

**English
edition!**

Frédéric Schumacher

Gastro.Startup.Berlin

Conversations with Berlin's food and startup scene

Gastro.Startup.Berlin

2017

Gastro.Startup.Berlin
© 2017 local global GmbH, Stuttgart

1. Edition
published by local global
August 2017

local global GmbH, 70178 Stuttgart
Art Director: Julia Steiner
Printed by: WirMachenDruck GmbH
Printed in Germany

ISBN: 978 3 9817242 7 -1

Image rights:
Alejandra Loreto, Marian Lenhard,
Michelberger Hotel, METRO AG,
Berlin Partner, Lena Stahl,
Marienpark Berlin, SPD Berlin

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NEW *IDEAS* FROM BERLIN

Berlin is growing and changing at a rapid rate. Given its freedom-loving, tolerant and cosmopolitan climate, Berlin provides people from all over the world with a wide range of opportunities to action their ideas. This is where talent finds its expression and startup entrepreneurs can venture to do the impossible – an ideal environment for continuously generating instances of creativity.

One of these creative Berlin instances is the link-up between the startup community and the innovative culinary community in our city, which is developing an increasingly international charisma of its own. A wide range of mouth-watering products are being created and tested in Berlin right now. New culinary and delivery concepts as well as innovative production techniques and distribution channels are helping to bring these products to market. Here, they encounter a public that's eager to experiment. And it is often the digital solutions provided by Berlin-based startups that popularise these new culinary trends and make them widely accessible.

What are these new ideas emanating out of Berlin and what drives the people starting new culinary trends in our city? You will meet several startup entrepreneurs and pioneers in this book. Enjoy reading it and finding out more about a fascinating aspect of Berlin! ■



Michael Müller
Governing Mayor of Berlin

BERLIN IS THE *PLACE TO BE!*

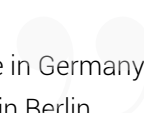
That has applied to art and culture for ages. More than most other cities, Berlin is synonymous with creativity and diversity, boundless energy and inspiration. This spirit has also become embedded in the city's commercial and economic life during the last few years. Berlin has morphed into an innovation hub that attracts people from all over the world intent on developing new ideas and solutions.

But the international melting pot Berlin can also claim to be the culinary epicentre of Germany. Almost every innovation from the world's cuisines reaches Berlin first and then spreads out from there to gain a foothold in the rest of Germany.

This book throws light on a quite particular group of startup entrepreneurs – Berlin's creative and bold restaurateurs. They are the ones that make Berlin the pulsating, freedom-loving city attracting startup entrepreneurs, top talents and investors from all over the world like a magnet.

The authors of this book, themselves creative young minds with a fair amount of career experience in the restaurant business, have delved deeper into the city's entrepreneurial spirit. They have marked personal portraits of restaurateurs, who take the freedom to something completely new, who develop themselves like Berlin on the double and who try out new things. The authors have also met people generating new ideas for the future of the restaurant business. They talked to food startups, to startup entrepreneurs, who develop software for the

restaurant business and to the networkers that match make people and ideas in Berlin.



Global meets local – nowhere in Germany
can you feel it more than in Berlin.

Global meets local – nowhere in Germany can you feel it more than in Berlin. At local level, restaurants and cafés are enormously important as employers of thousands of people. At the same time, Berlin is a city of many cultures and sources of inspiration. A city of diversity with a high degree of creative potential – that is of course reflected in the restaurant business too.

The restaurant business is, like its guests, in the midst of this new digital world. Every single step along the value chain is subject to rapid digital change. However that should not be regarded as a threat. On the contrary, digital solutions can make businesses considerably more successful and efficient. Starting with procurement via order processing through to customer communication. The applications are numerous.

And where better to locate the necessary startups and software developers than in Berlin? The global networker, Jens Lapinski, says in this book that Berlin is more closely related to the spirit of Silicon Valley than any other place.

