about cooking as I am. I share my experience and knowledge with them, emphasising respect for ingredients and how to work with what is in season. Each day, we try to surprise our guests by providing them with a unique experience: a culinary voyage around the world. We always create our menus based on seasonal ingredients, which is our speciality and what distinguishes us from the rest. We need constantly to be up-to-date with the latest trends in terms of taste and flavours. Alongside my team, we inspire one another to experiment by varying products which ultimately come together as a perfect menu for the pleasure of those tasting it."

**What plans do you have for the future?**

"I do have a number of personal plans in my head, but really in the long term. Today, I am completely focused on At.mosphere, since my story with this incredible restaurant is just beginning."

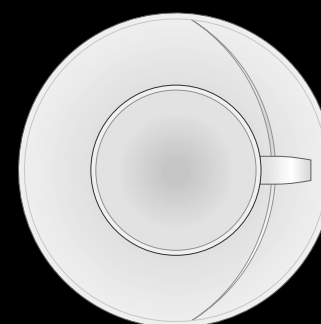




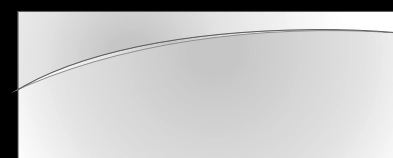
BIRTH OF A NEW COLLECTION

# MOON

*Asian and Western Dinner & Style*



Mikaela Dörfel  
and her assistant  
are creating MOON



Interview

## MIKAELA DÖRFEL

*Two cultures – one language of form*

**How did the moon become a source of inspiration for your new dinner service?**

At the start of 2015, RAK Porcelain and I came up with the idea for a fine dining service that would combine elements of both Asian and Western cuisine. When we started looking for a common theme for Asian & Western Dinner & Style, we settled on the moon relative quickly. It connects East and West in a very simple way – as a symbol, it has great emotional significance for everyone, no matter where they come from. Of course, the moon is also a very graphic motif. As you know, I like to take a graphical approach to my work, building my designs on simple geometric principles, so this form suited me very well.

**What exactly is new and unique about MOON?**

What's new about MOON is the way we bring together Western and Asian cuisine. We have succeeded in unifying two very different cultures through the use of a single language of form. MOON is a truly multifunctional service, and the symbol of the moon gives it an emotional link to both cultures. I also find it fascinating to see how important this topic currently is on a socio-political level. Issues of East and West – Islam and Christianity – have been very prominent in the past few months, and since the wave of refugees that began last summer, they have become a story that affects us all.

As a result, MOON is the perfect addition to the market right now. On top of all this, MOON very clearly embodies the RAK Porcelain philosophy, as while the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah (RAK) is located in the Middle East, its large headquarters in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg also anchors it in the heart of Europe. RAK Porcelain is a cross-cultural porcelain brand unlike any other in the world, and MOON is a direct representation of that.





**How did you apply this philosophy in practice?**

Let's take a look at the example of the cups. We designed six cups in the Western style, four of which were re-used for the Eastern style. We took a very long time and a great deal of care over the adaptation, because we wanted to be sure that we weren't making any mistakes in the culture we were less familiar with. I worked with a Chinese designer on this aspect, who checked all the pieces for the Eastern style from her perspective. We then tested our models in Asian restaurants as well, where they were received very positively. It was a great feeling when we realised that there were hardly any pieces that we had failed to find a cross-cultural solution for – a multifunctional solution. For most of the items, we were able to answer the questions “What is truly Asian?» and «What is truly Western?” with one and the same form. But despite that, as far as I know this has never been done before. That makes it a huge step both for RAK Porcelain and for me personally, and we're looking forward to presenting it to the world.

**How exactly is this multifunctional approach realised in the MOON series?**

Well, let's take one item – say the egg cups. The idea of designing a Western egg cup wasn't particularly exciting to me, in and of itself. So we did some research and found out that we could also make a standard 40 ml sake cup out of it. We then made a second size as well, as a gourmet/egg cup. This allows chefs to place extra emphasis on a particular detail of their dish.

**And could you give us an example of one of the more Eastern-style pieces?**

The round gourmet platter obviously has a stronger Asian cultural influence. The soy sauce goes in the indent in the middle, and the sushi pieces go around the outside. The slightly raised half-moon then forms a decorative area for the wasabi and ginger. Or if you want a piece more typical of the Chinese kitchen, then we have the round table where each dish is presented on a rotating platter. The guests serve themselves from the middle. So our design for the Eastern style echoes the culinary culture. In the European kitchen, the plates are ideal for presenting dips with vegetables or even chicken.



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*“MOON very clearly embodies  
the RAK Porcelain philosophy.”*

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*“We have succeeded in unifying two very different cultures through the use of a single language of form.”*

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**How did you vary the moon motif throughout the series?**

In itself, the circle isn't a particularly interesting motif – it's quite static. But if you move away from the exact lines a little, it adds a lot more life to it, and of course the circle starts looking like a full moon. And even once you've defined a segment of a circle, you can keep varying it depending on which piece you want to use it on. So, basically all you need is one good idea. What is really appealing, first and foremost, is if a motif that seems decorative is actually functional as well. Of course, the half-moon is a powerful emotional symbol. On top of that, you know as soon as you see the plates how you're meant to hold them. Protected areas for holding plates are very important in the world of catering, so that you don't end up putting your hands in the food. The way the plates are divided is just as important. On the square plates, we deliberately divided the half-moon differently to on the coupe plates. But we still made sure the motif was more than simply decoration, too. On the saucers, the relief line of the crescent stops the spoon from slipping off. And of course, even if a plate has a raised half-moon on it, it still has to be stackable.

**Did the MOON series present any particular challenges, either for you as a designer or for RAK Porcelain as a manufacturer?**

Did it ever! Firstly, we had to harmonise the differences in the two culinary cultures, while at the same time finding a compact way of bringing together their different standard units. And on top of that, of course, we had to develop a new, unique language of form with emotional appeal. We also wanted to include special gourmet items to make the series even more attractive and offer chefs a range of options for how to use the pieces. Since food in Asia is often covered when it is served, we structured MOON in such a way that each bowl has a plate that fits on top of it. Maybe not every chef will use it that way, but I hope some of them make use of the option, maybe even as an additional presentation surface.

The plates also have a little guide line on the underside to prevent them from slipping during serving. It's a very decorative element, but the aim is also always to ensure stability. The design has a function, it's decorative and it's easy to handle – thus bringing together the three elements that are important to me in all my work. In the Western style it is the platters and plates that need to be easy to handle, while in the Eastern style it's the bowls, which the guests hold in their hands while they eat. This gave us the basic form we needed to use: that of a footed bowl. We always work with 1:1 prototypes when developing our designs, which are produced on-site in our own studio. I often see ways of improving the model while it is being turned or processed, so I implement them straight away.

**Which brings us to the second challenge...**

The second challenge was the units of measurement. This is very important – we structured the entire range in such a way that the dimensions would have a Western value for Western cuisine and an Eastern value for Asian cuisine.

Of course, there are standards for the pots (tea 450 ml, coffee 350 ml), and that's what we have to supply. So we looked for other functions for the hollow Western pieces, with the idea of keeping the body the same but changing the function. That was how our Western 150 and 350 ml pots became the 1 and 2 gō sake flasks (the gō is a special unit for sake volume), allowing us to keep roughly to the dimensions used in Asian cuisine while still using our Western servers. I'm very satisfied with the result: the pieces have a great, stable base, but still very elegant lines. And they are like nothing else on the market! Unique style is extremely important to me. If we can't find anything that sets us apart and is new, even in terms of functionality, then I've done something wrong.



**And challenge number three?**

A cloche is an attractive item for the gourmet kitchen, but also a very difficult one, as it takes up a lot of space and isn't always in use. On the other hand, it's very important for presenting highlights of the meal in secret, or as a surprise. Our cloche has a recess on the top to allow a good grip, and we gave it a different design on the inside so it can be stacked, which is rarely the case. The cloche also serves as a link between an important item in the Western kitchen and the Asian kitchen: as a cover for the bamboo baskets that are so essential in Asian cuisine. On the 27 cm Western plates, the cloche also sits perfectly in the centre of the half-moon, which stops it from slipping. There is also a matching gourmet platter that has a variety of uses in both cultures. Because of all its details, the gourmet platter is a complex piece for RAK Porcelain to make. The basic challenge for us was this: How do we make presentation in fine dining even more exciting? How do we make room for unusual specialities without turning people off?



MOON is also made of the new POLARIS white porcelain, a thinner material that is perfect for fine dining. Right from the start, MOON was aimed at high-end cuisine. The collection now boasts over sixty pieces, which just goes to show how much the motif and its symbolism inspired us. And RAK Porcelain have truly outdone themselves in terms of quality. But then, RAK Porcelain always does!

**Is MOON also suitable for buffets?**  
Absolutely! As a designer, graphics are always very important to me. I want my crockery to look good as soon as the table is set, before the food has even arrived. That's why we play with a lot of graphical elements and bounce the variations off one another. And since I've spent quite a lot of time working in the buffet sector myself, where making the most of a small space is all-important, I wanted the MOON collection to allow good presentation, too.



MIKAELA DÖRFEL



*Mikaela Dörfel grew up in Finland, which is where she developed her love of Scandinavian forms. She has now settled down in an old farmhouse surrounded by horses, meadows and scattered ponds. The inspiration for her design work also comes directly from the natural world, and is supported by a clear structure. For over 15 years, she has been working from her design studio north of Hamburg, and her customers include brands from all over Europe, Asia and the USA. Mikaela Dörfel employs a hands-on approach to design and loves feeling the porcelain against her fingertips as she checks the practicality of her forms for day-to-day use. Her love of form has led her to create collection pieces that avoid the whims of trends and are designed to last. Some of her collections have now been in existence for several decades. She has a special relationship with Asia, which is inspired primarily by its cuisine: sushi & sashimi, dumplings and meals containing plenty of ginger and coriander top her list of favourite dishes. She has also travelled to Asia many times to take in the wonders of China, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Japan.*

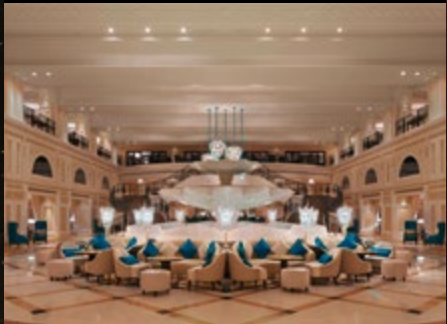
WIN A TRIP FOR 2  
TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

TELL US YOUR OPINION!