Berlin has therefore also become METRO's innovation hub, because here we can get up to the speed required. We can refine new digital ideas and services in partnership with our customers, successful entrepreneurs from the restaurant business and dynamic startups and subsequently roll these out and scale them to the benefit of our restaurant, café and hotel customers.

One example is our testing of a new digital tool for human resources management and point-of-sale systems together with Berlin restaurateurs. This tool was developed using the resources of our METRO Accelerator powered by Techstars programme. We help promising startups, which we search all over the world, to refine marketable solutions and attract investors. Our Horeca Digital business unit not only supports and enhances solutions with a promising future via the Accelerator programme. We sponsor startups via other partnerships and investments and collaborate with leading universities like the École Hotellerie Lausanne or Wageningen University to develop trend-setting ideas. We seek one-to-one dialogue with our customers in our superstores. There, we also showcase new, pioneering trends like, for example, the high-tech herb garden by the Berlin-based startup, Infarm, at our store in Friedrichshain.

We want to build a bridge between the
analogue world and digital future.

To build a bridge between the analogue world and digital future in the restaurant industry – where better to seize this opportunity than in Berlin? And who is best able to help establish customer contacts and embed new solutions? We! We can do this and we will – to the benefit of our customers and those who assist them by providing innovative solutions to do things even better.

The digitalisation of the restaurant business is an historic opportunity for the entire industry. Supporting and promoting this trend is one of our most major priorities. ■



Olaf Koch
CEO METRO AG





PART I

Gastronomy

„Have it all and tilt your chair back in satisfaction”

Sensuousness, desire and freedom: Maximilian Strohe's passionate cooking at "Tulus Lotrek" is an ode to hearty culinary pleasure.



TEXT: REBECCA HOFFMANN PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Fichtestrasse in Berlin-Kreuzberg is a road some could easily miss, with more of a residential than going-out feel. Hidden behind copper lanterns and dark hedges is the "tulus lotrek" restaurant run by Rhinelander Maximilian Strohe and his Swabian partner Ilona Scholl. Strohe's love of all

things playful and frisky is evident right from the incorrectly written artist's name. The website is aimed at "all militant bacchants, flabby masochists, belt-looseners, cork-poppers, want-it-alls & no-regretters." Bon vivant Toulouse-Lautrec would be thrilled. Neither classic nor French, Max Strohe serves a cuisine which is passionate,

hearty, and incapable of being pigeonholed. Much like himself. Just take a look at his original responses to the keywords I discussed with him.

Start

"I simply couldn't follow other people's concepts anymore, because I no longer identified with them. This gave rise to the original plan of becoming a publican and doing something of my own at all costs. Thank God Ilona then also came along. It wasn't that easy to convince her. She wanted to, but she felt self-employment involved too high a risk. I'm fearless in that respect, and always think things will work out. And if they don't, at least I'll have tried."

Persevering

"There were definitely low points. But I react to things like that aggressively. I tend to be one of those who takes on any attacks. That's how it is with me. It means I get scared, demotivated or irritated, but only for a short while; then I go into attack mode. And I keep ploughing on. Sometimes you do, of course, doubt your decision; you think you're working your butt off and not earning a cent. But I believe you need to think in small steps: We'll sand down the floor, then we need tables. Just do one thing after another."

Concept

"It all needed to somehow fit with the life of Toulouse-Lautrec. We can't now just start serving Nordic cuisine. That won't work. There needs to be a real Toulouse-Lautrec theme which people can immerse themselves in, and which makes them happy and inspires them."

Patrons

"People must be able to stay until the small hours. Whatever we do needs to pack a punch in terms of flavour. Our cooking isn't subtle. The plan needs to be that someone comes, asks for everything, and tilts their chair back in satisfaction at the end."

Communication

"We tend to be on the quieter side; we're not dogmatic. We don't tell anyone that our restaurant is a good, healthy place to eat, and that we serve up cows who lived happy lives. It's pretty much a given that we'll be offering food at that level. I think people know how to handle the fact that they can do whatever they want here."

Home and roots

"Yeah, well, my kitchen doesn't represent my roots for me, not even at a culinary level. I enjoy being there; it's like a home, but it's not my roots. Your roots are not a place; they're more a feeling. When I think of my roots, I think of my grandma in Ahrweiler and apple pancakes and being a young kid again. But it's not something I could properly define. It was definitely my father who shaped my tastes. He took me out for a meal on my 18th birthday. We ate foie gras and drank three bottles of wine. I knew about it, but had never been able to try it in my apprenticeship, as it had been too expensive. We then spent the entire summer cooking together, which gave me a different perspective on my profession. It made it more of a passion than it had been previously."

Trends

"In the past, I tended to gear my actions around others. Now when I go out for a meal, I eat it without tying it in with what we do here. I also used to look through cookbooks, but that now seems to cause a creative block for me. Maybe I don't even know what's trending. Maybe there's something I've completely missed, but I think it's good to just be engrossed in what we're doing out the back and see what happens. Sometimes a supplier comes and brings a new product, which we then use to try things out. But we may change the menu more often. After all, we want people to come back."

Ideas

"The ideas usually come to me when I'm in bed. During the six days a week that I'm at the restaurant, I don't come up with anything. I need to be alone, and when I am, I talk to myself and read. And I then usually try out new things while alone in the morning."

You ideally want to stand next to him and watch him at work. When I ask what Tulus Lotrek's signature ingredient is, he replies: "Frisky beef marrow is Tulus' thing!" Max's zest and passion for cooking and pleasure is apparent in everything he says. The rising star of the year in the 2016 Berlin Master Chefs competition has arrived in Berlin as a chef who is truly fun to talk to, laugh with, enjoy with and party with, and whose cooking is hearty, passionate and even a little rough. Because after all, eating should be all about pleasure and love. I, in any case, have already mentally loosened my belt. ■

A black and white portrait of Jennifer Mulinde-Schmid. She is a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a dark, zippered jacket. Her arms are crossed in front of her. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with some light sources creating bokeh effects.

„I simply invested everything I had”

Multi-talented Jennifer Mulinde-Schmid puts on a performance every day in the “Schwarze Heidi”: topping the bill in Kreuzberg is Swiss cuisine at its finest.

The “Schwarze Heidi” in Mariannenstrasse is everybody’s vision of a cozy alpine chalet. Red and white chequered table cloths on dark wooden tables, a large cowbell on the wall. Miniature cow figures and oversized bottles of Appenzeller adorn the bar. The menu features Swiss rösti with fish, fondue and vegan dishes. In the midst of it all and playing the lead role - Jennifer Mulinde-Schmid, host and multi-talent.

Dancer, model, trained actress and award-winning comedian – exactly the right mix for opening a restaurant serving “inventive Swiss cuisine” in the middle of Kreuzberg in 2016. At any rate, Jennifer Mulinde-Schmid has reinvented herself several times over. She is an all-rounder with a sense of humour, a culinary clown.

Jennifer relocates together with her Ugandan mother from Kenya to Switzerland two months before her first birthday. She grows up in Zurich and starts dance training at the age of 16. She is cast in her first film role as a result of completing several modelling assignments. Acting appeals to her. She begins to train as an actress in Munich. And then – in her words – “things begin to take off”. She can make a living from acting and a good one, too. However, she often encounters rejection because of the colour of her skin.

“The colour of my skin was a really big deal for them. I have never understood why, because although I am black, I can do more accents than any Swiss, because I am good at them. I feel like a Swiss.”

Jennifer Mulinde-Schmid conceals her exasperation by displaying a sense of humour. She invents “black Heidi” as a comedy character. This character can only explain away the colour of her skin by the fact that she must have fallen into a pot of melted chocolate when she was a child. She yodels, dances and serves up all the clichés you can think of in Swiss German dialect.

But how did Jennifer get involved in the restaurant business? Hermann Rohrer, back then the head honcho at the Helvetia Röschti Bar, offered her a job: We need a really cheerful someone exactly like you! And she says: Yes, why not? So she begins to waitress in the Röschti Bar and organises jazz and comedy evenings.