Enjoy a stay for 4 days  
in Ras Al Khaimah and in Dubai

Send us your thoughts of our Perspectives magazine  
and you will be entered into the prize draw for a trip to the Emirates.

The programme



Stay at the  
Waldorf Astoria



Visit the RAK Porcelain  
production facilities



Visit Dubai including  
the famous gold souk,  
the Dubai Mall, Burj Khalifa,  
Burj Al Arab...

Thank you for your feedback, we want to continuously improve the quality of our Perspectives magazine and for your help in that we look forward to welcoming you to the RAK Porcelain production site in Ras Al Khaimah, where you will be introduced to the secrets of porcelain production.

In order to participate, please visit  
BIT.LY/RAKPERSPECTIVES





CULINARY TRENDS

# COMFORT FOOD: A PROUST MADELEINE AS THE FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

*When returning from a long, exhausting and stressful day at work, who has never sought solace in a good shepherd's pie, a juicy hamburger or a golden paella, and then found that the dish had made the day turn out okay? Comfort food is a culinary trend which invites you to rediscover the warmth of the hearth and inspires a feeling of contentment.*



Baked onion soup



*Comfort food is very popular in winter when the cold, rain and short days dampen our spirits. It can be considered as the culinary equivalent of a warm and comfortable woolly jumper. This emotion-based cooking experience, in which food plays the role of panacea to sadness, brings to mind happy childhood memories and can offer consolation on a gloomy day, after a break-up or after losing one's job.*

*And yet the topic at the heart of current gastronomy is sometimes controversial: what is the result of this sudden reappraisal of simple family cooking? Why has this trend gone global? Is it healthy? Are there genuine psychological benefits? Are the chefs of major restaurants justified in reintroducing it?*

1. Fish & chips
2. Tempura



### Tradition in the spotlight

Comfort food may be a recent trend but it is not a new phenomenon. It is effectively a reference to family dishes that are easy to prepare and tasty... a cooking tradition as old as the hills! It was not until 1966 that an article in Beach Post, published in Florida, first mentioned the term to describe food that adults associate with the security of childhood when they are under emotional stress. For a long time it was depicted on television as low-cost, simple and popular cuisine and looked down upon by the food snobs of fine dining. We are currently witnessing a new appreciation for this family-centred and natural cooking, which is a thing of pride for many big chefs.

It has not escaped the attention of those who follow the latest trends that a number of chefs across the world have begun to revisit their culinary memories and offer them on their menus, perhaps influenced by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver who often champions comfort food in the media. Some integrate this trend into the training they provide, such as Christophe Michalak, who asks his patisserie students to make chocolate bars in the shape of an audio cassette or praline-covered VHS-shaped chocolate bars. Others have devoted a restaurant to the idea, such as Gastón Acurio, the famous Peruvian chef, who created the Panchita in Lima at the heart of his empire of 46 restaurants across the world, and where the menu features exclusively Peruvian comfort food.

### A cultural trend

Comfort food is influenced by Anglo-Saxon culture; however, it should not be confused with junk food from the United States. Although the sense of well-being inspired by familiar dishes is appreciated around the world, it still differs greatly in each case: the ingredients are not the same depending on the culture and country of the consumers. France's most beloved meals are dauphinoise potatoes, croque-monsieur and pot-au-feu; in Argentina and Chile, empanadas and maté provide ultimate comfort; in Japan, miso soup, rice and tempuras play this role, as does fish and chips in the United Kingdom. Delve a little deeper, even within the same family, and you will discover that comfort food is not the same for each member of the family! However, the variation in social and cultural experiences of comfort food begs the question as to whether the concept is relevant: can you really talk about a culinary trend centred on family, popular and traditional cooking which at the end of the day has always existed? How can you grasp what it means when it differs for each person? Nobody would say that the ample variety of comfort food can be put into the same box as food for the soul...health professionals too have their own views on the matter.

### Body or soul?

This culinary trend is directly relevant to health. The basics which make you feel good are often very calorific and are therefore criticised by nutritionists and dieticians. Moreover, in the United States eating comfort food is perceived as an emotional response to stress and is a factor in the obesity epidemic facing the country, as a number of researchers reported in an article published in 2003 called «Chronic stress and obesity: A new view of comfort food». Fans of healthy and organic cooking who are partial to steamed vegetables will certainly identify with this view! However, in the face of these worries, various scientific studies have shown that sugar, salt and fats play a role in offsetting other factors in the human body: they are said to diminish the risk of depression by increasing the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter which has a positive influence on mood. Comfort food therefore makes us feel better, but in terms of health, it is Hobson's choice as to what is more important, the body or the soul?

### Some disagree...

Jan Hoffman, author of the article "The Myth of Comfort Food", published in the New York Times in December 2014, asserts that the curative properties of comfort food are overstated. He bases his statement on a study carried out by researchers from the University of Minnesota who subjected around one hundred volunteers to some of the saddest scenes in the history of cinema, and then gave some of them food and others nothing. In the end, they concluded that ingesting food had no impact on mood because all of them quickly returned to a normal emotional state. Some major chefs also oppose this trend. Foremost among these is the famous Alain Ducasse who has vowed to fight tooth and nail against a global penchant for fatty, sugary, salty, saccharine and fried food, against the hegemonic aims of comfort food, declaring that one of the roles of high-end gastronomy is to show that it is possible to be nourished by a modest diet by sourcing high-quality and rural products.

### Others are more enthusiastic

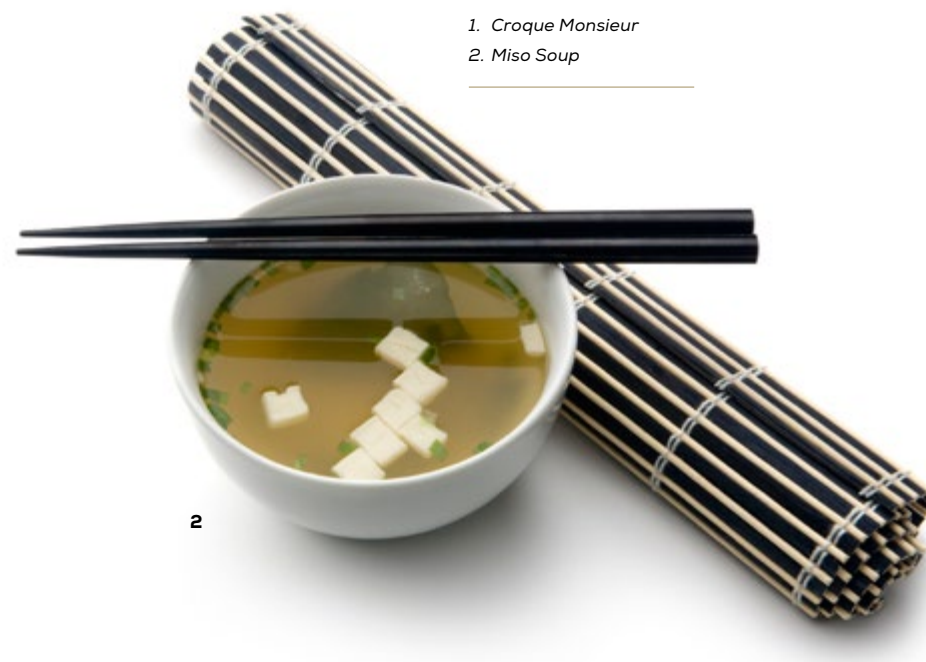
Some chefs, on the other hand, have made comfort food a specialised area of work. Armand Arnal, the Michelin-starred chef of the La Chassagnette restaurant in the Camargue, has decided to embrace the concept, adding a dash of French spirit to New York by opening the Maman café bakery in SoHo. The venue serves up family-inspired recipes from the south of France and North America conjuring up strong memories of childhood. On the other side of the American continent is chef Satoru Yokomori, an aficionado of Japanese comfort food, who wanted to share it with a wider audience. He and his partner, Michael Yee, started up the Del Rey Kitchen restaurant in Los Angeles, offering Yoshoku-style cuisine, influenced by European dishes and in contrast to Washoku cuisine, which is pure Japanese traditional cuisine. Yoshoku is a popular and affordable form of fusion food that is very popular in the streets of Tokyo, where it is easy to find tonktasu, a breaded and fried pork dish, naporitan, a pasta dish, or hayashi rice, which is rice with beef, mushrooms and tomato and red wine sauce.



### Each to his own madeleine

So, the jury is still out. Do some dishes really have this comforting property? Can they put us in a better mood? Could comfort food become a culinary trend of its own in a world where all cuisine is about pleasure? Both chefs and health professionals have diverging opinions on the matter... but if we trust in Proust and his madeleine cake, each of us will certainly find our own answers.

1. Croque Monsieur
2. Miso Soup





RAK AROUND THE WORLD

# LIMANI NEW YORK CITY

*When the Mediterranean comes to Manhattan*

*Forget the image of a cosy atmosphere and fishing nets on the wall that comes to mind when you think of a seafood restaurant. Far from cliché, the Limani emanates a decidedly modern vision of Greek and Mediterranean cuisine in which the sea plays the starring role.*



Originality & elegance

*The name sets the tone. From the epicentre of New York, this "maritime port", as Limani means in Greek, pays homage to the sea in a modern and elegant setting with a remarkable decor. The restaurant, which opened at 45 Rockefeller Plaza in November 2014, occupies two floors and can host up to 200 people within its 750 m<sup>2</sup> facilities. Customers have direct access to the open-plan cuisine, which is in the very safe hands of Head Chef M. J. Alam.*

*With the intention of recreating authentic Greek and Mediterranean cuisine and inspiring sharing and joy around the table, Head Chef M. J. Alam has been working exclusively with seasonal seafood prepared according to traditional Greek recipes, with modern sensibility and a keen eye for theatricality. He tells Perspectives his story and his vision for the cuisine.*

## *A gift revealed by chance*

Originally from Bangladesh, M. J. Alam moved to Montreal in 1992. At 23, without any training, he was looking for a job and stumbled upon a career in the restaurant industry by chance. Exceptionally gifted, he was soon talent spotted and learned his trade at Milos, a famous Mediterranean-style restaurant. "My love for cooking started when I moved to Canada. I started to work at Milos without having received any training. The chef there taught me the basics of Mediterranean cooking and he has been a real mentor for me."

After building up some solid experience and technical skills, he tried his hand at managing in a branch of the Quebec-based restaurant "Au Vieux Duluth" and continued his training before returning to Milos in 1998, this time in New York as sous-chef. Promoted to chef in 2000, he went on to run the Milos kitchens for 14 years before finally becoming the Head Chef of the Limani New York, the little brother of the restaurant of the same name at Roslyn, Long Island.



Head Chef M.J. Alam



The jewel is the wide square pool of sparkling water in the middle of the room

This happy father of two young girls is passionate about healthy eating and has one credo: "eat fresh, eat well and stay in good health". He likes to combine artisanal ingredients straight from the Mediterranean with local products from farms around New York. The Chef derives immense joy from making new discoveries, unearthing new, rare products to create spontaneous culinary creations and real seasonal surprises to delight his customers. His philosophy is to remain true to simple Mediterranean flavours, such as ladolemono, a traditional Greek vinaigrette based on lemon and olive oil, which brings out the taste of fish that is ultimately the star of the dish.

### *Simplicity and virtuosity go hand in hand*

"At the Limani, we are working in front of the customer every day: the kitchen is accessible and I enjoy sharing the skills of my craft with the guests. It is not a show but simply an open window into the preparation of our dishes."

The cornerstones of Chef Alam's cuisine are seasonal menus, local products enhanced by artisanal ingredients, such as red Kozani saffron, products imported directly from the Mediterranean, such as Rascasse, and authentic Greek dishes. He has also added a few creations to his menu which are very representative of his style of cuisine, such as trikalinos bottaraga, dried and smoked mullet roe which is available in France under the name of poutargue [botargo] and is called the caviar of the Mediterranean, or a bio salmon with Fresno pepper, shallots, coriander and spring onion.

"My approach to cooking is straightforward: I use only light oils and ingredients that are selected during the dish's creation to really bring out the Mediterranean flavours. My favourite dish is grilled squid, presented as sashimi with a sprinkling of extra virgin olive oil and served with white onions, grilled red peppers and Santorini capers. I also really love cooking the fish whole, especially sea bass, which is known as the wolf of the sea in the Mediterranean."

Highlights of the Limani also include the elegant kolokithi, fine layers of courgette and aubergine served with lightly fried cheese and tzatziki, and seafood like carabineros prawns and especially the famous kakavia soup. "A traditional stew that Greek fishermen make with the day's catch, generally from white fish called kakavia, which is named after the three-legged container in which it is prepared. It tastes quite similar to bouillabaisse, which is eaten in the south of France. This is a very sleek dish of high quality, made from fish imported from Greece and Portugal." The Chef serves the elements of this tasty dish separately: the fish on one side, a bowl of potatoes and onions and the stock made from olive oil, lemon, saffron and bay leaves and then combines them himself in front of the customer.

### *A tribute to the sea*

The decor of the Limani is exceptional and unique: modern, well-lit, both airy and glamorous, but above all, impressive. It was designed by Skordas Design Studio and constructed by Shawmut Design and Construction, whose goal was to create a visual representation of the Limani's orientation towards the sea and Greece, while avoiding the typical clichés of this kind of restaurant. Skordas was inspired by the hull of a ship for the design of the dramatic entrance, which sets the sophisticated tone found in the dining room, featuring a white marble floor and hand-grooved sandstone columns. But the jewel in Limani's crown is undoubtedly the wide square pool of sparkling water in the middle of the room, with a magnificent chandelier of 25 swirling fishes suspended above, akin to a round of applause swirling in the air. Like a mirror, the marble on the floor reflects the image of the water in the pool, giving the customer the impression of being surrounded by water, while the walls and columns seem like a rock emerging from the sea. The light plays differently throughout the day, evoking the movement of the sun over the Mediterranean sea. Subtle yet continuous, the changes in light create a minimalist impression of the space, in homage to the Mediterranean way of life.

Finding the materials necessary to carry out the project was the major challenge of the Shawmut construction company over the 20 weeks of construction: 11 design elements, precision, intricate carpentry, materials of various thicknesses, enabling stones and wood to combine smoothly and elegantly. In 2015, the Limani also won the highest recognition at the A.R.E. Design Awards in the restaurants category.

Lastly, the tableware chosen is part of the ambience desired by the chef. According to Chef M.J. Alam, not only the decor in which the customer is immersed is crucial to the culinary experience, but also the containers of his creations too. "I have been working with RAK Porcelain for a very long time. The finish and quality of its porcelain is unique, which really sharpens the focus on the fish. I see a real harmony there between the container and the contents".



2

### *Authenticity is a winner*

A meal at the Limani is a multifaceted experience: spectacular architecture, authentic cuisine focused on the product, outstanding and friendly service and an open-minded Chef who takes pleasure in cooking before his customers' very eyes... It is a winning formula and the Limani partners, including M.J. Chef Alam, already have plans for further projects, initially in California and London, and are already thinking about other potential markets.

[www.limani.com](http://www.limani.com)



1

1. Red tuna tartar

2. Zucchini tempura with fish fillets

3. The exterior view of the Limani NYC



3



## SENTHIL KUMAR

### A PORCELAIN WIZARD

*“I was searching for a new professional challenge and wanted to gain experience abroad.”*

*Here is a man who carries a great deal of responsibility. We are talking about Senthil Kumar, Deputy General Manager of Production at RAK Porcelain in Ras-Al-Khaimah, where there are not only the company's headquarters but also its highly modern production site. This is where Senthil oversees the manufacture of over 25 million articles of the highest quality china per year. But even such immense quantities cannot disturb his apparent sang-froid, in fact it's just the opposite.*

He is calm and serene. When you ask him or anyone else about his character, the answers come promptly. And exactly these characteristics are radiated by the man born in India. "I always try to keep a cool head. Strength lies in serenity. A hectic and nervous attitude will have negative effects on the team and its surroundings." By team and surroundings he means the 750 employees involved either directly or indirectly in the process of manufacturing porcelain and spread over 17 different departments. Senthil's job is to lead this impressive production team. Is includes having control of the delivered raw materials and the product design, ensuring that everything runs smoothly and each month two million pieces of china are produced.



"I'm a graduate ceramics engineer." He studied in southern India, where he was born 42 years ago. After finishing his studies, he started work in the field of sanitary ware technology in 1994. How did he come into contact with RAK Porcelain? "I was searching for a new professional challenge and wanted to gain experience in advance technologies prevailing in abroad," says Senthil. He found what

he wanted at RAK Ceramics in Ras-Al-Khaimah, one of the largest tile and ceramics manufacturers in the world. A year before RAK Porcelain started up, he took on the job of production manager. Since then he has been the mastermind of process oriented technology. Senthil is a real wizard when it comes to all things porcelain.

What does he find best about his job? "Developing new products is always a very gratifying and exciting task. It requires technical innovation paired with creativity. That's what I enjoy most," he explains. The biggest challenge is to ensure that the china meets high quality standards, but it must also stand the test of time and prove it is holding up in the very tough and rigorous day-to-day use in the restaurant and hotel business. The visual appearance, the look and the glaze obviously also play an important role. Had he not found his way to the china industry itself, Senthil would probably now be lecturing the ceramics engineers of tomorrow at a university somewhere. He really enjoys mentoring. "I have two daughters aged 3 and 11." Although they both go to school in Ras-Al-Khaimah, they are also taught privately by him and his wife in their own language. In fact, he spends the major part of his leisure time with his family. And what is it like, living as an expatriate in Ras Al Khaimah? "My family and I feel more like locals than expats in UAE. We feel quite at home here. I don't actually miss India at all." In fact, Ras-Al-Khaimah is to him sometimes "more like India than the real India". Yet, he is interested in how the subcontinent with its population of more than 1.2 billion is developing in both economic and political terms, and once or twice a year he goes back to visit family and friends.

He is also a bit of a "petrolhead", since cars are his passion. Every morning he sets out for work in his bordeaux red Lincoln MKX Luxury Crossover. His car has its parking space in one of the giant production halls. "It is definitely the best car I have ever had: a 3.8 litre engine, American design, but manufactured in Canada." This sports utility vehicle also has four-wheel drive and so it is quite well suited for making trips across the desert sands.

So what is the key to RAK Porcelain's success? Senthil laughs. It's a good question, he says, and he'll have to be careful not to give the wrong answer. "The quality, the customer service and the cost. The fact that sales and production go hand in hand. We act and react quickly. Others need five years to do what we achieve in five months." Even though there is production pressure from time to time, the quality has to be right. Senthil is also out and about all the time and walks several kilometres every single day. There are



Lincoln MKX Luxury Crossover

bicycles everywhere throughout the plant, so that he and his people can get around quickly. In fact, he is not at all the classic pen pusher, but likes best to be at his employees' shoulders where he can provide swift, expedient advice. He wants to be close to the action and be involved in the production process at all time and to have a feeling for it. "Nothing else will do," he declares.

And which one is his favourite line? Giro is his absolute favourite. Every day he drinks tea from a Giro cup. This collection was designed by the renowned Spanish designer, Gemma Bernal. Giro, with its attractive oval shape combined with an eccentric composition, was also one of the highlights of RAK Porcelain at the Ambiente trade show in Frankfurt in 2015. This consumer goods show, the largest in the world, is now a fixed date on Senthil's calendar. He has already been to it a couple of times, as he

did in February this year. However, his next visit to Europe will be for personal rather than business reasons, as Senthil and his family are planning a holiday in Switzerland. His daughters are longing to see mountains and snow, for the sun-drenched Ras-Al-Khaimah on the Persian Gulf cannot, for once, compete with Switzerland in this respect.





RAK AROUND THE WORLD

# CAFÉ MÁSALTO

*From experience comes a new idea...and a new coffee!*

*In a world like that of coffee, there are big brands and artisanal coffee producers. Másalto is something different. The brand is still young, with barely 10 years of existence, and a philosophy which happily combines commercial development with tradition. Firmly focused on quality and human values, Pascal Anguela, the founder of Másalto, reveals the origins of his brand.*



Interview

## PASCAL ANGUELA SALES & BRAND MANAGER MÁSALTO

*“We have been able to create a cup which is elegant and unique.”*

**Mr. Anguela, in what way is Másalto coffee different?**

It is because the original idea is a bit different. After 20 years of experience in the coffee trade, I wanted to offer the market something different, and the Másalto project was born of this desire. The name comes from Spanish and means “higher”. The name evokes several layers of meaning. First of all, the best coffees are grown at high altitudes, but it also reflects our desire to place human values, an appreciation for the work of human beings, higher than those of machines. Better pay for coffee farmers is important, as they are often paid very badly. Taking our respect for the environment to a higher level through traditional rather than industrial processes. Creating a higher quality of product by opting for artisanal methods, since these ensure that all of the coffee's aromas are released, as opposed to industrial methods which favour speed and use substitute products to replace natural aromas.