But then she is hit by a triple whammy – she breaks up with her former boyfriend. Then her stepfather dies suddenly. And while visiting her family in Zurich, Rohrer calls: You don’t need to return to the Röschti next week, I am closing it down.

“Just imagine: Dad dead, boyfriend gone and your side job gone too. You’ve somehow lost your mojo. And I knew I could not get my boyfriend back and my dad neither, but at least my side job. And so I just asked my boss how much he needed. And suddenly, I invested all the money I had. Everything I have ever had.”

On the way back to the restaurant, coincidence struck again. Thoko Banda spoke to her: “I told him that I was on my way to work in my restaurant. And he said: “Right, can I come with you?” Then he came with me. And then he said: “Oh, you need to make a lot of changes here.” And I responded: “What exactly, what exactly?” And he said: “I can tell you. If you pay me 250 Euros, I will tell you what you can do.” At first I just laughed. But then we started meeting twice a week. And he told me what I needed to do.”

Banda is helping her to transform the “Schwarze Heidi” into a brand. And, above all, to conduct herself like a “person to be respected”. She is developing an exact idea herself of what she wants and how she wants to achieve her goals. She has a number of setbacks along the way. She took a close look at business management processes far too late. She often acts too emotionally.

“My heart often tended to rule my head. But ultimately, I am still standing! Plenty of people fall by the wayside, but I’m still standing. You have to make your mistakes, life is not just plain sailing.”

Jennifer focuses on quality and guests that have high quality standards. And they like coming, and in increasing numbers too. On Facebook, they praise the quality of the dishes served. And the boss’ hospitality even more so. Yet, for all this praise, Jennifer is not resting on her laurels. Her new film, “Amara”, a Nigerian production, was filmed in Zurich. She flies to Lagos in March 2017 for the premiere. And now she is working on a new plan – her next restaurant, the second “Schwarze Heidi”. The grand drama about a Swiss alpine pasture is now playing to audiences on the Kurfürstendamm, too. ■



„Leaving the joint really late and really happy”

The Austrian sommelier Willi Schlögl runs the “Cordobar” with his three partners. The “wine bar serving food” appeals to a very heterogeneous, urbane crowd.

The “Cordobar” has not even opened and yet I can scent wine in the air. The delicate necks of the glasses are lined up in a row in the dim light. The wood-dominated interior exudes a pleasant, dimly lit atmosphere. Instantly, I feel at ease. Here, I can guzzle my way through a list of top-quality German and Austrian wines as thick as a book, no holds barred, and beforehand line my stomach with treats like brill pasta or pointed cabbage risotto. Yet, the “Cordobar” is anything but snobbish. This is confirmed by Willi as well, as he casually walks through the door in track-suit bottoms and very cordially greets his staff in his Austrian accent.

But let’s start at the beginning: how does a young person become a wine connoisseur? Willi knows how it happened: “My culinary awakening took place at the School of Tourism in Bad Gleichenberg. There I shared a room with the son of a wine bar proprietor.” He often brought a drop of the good stuff with him, and they did their wine-tasting in rather amateurish fashion using tooth-brush beakers. Lucky Austria: once the teachers got wind of that, they quickly launched a course for young sommeliers. “That’s when I started concentrating on the subject of wine.”

It was more of a coincidence that Willi teamed up with Gerhard Retter, Jan-Ole Gerster as well as with Christoph and Gudrun Ellinghaus – what they have in common is their passion for wine. The five of them came up with the idea of setting up their own business in Berlin one evening, naturally over a glass of great wine. “At first, it was more of pipe dream rather than a serious undertaking. But at some point we decided to take the plunge.”

The biggest stress factors? “Definitely dealing with the authorities and trying to find a common denominator with so many people involved”, says Willi laughing. The four of them quickly abandoned the original concept of just serving sandwiches with wine. “The kitchen had already been installed and star-rated chef Lukas Mraz was available at that moment. His cuisine then helped us reach the top.”