This is how we developed our coffee, which is based on arabica beans from Ethiopia, striking the right balance between bitterness and body. Espressos have that particular lingering flavour and the challenge is to replicate that sensation recur in the same way each time. The blend that we created therefore embodies that consistent and regular finish.

**You put emphasis on tradition in coffee farming. What does this mean?**

Tradition begins with using coffee from the shade. These coffee trees grow in the shade of large trees and produce grains with natural caffeine. Industrial plantations use plants which can be modified through cross-breeding and produce coffee trees which are sun-resistant. These trees are arranged in particular for mechanical harvesting.

Roasting is the second part of the tradition. We work in batches of a maximum of 200 kg, with an extremely slow cooking process of 12 to 20 minutes at 210-220°. Cooking “with love” helps the aromas to develop. For the same reasons, we have opted to stop roasting with hot-air roasters instead of water. This method, although more expensive, allows the product to retain up to 98% of the dry material. The packaging has been selected from the best methods to ensure that coffee remains fresh.



**What is your relationship with the producers?**

We cannot meet them as often as we would like to, however our trader has four generations of experience and contacts on the ground. He also owns the only warehouse in Europe with constant temperature and humidity as well as constant air replacement.



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*“We have therefore been given the **Rainforest certification** because the plantations we work with are in **protected areas**.”*

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**You seem to be very concerned about ecological and environmental aspects?**

We are aware that, like other natural products, coffee is a gift which has been given to us. Consequently, thinking about leaving our children a heritage that has been well preserved is not merely an abstract idea. As we see it, sustainable trade is what allows long-term management both of natural resources and of the well-being of the women and men working in the plantations.

Ethics and excellence are core values for Másalto, which include ideas such as transparency, honesty and respect, as much as a love of quality and the desire for perfection.

We have therefore been given the Rainforest certification because the plantations we work with are in protected areas. The workers are treated with respect and there is no child labour. They have access to education and to medical care. The label is a guarantee that accredited independent experts have verified the sites with respect to challenging social and environmental standards with regard to sustainability.



**What stages need to be respected for a cup of coffee to have character?**

To serve a good-quality espresso, a number of factors come into play, which is why as coffee producers we pay particular attention to technical aspects and to the human dimension.

For example, once a packet of coffee beans has been opened, it has a shelf life of 7 days. Once ground, it can be kept for 1 to 3 hours in the coffee grinder. Beyond that, there is too much oxidation and it can harm the flavour of the coffee. The quality of an espresso also depends on a magic formula.

***7 g of coffee + 25 seconds of percolation + 9 atmospheres of pump pressure + a temperature of 90° + 30 ml in the cup + 20 kg of manual pressure.***

*The golden rule for an espresso*

Coffee grinding is a key element in the quality of long or short coffee. It would be ideal to have two coffee grinders so as to constantly have the right grinding. We really take care to remain partners with our customers and bartenders, both in terms of training and assistance in choosing machines, percolators and coffee grinders.

**You have chosen RAK Porcelain as the provider of your coffee cups. Why did you make this choice?**

Throughout my many years in the coffee business, I have been able to observe and experiment with a number of cup models. I therefore have an image of what to me would be the perfect cup. A timeless, attractive and enticing cup. Working with Claude Peiffer, the Managing Director of RAK Porcelain Europe, thanks to all of his experience and ability to listen, we have been able to create a cup which is elegant, taller than others (with regard to Másalto) and, above all, accompanied by a unique saucer. It is absolutely fantastic because it really makes the life of restaurant owners and bartenders a great deal easier. With such good customer relations and production, I am not surprised by RAK Porcelain's growth. Although we started on a modest scale, we found a partner who understood our requirements.

*Roasting is an art on its own*



**Your company has experienced major growth. How do you see the future?**

Initially, we tried to find a place in the Belgian market which is extremely competitive and serves as a trial market for many products and international brands. We are now recognised in our natural market, with around 900 locations in Belgium and 50 or so in Luxembourg and we are starting to develop in Paris. We are currently looking for distributors for products intended for the hotel industry and owners of cafés and restaurants, both in Europe and of course other countries. We prefer large capitals, such as Paris, London and Madrid, but we are also thinking about emerging countries, including China, where culturally speaking, coffee is starting to play a significant role.

[www.masalto-espresso.com](http://www.masalto-espresso.com)



RAK AROUND THE WORLD

# LOUNGES EMIRATES

*A haven of luxury*

*Throughout the world, Emirates Lounges offer more than relaxation and hospitality: customers of the Emirates Airline have a unique and peerless experience at the very heart of the airport, where they are plunged into a world of refined and sophisticated esthetics.*





Emirates, which is based in Dubai, has become the most important company in the Middle East over the past 30 years and can take pride in achieving one of the most rapid developments, since it is already listed in the top ten airline companies worldwide by number of passengers. Internationally recognised for the quality of its service, as demonstrated by over 500 awards and accolades which it has won in recent years, this is a key factor in the country's strategy for tourism.

Hospitality is not only provided in the air, it should be a complete experience, and what the traveller experiences on the ground is just as crucial. Emirates wants to distinguish itself in particular through its dedicated lounges. Perspectives met Don Surrendra, the maestro behind these magical moments, who shares his taste for excellence with his staff and his customers every day.

### Innovate to be unique

Originally from Sri Lanka, this jazz and photography fan came to Emirates around 30 years ago and has held the position of Product Development Manager (Airports Division) for 10 years. After earning an MBA from the University of Bradford, UK, he started his career with Sri Lanka Airlines before joining Emirates in 1987, where he worked in the Service Delivery department, followed by the Training and Cabin Crew Management departments. Heading up a group of experts, he designs, develops and enhances the customers experience in the company's lounges, as well as the line of products and services available to them. In his enthusiasm, Don Surrendra is happy to feel "responsible for the entire customer experience on the ground. Thinking about and conceptualising this unique experience, offering the best products and services, innovating on a daily basis and searching for added value at every stage are challenges which I have enjoyed for many years".



### Global recognition

Emirates opened its first lounge in Brisbane in 2004, with the aim of offering its customers global service of exceptionally high quality. Since then, over 350 million dollars have been invested and 37 premium spaces have been opened, including 6 in Dubai, while several others are under construction; more than 22 million people worldwide have experienced Emirates lounges. "Our premium customers have very high-pressure jobs. They are often company CEOs



who travel a lot and are used to luxury hotels. We offer them the very best at every airport, and give them access to gourmet cuisine in a location designed for their comfort. We have gradually gained their trust and last year 2.8 million of them went to Dubai, 70 % of whom were in transit and thus not residents of the United Arab Emirates, and 1.7 million across the international network".



This growth and exceptional customer care have earned Emirates its place as a world leader in this sector. Today, in addition to opening new lounges, the company is also devoting some of its resources to renovating existing lounges so that all customers benefit from the same high quality across the entire network. Next on the list are Melbourne, Beijing, Johannesburg and Cape Town, which will certainly benefit from a larger location. "It is extremely difficult to acquire space in an airport and a lot of investment is needed. That is why we want to be sure that we can manage all of the aspects of our customers' experience. Sometimes the lounges are open only a few hours per day and just for a single flight! ".

### Attaining perfection

But what exactly is this famous experience? On entering the Emirates world, the customer is surrounded by an ambience of luxury, perfect for relaxation and comfort, with the same defining features in all of the company's lounges: a classic and contemporary decor, Italian marble floors, leather seating, golden Rolex clocks, mahogany furniture and cream and golden tones selected from a range of timeless classic colours. "Although available worldwide, each lounge has local personal touches to adorn the overall effect, whether through the paintings on display, the products and services offered or, of course, the cuisine." The range of services abroad varies, but Dubai offers the full spectrum. All passengers may access the lounge, through which they have direct access to their plane at the A Gates. They can lie back for a few hours in the spa, have their shoes shined, visit the hairdressers, or browse high-end shops selling

exquisite products. "We are always trying to surprise passengers who use our airline regularly. Recently, for example, we opened a 'Voss Health Hub with fresh salads, fruit infused water and healthy smoothies." In addition to the classic Business Center, bathrooms with showers, over 70 newspapers and magazines, and a selection of numerous kinds of armchairs allows each person to find the environment and level of comfort that suits them.

### Good food first

Nevertheless, the real star of the lounges is still the gastronomical fare. Whether as a buffet or à la carte dishes, Emirates is known for its outstanding quality and freshness of its meals. Within the space of 45 minutes, the passenger can savour a complete meal, which is changed regularly, and enjoy some of the most elegant wines and champagnes in the world. At Dubai, the company has created its own division, Emirates Flight Catering, which employs a staff of 8,000, including 600 employees and 40 chefs working exclusively for the lounge kitchens. Abroad, a catering

company is selected and its employees are trained in Dubai so that they can acquire the skills and take in the feel of the brand, while Chef pay regular visits to kitchens across the world to make sure that the quality of their execution is up to standard. "Although each Lounge offers elements of local cuisine, the Emirates standard must be respected everywhere and the customer must be able to enjoy the same international experience.

The variety, freshness and sophistication of the products are obviously part and parcel of these standards: salmon, grilled beef fillet, Basque chicken, and Indian curry vie to be the best dishes. To set the stage, a number of food events are organised with renowned chefs based on what is relevant to the country. The selection of porcelain used to present and enhance the cuisine in the lounges has also been considered in detail. "Our partnership with RAK Porcelain has been very strong since the very start. We appreciate its porcelain for its design and ease of use. We also often receive unique pieces which contribute to the one-of-a-kind experience that we wish to communicate to our customers".



Don Surrendra, Product Development Manager (Airports Division) at Emirates



### A cherished corporate image

For four consecutive years, the value of the corporate brand image of Emirates has stood at US\$6.6. billion. It leads the way in the airline industry. Emirates is a top brand in the Middle East and it has also been ranked in the top 200 of the largest brands worldwide, as measured by the Brand Finance Global 500 report in 2015. Don Surrendra concludes that "this success is due above all to the excellent work performed by the stable and fantastic team which I am lucky to work with".

[www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com)



## CULINARY TRENDS

# AN AUTHENTIC, BENEFICIAL GRAIN THAT IS IDEAL FOR COOKING

*Long, round, brown, white, red, whole-grain... rice has offered endless variety for as long as the crop has been eaten. Rice is among the oldest cereals and has a number of special characteristics. A staple food, and even a subsistence crop in some cultures, it is the main ingredient of both typical and national dishes, the accompaniment of choice for gourmet recipes, a go-to source of carbohydrates for sports diets... eating rice provides a number of benefits that are unique for each person.*





### Ten centuries of cultivation

Stretching back 10,000 years, rice originated in China. It wasn't until more recently (around 5,000 years ago) that its domestic version appeared. Cultivation of rice then spread quickly to the whole of Asia, especially to India, Thailand and Indonesia. Its arrival on the Old Continent dates back to 320 B.C. when rice was imported by Alexander the Great. In the X century, the crop was grown in Africa, then reached Spain in the XI century before gaining appreciation in Italy and France. Cultivation of rice in these countries required ideal conditions for water and sunshine, which is why it was quite understandable that regions such as the Camargue in France, Po Valley in Italy and the Valencia region of Spain were chosen for planting it.

In the United States, the first rice cultures date back to the end of the XVII century. At that time, a boat coming from Madagascar ran aground off the coast of South Carolina, leaving the inhabitants a few sacks of these precious grains to thank them for their help before setting sail again. The region became the cradle of rice growing in North America, although it was quickly usurped by Arkansas which was more propitious for harvesting. On the west coast, in California, the Chinese who had come to build the railway helped it to flourish from 1860 onward.



### More than 140,000 varieties

Since the first plants appeared, rice has developed considerable genetic diversity and today there are more than 140,000 varieties and just as many flavours. Each rice variety has its own look, texture and taste, which is also influenced by how it is grown. Several varieties are now used in cooking, often taken from different stages of the cultivation process, because rice has a singular quality that it cannot be consumed in raw form when directly harvested. This rice, called paddy rice, must be processed before it is fit for consumption.

Dehusked rice, or whole grain rice, refers to the first stage of processing.

The hull of the rice is removed while the kernel contains the bran and the germ. These two elements are then removed to obtain white rice (or milled rice). White rice, like whole grain rice, is the basis for another level of processing, that of parboiled rice. With its elongated form, the process means that it does not stick, simplifying its use in cooking. This is now the most popular rice, ahead of naturally aromatic rices such as Thai rice from Thailand, and basmati rice which is cultivated in India and Pakistan. Central to this diversity is wild rice, which appeared in the United States in the Great Lakes region, and red rice, which is particularly cultivated in France. The most popular rice comes from Asia. These varieties are called indica and japonica, and the main difference between them is the way in which they are cultivated. Whereas the former allows for irrigated and deepwater rice production, the latter mostly comes from dry cultivation.

### A gastronomic bridge between East and West

Regardless of the continent, rice immediately brings to mind specific dishes. Although traditional Asian dishes are the foremost examples, it is difficult to imagine a paella or risotto without its basic ingredient. Both amateur and professional cooks have been captivated by its flavours, which has transformed the grain from a simple accompaniment to a main dish. From pilau rice in zembrocail, a spicy rice dish from the Reunion Island, to jambalaya, a speciality from Louisiana and Provence in France, which includes tomato, pepper and smoked ham, rice has crossed every region of the world, each time leaving in its wake a touch of Asia.

The selection of rice is still essential and fully contributes to the success of the recipe in the search for texture and aroma. Sushi illustrates the importance of rice and its success is aided by the choice of a rather sticky rice that is not parboiled. With this example, rice could be called the precursor of fusion cuisine...it has also taken its place in the starters and appetizers category. Risotto crisps with small vegetables, peanut rice balls, rice pancake with smoked salmon, spicy rice croquet, etc. Rice, easily accompanied by an appropriate drink, brings people together and invites them to share good flavours and good company.

### Adopted and recommended by chefs

Grains of rice are given top billing by the most renowned Chefs across the world in traditional or original interpretations of dishes. Artichoke risotto by Alain Ducasse, Cantonese rice with pineapple by Christophe Michalak, fried rice with calamari, onions and soya beans by Frédéric Anton, stir-fried rice with scrambled eggs and garlic by Indian Chef Vicky Ratnani, or «Mugi Gohan», a tartar of rice, wheat and meat by Japanese chef Hiroko Shimbo, all tempt us to travel. Desserts are no exception to this trend and include well-known rice cakes and rice pudding, or more subtly, with a biscuit or soufflé.



Diversity of varieties

Japanese maki



Paella Valencianna





### *An energy booster*

Easy to cook and embellish, rice grains have a number of benefits. As part of the starch family and a source of complex carbohydrates, rice also contains fibre, vitamins and minerals. The low fat content makes it an ideal product for diets, while it also includes necessary carbohydrates. It is also part of the dietary habits of those who practise sports, as rice accounts for between 15 and 20 % of the recommended daily allowance. Some studies have shown that it is also involved in preventing certain forms of diabetes and cardiovascular illness owing to its low glycemic index.

Rice is meant to be first and foremost pluralistic and multicultural. It is a versatile foodstuff whose main attribute is that it can be stored for several months, serving to mitigate the uncertainties of production in some regions. Ever popular, rice brings people together around plates on every continent. Thanks to its strong potential, it continues to be displayed on shelves alongside new consumption fads, such as rice wine, syrup or vinegar, which stem entirely from China and Japan. An extraordinary grain, whose biggest asset is its diversity.



*Cake of blown rice*

## GLOBAL CONSUMPTION

*Although average rice consumption globally is 60 kg/year/person, it stands at 70 kg in developing countries and 12 kg in the West. Countries vary as follows: in Myanmar, rice consumption stands at 188 kg/year/inhabitant; in China - 90 kg, Portugal - 14.5 kg; Italy - 6 kg; and the United Kingdom - less than 3 kg.*

*Its importance in Asian countries, the biggest producers, illustrates another distinction: rice is primarily a subsistence food. Out of some 490 million tons of milled rice produced per year - around 90 % of which is from Asia - less than 10 % is intended for the global market. However, rice consumption is constantly increasing across all continents and is used today in the preparation of a number of dishes, including desserts and drinks. Rice consumption today feeds 2/3 of the global population.*

Source: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)



*Risotto with mushrooms*





HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

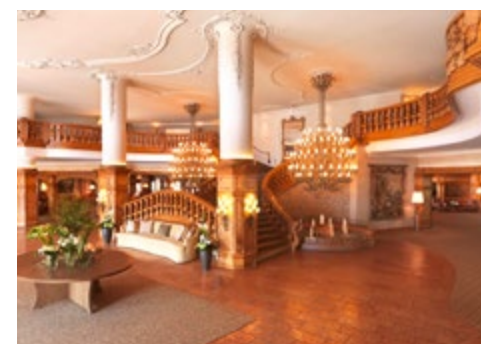
# INTERALPEN-HOTEL TYROL

## Pure Pleasure

*The five-star Inter Alpen-Hotel Tyrol near Seefeld is synonymous with perfection in hospitality and relaxation. At an altitude of 1,300 m on the Seefeld plateau, nestled in the heart of vast pine and spruce forests, its international clientèle enjoy the creative cuisine of Chef Mario Döring. Guests may then step into the comfort of the 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> Spa, to relax and recharge their physical and spiritual batteries. This luxury high-altitude hotel is also the ideal point of departure for a variety of activities in the mountains of the Tyrol.*



Inside like outside



A majestic entrance

*The hotel, secluded in its enchanting surroundings, is 12 km from Seefeld city centre. It is ringed by the pristine nature of the imposing Karwendel massif and Wetterstein mountain chains. This exclusive Alpine hideaway invites guests to step into a dream world, with a guaranteed panoramic view from each of its 282 luxurious rooms. Even the smallest double rooms feature a balcony, as do the suites, junior suites and luxury rooms. To enhance the guests experience, many of the rooms are equipped with a traditional tiled stove.*

The top floor of the hotel is comprised exclusively of panoramic suites with interior decor characterised by the modern Alpine style. The use of wood, whether in the form of panelling or parquet, features prominently. Boasting an area of 90 m<sup>2</sup> each, the roof terraces of the suites may mark a new world record. The opulent reception hall, comfortable salons, timeless and elegant bars and luminous restaurant spaces with such pleasing names as the Spa-restaurant, the Café Wien, the Salon and the Kamin-Bar offer a stunning complement to the inspiring visual effect.





In these areas, guests' attention should be drawn first and foremost to the use of Alpine pine. This kind of wood, a true cultural asset of the Alps, is only used here. The use of this wood to manufacture scented furniture and other refined interior furnishings is strictly regulated and controlled. In this regard, at a gastronomic level, the Inter Alpen-Hotel Tyrol offers its guests numerous peaceful refuges where they can enjoy a variety of culinary delights created by its team of highly skilled Chefs.

We should also mention that, for esthetics reasons, all of the hotel's complimentary parking spaces are located in underground car parks beneath the building. The view of the enchanting Alpine countryside must not be altered, in order to preserve the visual attractiveness of this hotel, which blends seamlessly into the mountains. Despite its unique and discreet

destination, the Inter Alpen Hotel Tyrol, a member of Leading Hotels of the World and Leading Spas, is easily accessible from Innsbruck airport and the Inn Valley motorway. This guarantees easy access.

[www.interalpen.com](http://www.interalpen.com)



The top floor of the hotel is comprised exclusively of panoramic suites with interior decor characterised by the modern Alpine style.



*A portrait*

## MARIO DÖRING

### THE HEAD CHEF

*A calling to become a Chef*

*As Head Chef at the Inter Alpen-Hotel Tyrol, he takes on a serious responsibility every day, for the public and his team. But when he is working away in the kitchen creating gourmet delicacies to win over his guests' palates, Mario Döring is focused solely on the essentials.*

The answer to our first question is clear: "Did I want to become a chef? From the age of five, I was always at my grandmother's side in the kitchen. I already knew back then that, in my life, everything would revolve around what was on the table. It was my calling to become a Head Chef. Later I developed my passion for the work." The path was already set. Mario Döring loves his trade. He describes his cooking as international, but with a significant measure of local influences. "A large portion of our clientèle is European, and they have specific preconceptions of the Tyrol and the Alpine region, especially in terms of cuisine," explains the Head Chef, who prepares delectable treats for hotel patrons every day, often for as many as 600 people. As we are part of the Liebherr Group, our highly prized hotel is also frequented by business people. Many arrive from other continents, especially North America and Asia.



The Inter Alpen-Hotel Tyrol enjoys partnerships with various food suppliers between Innsbruck and Garmisch-Partenkirchen. "Most of our meat comes from this region. Our freshwater fish, such as trout and salmon, comes from the Leutasch fishery. Our game comes from the mountain forests around the Zugspitze and the Hohe Mulde," notes Mario Döring. Generally speaking, the ambiance of Seefeld carries over to the cuisine. Special chalet evenings are regularly held in the restaurants, with a hospitality concept that features meals, snacks and specialities.

At the Inter Alpen-Hotel Tyrol the pleasure starts early in the morning when the baker Philipp Schweiss and his team prepare the bread, bread rolls and croissants for the day. The grain is even partially milled here before Philipp deems it ready for the preparation of 15 to 20 types of bread. Even the jams and preserves provided with breakfast are made from scratch in the hotel's kitchens. "On the one hand, I need to try to find local suppliers. On the other hand, making something from scratch offers unmistakable proof of freshness in such a prominent hotel. Even if we have to prepare for a large number of guests, we must still provide a certain element of charm and individuality," explains Mario Döring.



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*Mario Döring loves his trade. He describes his cooking as international, but with a significant measure of local influences.*

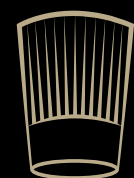
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The perfectly fresh ingredients that garnish the plates come from the herb and vegetable garden. Getting to the heart of the interview, Mario, a dedicated master of his craft with refined tastes, explains that the tableware also plays its role in a successful lunch or dinner. "If I serve highly refined cuisine on boring plates, that mars the overall experience in a way. Using special china has its advantages", he adds. The resident sommelier, Andreas Pflingstl, immediately concurs. The glassware must be perfectly suited to the wines selected from the different interesting wine-producing regions of Austria and the world. "We do not pay attention to fads here. We are of course up on the latest developments: we examine them and decide if they have anything of interest to offer us over the long term", stresses the sommelier. This was the case with the Hofburg – meet & eat cooking demonstrations where you can watch Mario at the Chef's Table. The fully equipped cooking bar or Kochbar is used for successful culinary events and fun musical cooking parties, or even specialist wine tastings. This means a relaxed and intimate atmosphere is strictly required.

Mario Döring speaks of Christoph Zangerl – his predecessor, whom he worked alongside for eight years here – with palpable respect. He taught him the tricks of the trade and a passion for detail. "We are specialist craftsmen and our future lies in complete mastery of our complex craft. I don't put much stock in culinary artists who lack a solid foundation in the craft", concludes Mario Döring. He then discreetly vanishes into the fully equipped hotel kitchen to dedicate himself to preparing more mouthwatering delights.



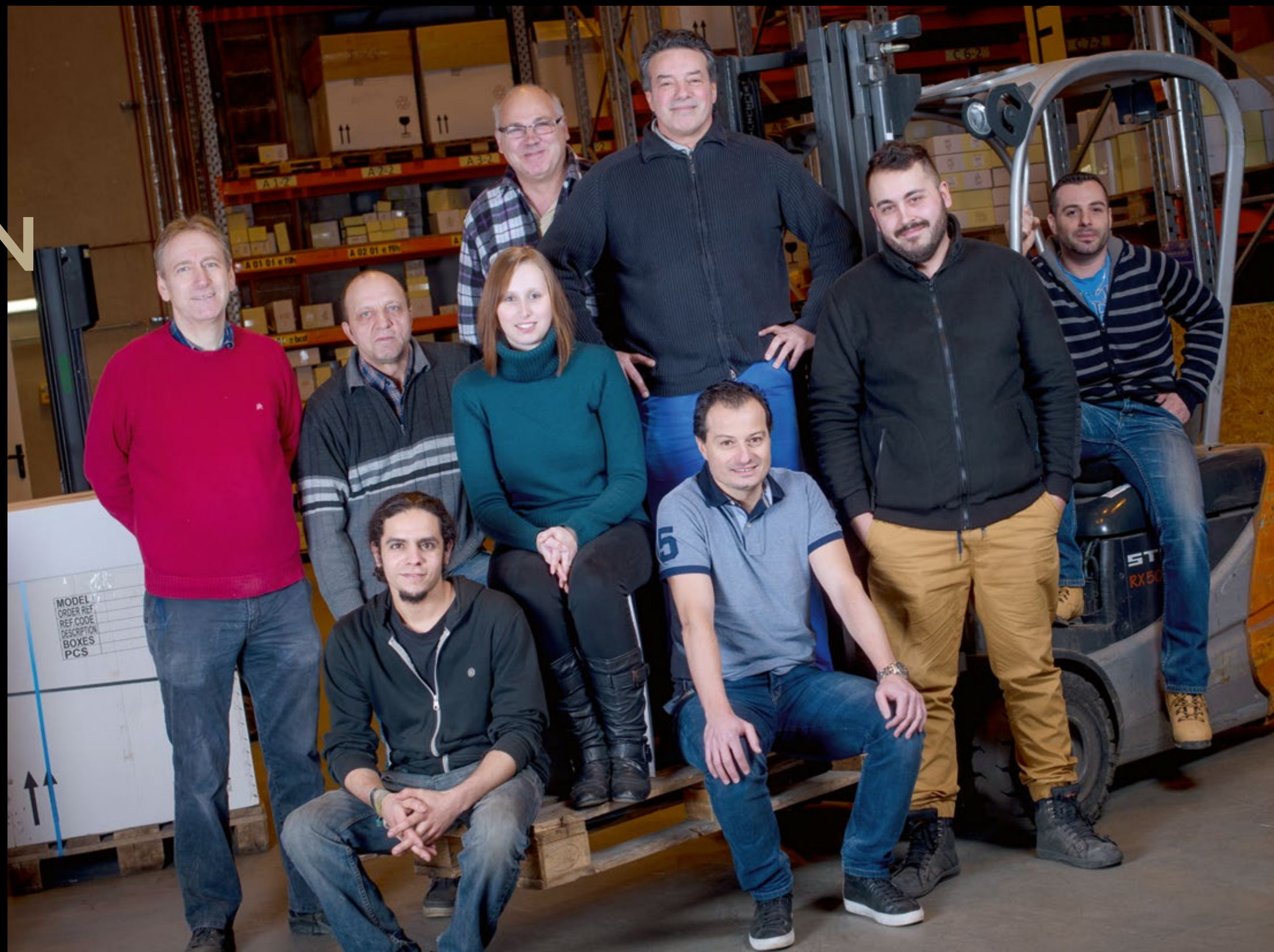


PORTRAIT

# A WORLD OF ITS OWN

*A short excursion into the field of logistics*

*A wall. Man stands in front of wall. A wall made of innumerable cardboard boxes, all of which boast the RAK Porcelain company logo. All are tidily stacked right up to the ceiling. To a height of 15 metres. The European headquarters of RAK Porcelain in Windhof, a small place in Luxembourg just a stone's throw from the Belgian border, is home to about 2.1 million articles of the finest china stored on an area of 1,000 square metres. These articles are shipped out from there to 60 countries.*



*"It's all pretty impressive, isn't?", says Samy Nieder with a broad smile. Samy is the only woman amongst a host of men. She acts as right hand to boss Miguel Geraldo, the logistics manager. "Without logistics this warehouse is worth nothing," Samy declares stoutly. This 25 year-old had been looking for a fresh challenge. Before, she had been employed to do secretarial work at a school of music. "I was looking for a challenge – and I found one! It's really exciting. I can act independently, but am still part of a team."*



Luis Seixas

Three days after starting her job, Samy was thrown into cold water but soon found her feet. Her boss was absent for private reasons, and Samy was left to hold the fort, as one would say. The phone rings. It rings a lot. Samy picks up, listens for a short while and gives an answer. Problem solved. Luis peers into the office, perhaps just because Samy is being interviewed. This has never happened at the warehouse before. He also gets the answer he is after. Then the 45 year-old, responsible for the stock of samples, returns to his fiefdom. If customers need articles for inspection and testing, this is where Luis comes in. The articles are found and carefully packed. Luis has all 2,500 of them in his head. He is an excellent teacher when it is a matter of acquainting employees with china.

But back to Samy... How did you manage to fit into this very male world that is really like a world of its own? "There were no problems. The men were all perfectly polite, just as one would hope. The fact that every single day we need to find solutions is what makes us all pull together." Every day lorries arrive with containers of china. The containers have to be offloaded as quickly as possible so as to avoid being charged penalties. Any container which stands idle is not bringing in revenue. As soon as the goods have arrived, they are registered and placed in the correct storage – or rather temporary storage – location. During the past year, the china factory at Ras Al

Khaimah despatched around 11 million articles of china to Luxembourg. This factory is located in the smallest of the seven member states of the United Arab Emirates and is the headquarters and main production plant of RAK Porcelain. The articles are sent by freighter to Antwerp in Belgium, and are then transported by road to Windhof. Of 11 million articles 7 million are shipped out again to customers in the 60 different markets within Europe: from Finland to Spain and from Ireland to Romania.



Cosimo "Mimo" Galizia



At last, Miguel, the warehouse manager, also has time to be interviewed. He is 41 and comes from a small town in Portugal, 70 kilometres from the Spanish border. At the age of two he, like many others, arrived with his parents in Luxembourg where they built a new life for themselves. Miguel has been employed by RAK Porcelain Europe since 2012. He used to work for the tax authorities and in the transport sector. At RAK Porcelain, he initially worked in customer services. When his predecessor left the company it was his turn. "The experience I gained previously in the transport sector is useful in my present role. I know how the sector works. And that is a real advantage when it comes to getting the goods to the customer quickly." The fact that he was boss of a company for several years is also useful for him. "To have seen it from the other side helps a lot, I think, when you are dealing with a team." The team is 11-strong. They work in three shifts. "The night shift always starts at 6 p.m. It lasts until 2 a.m., including early Saturday morning," Mimo explains – not only has he worked there since 2010, but he is also head of the staff delegation.



Samantha "Samy" Nieder

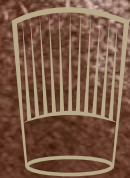
"What problems? There are no problems, just solutions, even though it can be difficult finding space because the warehouse is bursting at the seams." No wonder then that Miguel is dreaming of a larger warehouse. Along with the main warehouse in Windhof, which covers about 1,000 square metres and has



Miguel Geraldo

space for 2,200 Euro pallets, the china is stored at three other locations. What else does he wish for? For him and his team to continue not to suffer any accidents – which is why the safety culture is writ large. For sales to continue on its upward path. For him and his team to go on keeping their heads above water. Unload. Register. Stack. Ship. Or despatch, as this is more the technical term. And for the team which he took over last January to become ever more close-knit. He says that it is crucial for each to help the other when things become critical. And the fact that sometimes the tone can become a little harsh is what you have to expect in this industry. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. Cleaning the warehouse is the men's job, by the way. They vacuum clean every week and mop the floor once a fortnight. Not a single man would ever dare to think that young Samy, the sole woman among this host of men, would ever have to take on this job.





INTERVIEW

# PAINS & TRADITION

*Far from being revolutionaries, it's all about flour power!*

*It's in Bascharage in the south of Luxembourg, a town renowned for its beer, that Jean Kircher and his team bake bread – a traditional bread using ancestral methods. And what was initially supposed to be a presentation about the company took a different turn – Jean Kircher wanted to deliver a strong message about his battle against junk food and the desire to sell a good product at a competitive price.*



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Interview - Perspectives



Interview

## JEAN KIRCHER FOUNDER OF "PAINS & TRADITION"

*"It takes us four to five hours to bake our bread!"*

**Mr Kircher, you seem upset. What's on your mind?**

It's simple, we bake bread; lots of people make bread, such as bakers and the bread-baking industry. Not counting those who sell it but don't bake it. A huge industry revolves around bread and the message always focuses on quality, tradition, freshness and taste. Everyone plays on these values which are anchored in the collective unconscious; bread is considered as sacred in Judeo-Christian culture, as it is in other cultures. It is hard to make your voice heard amidst all this chatter. And the task has become even harder now that bread has garnered the reputation as a 'bad food'.

**What do you mean by that statement?**

The majority of what we consume today is mass-produced in industrial facilities – safety and hygiene standards are guaranteed but the whole process has been polluted by chemicals. It is clear that the driving force behind this practice is the notion of 'output' – maximum output must be ensured. For example, at present, a cow produces 40 to 45 litres of milk a day. A traditional breed of cow however produced 15 to 20 litres a day. Intensive farming methods deplete the soil and, furthermore, animals fall sick more often and must be treated with antibiotics.



**And where does bread come into the equation?**

The issue is straightforward. Due to industrial production methods we can now bake a baguette in 45 minutes. It's the combination of industrialisation and the demand for output. This is made possible by cutting out a fundamental stage – fermentation. It takes us four to five hours to bake bread if we respect the natural process. We allow our bread to ferment at room temperature with only 0.2 % to 0.3 % of yeast, as compared to 2 % to 3 % used in the industrial process. We have opted for tradition.





#### What about the modern baker?

The modern baker undertakes a false long-fermentation process. The dough is subject to cold-resting and placed in the fridge for six to eight hours. When taken out of the fridge, it is exposed to a temperature of 30 to 40 °C – which is anything but natural! At Pains et Tradition, we follow traditional baking techniques – we are not revolutionaries. We have decided to embrace the traditional method and it offers unbeatable quality.

#### What are the ingredients of a good dough?

Good hydration and a balanced amount of flour. Flour acts like a sugar which, when you hydrate it, transforms into alcohol, CO<sub>2</sub> and flavour. If the mixture is not balanced, the dough will be too dry and therefore not bake properly – the outcome will be an unpalatable product. Just as if you were eating flour... Finally, you need a proper fermentation.

#### Knocking back the dough – a baking trademark?

Long fermentation and knocking back the dough are two techniques which trigger enzyme activity. Enzymes and bacteria need oxygen. The dough is a ‘closed environment’ and the enzymes stop working after an hour due to the lack of oxygen. This is where our bakers come into play by knocking back the dough. The CO<sub>2</sub> is thereby liberated and oxygen is introduced into the dough. When it's taken out of the oven, you're left with a great loaf of bread – as expected. Knocking back the dough is, above all, a technique to reintroduce oxygen into the dough. Once again, tradition – not revolution.



#### What about the glycemic index?

This index is used to classify food containing carbohydrates. I would like to remind you that modern, poorly fermented breads have levels that are too high, between 70 and 90 GI, and therefore contain fast-releasing sugar (bad sugar). Our breads are between 39 and 44 GI. At this level, our bread is not bad for health as it contains slow-releasing sugars, which are better absorbed by the body.

#### That sounds like a political statement...

You're right! Imagine this: to get the same amount of vitamins out of an apple from the 1950s, you would have to eat about forty of them in 2016! From a hygienic point of view our food nowadays is perfect – but so much so that over the long term it will make you sick. In my eyes, food is our basic medicine. I am convinced that 90 % of illnesses come from what we eat. And I'm not alone in thinking this, far from it. When I'm in the supermarket and I look into people's trolleys, I am always shocked by the sheer amount of junk food: ready meals, frozen pizzas, tinned sauces. It is sad to see that people no longer take the time to prepare a proper meal. After all, it's not difficult to make a Bolognese sauce! Isn't it ironic that everyone is now watching cooking shows on television, but the pleasure of cooking is on the verge of extinction.

#### It's a broad subject...

... but few politicians dare tackle the issue head-on. Eating a proper and balanced diet is beneficial for health and, consequently, the national health insurance. Nevertheless, I am aware that due to financial constraints many consumers really don't have any other choice. However, 20 % of the population are aware of the need for a healthy diet. What must we think of a 'naturally carbonated water from the spring' where the gas is extracted and then the water is recarbonated? It is no longer the same product. I shall say it again: I believe that food is our basic medicine and it is time to sell good products at competitive prices. Ultimately, we are both fighting the same battle: at RAK Porcelain, you are fighting in your sector and we at "Pains & Tradition" are fighting in ours.

[www.pains-tradition.com](http://www.pains-tradition.com)



## PAINS & TRADITION

*Jean Kircher comes from a family of millers whose origins he can trace back to the year 1760. In 1990, he himself decided to turn his back on his professional guild and instead try his luck as a baker. Today, his company „Pains & Tradition“ produces some ten tons of bread per day on two different sites and employs 120 people. A mill in Alsace, France, belongs to the firm.*

*Today, the products of „Pains & Tradition“ are exported throughout the world, to the Emirates, Russia, Japan, Scandinavia... About a hundred Michelin-Star awarded restaurants are listed among its customers, the motto of the house being: „Taste is everything!“. Dough is kneaded slowly several times, the guaranteed for the perfect development of its aromas. The long fermentation is neither interrupted nor artificially extended and lasts for at least four hours. Before the dough is put into the oven, where it will be baked at 250° Celsius, a last fermenting process will take place. The baking is interrupted after two thirds of the required time, then the bread is deep-frozen at -35° C and prepared for transport. The customer only has to bring the baking process to an end. Furthermore, the company to a large extent forms its own collaborators in-house. As a result of this, a strong sense of community and a personal identification with the products rank very high, which in turn lead to a higher quality down the production line.*





EVENTS

# IKA 2016

*Erfurt, the “Olympic” capital of culinary arts*

*From 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016, for the fifth time running, the Thuringian city will host the International Exhibition of Culinary Art at the Messe Erfurt exhibition centre in Germany.*

RAK Porcelain, exclusive partner of IKA 2016



*The “Culinary Olympics” is one of the oldest and most prestigious culinary competitions in the world. The first event was held in Frankfurt in 1896. For over a century, Chefs competed in Frankfurt, then in Berlin, until finally putting down their pots and pans in Erfurt in 2000 – since then, they have never left. Over the years, the event’s popularity has grown. From 16,000 visitors fifteen years ago to 24,000 visitors in 2012; and for the 24th edition this year, the number is expected to be even higher.*

*Nearly 2,000 Chefs from five different continents will compete under the enticing title, “Cookery Without Limits – Come, Look, Be Surprised and Taste”. Sweden was the winner in 2012 for the third time running. It will defend its crown against rivals such as Canada, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Japan, and even China, which will compete for the first time since 1976. But this list is by no means exhaustive because nearly fifty countries have already registered in the various categories: national teams, young Chefs, regional teams, community catering...*



— exclusive partners —





During the competition



Young Chefs  
full of enthusiasm



### Give your taste buds a treat

Each team must consist of at least ten people. Six Chefs and four commis chefs will take the helm in 18 kitchens surrounded by glass panels – set up in the Erfurt exhibition centre hall – through which the public can watch the “crème de la crème” of international cuisine at work.

But IKA is not just a competition to create mouth-watering recipes. It is also a high-level showcase for culinary art. The different categories reflect this dual objective.

In the artistic programme, competitors are asked to create four appetisers; a cold buffet for a party of eight; a composition of three entrées; a vegetarian meal (entrée, main and dessert); and a banquet of five dishes, including dessert.

There is also a pastry art category where candidates must create a “showpiece” measuring 60 to 100 cm in height. The theme is open, but the showpiece must be entirely edible and created using three different techniques.

In addition to this centrepiece, pastry Chefs must create a selection of four individual desserts (one chocolate, one fruit and two desserts of the team’s choice) as well as a tray of petit fours.

In the pure cooking category, national teams cross swords over a hot dishes theme. They must prepare a full menu for 110 people (all hot, of course, except for dessert which may include a hot/cold mix) consisting of an entrée with a fish or seafood base, a main dish with poultry and/or red meat, and a dessert. All of this must be created on site, including the decoration.

### Well-regulated creativity

An international panel composed of culinary experts is in charge of evaluating candidates and the assessment criteria are very tough. The dishes must not be overloaded, the competitors must avoid the use of any inedible decorative elements, they must avoid over-use of food colouring, they must cook meat dishes to perfection... the list goes on... Each oversight results in penalty points.

The panel will pay particular attention to rules of hygiene, in fact so much so that non-compliance may lead to elimination.

Just a few months from the opening of the Culinary Olympics and organisers and future contestants are already in the starting blocks. Andreas Becker for example, head of the German Chefs’ association, more than ever, intends to make IKA a benchmark in culinary innovation.

[www.olympiade-der-koeche.com](http://www.olympiade-der-koeche.com)

Old posters



**You are president of VKD, the Association of German Chefs, the main organiser of IKA. What are the association's objectives?**

The International Exhibition of Culinary Art, better known by most Chefs, both male and female, under the name IKA/the Culinary Olympics, is a Mecca for cooks and patisserie Chefs from all over the world. This major professional competition is the most important culinary event in the world. Following the model of the Olympic Games, the Culinary Olympics take place every four years.

The competition is a homage to the culinary arts and is designed to emphasise the predominant role played by Chefs in every culture worldwide. Our aim is to portray cooking with emphasis on the creative, international and competitive aspect of our work. And yet it is also obviously an opportunity for Chefs to interact and network with their colleagues from abroad, meet old friends they have made over the years. The culinary community knows no bounds and we fully support this diversity.

*Interview*

## ANDREAS BECKER

### PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GERMAN CHEFS

*A comeback, a novelty and no bounds at all*



Poster of the first IKA in 1900

**IKA has existed for over a century. Could you tell us something about the origins of the Culinary Olympics?**

The event was conceived in 1896 by a group of German Chefs. Their aim was to inform people across the world about German cuisine and open themselves to other culinary cultures. The first competition took place in 1900 with only four nations taking part, but it has grown constantly ever since.

**Into which kind of competitions IKA is divided?**

IKA can be divided loosely into two groups: competitions for warm and cold food. The competitions for warm food involve a competition for classic restaurants, young cooks and a competition for the catering community. The events connected to cold food are reserved for culinary arts and patisserie competitions. We therefore try to give Chefs every chance to reveal their talent and creativity.





**And what is the highlight of the event?**

The highlight of our event is most certainly the cooking arena with studios open to visitors in which Chefs prepare their meals in front of the audience. Every day, eight teams show off their talents live to the public. This year we are really looking forward to the "edible buffet", a new competition that we are presenting for the first time. It is reserved for young Chefs, designed to encourage them to display and assert their flexibility and creativity by preparing rapid, innovative and tasty meals.

**RAK Porcelain is one of the premium partner of the Culinary Olympics 2016. Why?**

RAK Porcelain has been a reliable and important partner for us for many years. We look for top quality in our presentations and RAK Porcelain matches these requirements perfectly. RAK Porcelain products are the creative, resilient and high-quality products that we need. We are delighted with the support that RAK Porcelain gives our international teams and we are keen to continue working together in the future. In this context it is very important to mention, that the financial support of RAK Porcelain is also used for the promotion of young talents.

**What role will RAK Porcelain play during the competitions?**

RAK Porcelain is the exclusive supplier of tableware for all the teams throughout the competition. We are particularly excited that for the first time we will have oval plates instead of round ones. This new range wears the name Giro. Furthermore the creation of Giro goes back to a common idea which we developed together with RAK Porcelain. And I guess, we are really going to set a new trend with this

novelty. We are looking forward to discovering the finished products and creations of our chefs with this new design. RAK Porcelain will provide us all in all with 15000 tableware products. We need such a big quantity of porcelain to grant the smooth running of this big event.

Apart from any particular bias for recent winners, which teams will attract the most attention?

We are of course going to be interested in our German team, which has a strong line-up this year. More generally, the teams from Sweden and Norway perform well, as do Singapore and Hong Kong. The Swiss team will also be one to watch. We are also really looking forward to welcoming China this year. Because the empire of the middle is celebrating its comeback. China stopped taking part during the 1970s and we are really happy to welcome them to Erfurt again, so that we can see what the Chinese team has to offer.

Giro, the official plate of IKA 2016



## ANDREAS BECKER

*Andreas Becker, born in 1972, is leading the management of the kitchen of the “Vereinigten Hospitien” in Trier, the oldest city in Germany. Becker, who grewed up in a wine village at the beautiful Mosel river, is the president of the VKD (Verband der Köche Deutschlands) since 2013. The Association of German Chefs founded in 1884 includes 145 clubs which on the other hand are divided in nine regional organisations. The “Vereinigten Hospitien” are mostly active in the elderly care and nursing. This charitable foundation, approved by decree of Napoleon Bonaparte on 1804, is also working in viniculture since many years. On the administration site of the “Vereinigten Hospitien” you will find the oldest wine cellar of Germany, whose origins go back to the year 330.*



HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

# HOTEL VICTORY ERDING SPA RESORT

*A buccaneer's paradise with a Caribbean feel*

*Erding, twenty kilometres from Munich city centre, is home to the world's largest wellness and leisure spa. This facility celebrated its grand opening just before the turn of the millennium and now spans some 20 hectares, boasting a wave pool and water slides for fun getaways with family or friends, as well as a spa for rest and relaxation.*

*“In the early 1980s, when drilling in our village uncovered a sulphur-rich mineral spring containing fluoride, we decided to build a holiday-themed spa resort in Erding equipped with an opening roof dome bathed in light,” explains General Manager Jörg Wund. Today, the Ardeo spring, gushing up from depths of 2,350 m, supplies hot water to the baths of different temperatures in this spa paradise nestled in the suburbs of the Bavarian capital. Although the extraction temperature is in the neighbourhood of 63°C, the water temperature in the baths is “only” 33 to 50°C.*

The Erding spa has undergone continuous upgrades and expansions over the years. Since 2007, it has offered 25 different types of sauna, as well as the Erding Galaxy, Europe's largest water slide park. Here, breathtaking seascapes share the scene with refined relaxation areas and wellness attractions with themes inspired by world landmarks – a Bavarian Zirbelstube (a cosy den with Swiss pine panelling), Icelandic geysers and an Asian meditation sauna – as well as three outdoor saunas set on the edge of a vast natural swimming lake. In October 2014, on the occasion of its fifteenth year in operation, the Erding spa was expanded with the addition of a lagoon and a palm grove, tripling its area and making it the largest leisure and relaxation spa in the world. The Erding spa has benefited from the construction of a stunning hotel inspired by the HMS Victory, the tall ship built in 1765 that earned eternal fame as Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson's flagship at the battle of Trafalgar, precisely 210 years ago. All 128 rooms of the ship-hotel are decked out in a maritime theme. The opulently furnished yacht cabins, spacious ad-

miralty cabins and Captain's quarters are particular guest favourites. The outdoor Panorama cabins and Venetian Palazzo-style 'Serenissima' cabins lend even more unique charm to the Hotel Victory.

The Hotel Victory has just opened its doors and, because it is anchored in Venice, it also offers a wide selection of culinary options. In addition to the family Hafen Restaurant, with its themed islands, and the beach bar which holds live creative cooking demonstrations every morning, afternoon and evening, hosted by Head Chef Anton Stengl and his dynamic team, real foodies will be especially interested in the à la carte Empire restaurant, which delicately recreates the atmosphere of a historic admiralty mess on a ship in the purest colonial style. It bodes well for the Hotel Victory at the Erding Spa that its namesake, the real HMS Victory, survives to this day. You can visit this ship in Portsmouth, where it is preserved in the Historic Royal Navy Dockyards.

[www.therme-erding.de](http://www.therme-erding.de)





Portrait

## ANTON STENGL

### THE HEAD CHEF AT HOTEL VICTORY

*Show-cooking under the palms –  
in Bavaria...*

*A highly motivated Head Chef, his years of pilgrimage have taken him to destinations such as the Schwarzer Adler Hotel in Hinterzarten, the Wasserturm Hotel in Cologne and the Bachmari Hotel in Weissach. After a sojourn of nearly four years at a luxury hotel in Queensland, Australia, and a stint as sous-chef at the Madinat Jumeirah Resort in Dubai, he returned to Germany. Anton Stengl spent three enjoyable years as Head Chef at the Kempinski Hotel at Munich Airport before taking on the role of Executive Chef at the Erding Spa's Victory Hotel in April 2014.*

“In late 2014, when the Erding Spa expanded its highly popular holiday paradise by transforming it into a visionary hospitality concept, coming aboard as the in-house Chef obviously offered the best of both worlds for me. First, it would allow me to stay in Bavaria. Second, I would be working in a tropical holiday paradise, with guaranteed year-round summer living. A rare combination, particularly in the world of chefs,” notes Anton Stengl. Anton Stengl describes his cuisine as international, simply because the menus at the "Hafen-Restaurant" and the "Empire Restaurant" both follow the historical ports of call of the real HMS Victory throughout the year.



“Our cuisine is globe-trotter fare. Here, regional products with the ‘blue-and-white’ accents of Bavaria blend with the diversity of flavours of the Caribbean, North America, the Atlantic Coast and the Baltic Sea,” adds the chef, a 41-year-old family man originally from the district of Freising, to the north of Munich. Of course, his Bavarian roots are proudly displayed, with a themed buffet every Sunday with Bavarian dishes on prominent display. Their local suppliers from around Erding include bakers, vegetable markets, fruit juice manufacturers and fish farms.

“For meat, we tend to draw from a variety of local regions as well as Argentina, the US and Uruguay,” explains Peter Wittig, who, in a sense, is the new right-hand man of Head Chef Anton Stengl. On the question of whether chefs should be considered specialised craftspersons or culinary artists, Anton Stengl, native of Bavaria, does not mince his words: “In principle, cooking is a craft. However, the best Chefs are as sensitive about their craft as talented artists.”



*A total escape*

The Erding Spa Resort is in the spotlight for its selection of fine silverware and tableware; since the names of the dishes evoke the navy, the HMS Victory in Erding simply must have unique tableware aboard. “At the Empire restaurant, we use china inspired by our ideas and our directions and depicting major scenes from the battle of Trafalgar, where Lord Nelson commanded the Royal Navy to victory over the French and Spanish, but was also fatally wounded on that same day by a French musket ball,” explains Elisabeth Englert, sous-chef and Executive Chef at this à la carte restaurant.

Both Anton Stengl and Elisabeth Englert believe that the product is a vital aspect of their respective cuisines. All of these high-quality, modern, international dishes with regional accents must be perfectly presented on the plate. More specifically, in a highly emotive ambiance, the guest is drawn to the visual experience of a succession of dishes or a single plate. “Whether our guests take their meals in the restaurants, on the terrace, in the galleries, in the palm grove or outdoors by the wave pool, we can



guarantee the right overall impression with a pleasant atmosphere, good food and beautiful tableware,” adds Anton Stengl. And that is exactly what an enthusiastic Head Chef wants to impart to his first seven apprentices (or should we say shipmates?) who first came aboard the HMS Victory in September 2015.





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