That’s how the “Cordobar” became a “wine bar serving food” - is how Willi describes the culinary concept. In answer to the question what the “Cordobar” is really good at, he responds with “oblivion” like a shot. The

particular thing about this bar is how heterogeneous its clientele is. At six o’clock, you can take the parents-in-law out for a civilized dinner here, then send them off home and afterwards drink your way to ecstasy until the crack of dawn. Willi admits: “I am only really satisfied when both guests and staff leave the joint happy.” And that is what everybody is every night.

Why Berlin and not Austria, where after all two of the founders come from? That has something to do with the German capital’s youthful, outgoing wine culture and with very personal issues. “Keeping up with today’s tempo is one of the biggest challenges in the restaurateur profession”, he explains. “In Berlin, everybody can live their lives relying on guesswork and luck and at their own pace.” Furthermore the “Cordobar” would hardly be the “Cordobar” if it were not defined by that motley clientele that frequents Berlin-Mitte. “We get them all, from wine experts to businesspeople and families to Austrian tourists, who want to celebrate victory against Germany retrospectively”, says Willi. “Cordoba(r)” is namely the place where Austria’s footballers beat Germany during the 1978 World Cup.

Finally, I venture to ask a naïve question: What happens if you walk into the “Cordobar” as an absolute amateur? Here, too, Willi has to laugh heartily. “To start with, I would offer an aperitif and water. Then we would start chatting and drinking.” That sounds like a very good introduction to a very long night. ■





„That felt right straightaway”

Tom and Nadine Michelberger are creating a collective space in the “Michelberger Hotel” where creative people can evolve.

Tom Michelberger knew from the very beginning that Berlin is the place where he now feels at home. It was the city's attitude to life that brought him back to Germany in 2003 after living for several years in London and San Francisco. These days, he provides a new growth environment for unconventional projects and ideas in the "Michelberger Hotel".

The founding idea was born during a conversation in his former shared apartment in Prenzlauer Berg: "I had this desire to live in my own house and share it with loads of people." But the dream of a "collective home" was intended to be more than just a shared space. More of a place for personal projects and communal activities. His female flatmate asks: "Why not your own hotel?"

Shortly afterwards, Tom meets Nadine and together they fine-tune the idea: the search for the right location and funding. He had already worked as a barkeeper for a period of time, she had organised a number of events and they both had the feeling: We're going to make this work - with the right help.

That resulted in what the hotel now represents - character, spontaneity, the right gut feeling. In the inner courtyard of the building site, the idea of organising parties in the cellar occurs to both of them. The very next day this has been transformed into a temporary club that "breaks up the construction routine". That was the start. 120 employees with their own ideas and projects now work in the offices and studios housed in the "Michelberger Hotel".

"A collage of small things" is what they call the urban arrangement that has its origins in the "Michelberger Hotel". They focus on diversity and intuition, on projects that have their origins in the hotel and grow independently.

One example of that is the Michelberger Fountain of Youth – a coconut water that was previously not available anywhere in Germany at this level of quality. So the solution was to market it themselves via a small, independent and well-organised business that is integrated in the hotel and shares the profits with the Thai producers, which the founders selected themselves.

Another example is the restaurant in the Michelberger. It has grown as the hotel has grown. At the beginning dinner evenings featuring long tables and large pots were organised. The restaurant now serves breakfast, lunch specials and a wide choice of dishes in the evening. The chefs attach a great deal of importance to quality and regional produce and dishes.

Every day we try to translate
what a musician translates into music
into our work here

But the Michelberger is synonymous with one thing above all - music. For musicians touring Europe, it is the place to stay in Berlin par excellence. They sometimes put on mini impromptu concerts in the lobby. A music hotel was indeed not part of the original plan. But: "Band musicians like the way things are done here. Very personal, very human. Every day we try to translate what a musician translates into music into our work here."

Artists and performers often book a comfortable family room with several beds and a private living room to share. What's also an advantage is that many concert venues are located in the vicinity of Warschauer Strasse and the RAW site. The neighbourhood around Schlesisches Tor has always been a special place for both of them: "In terms of location, it felt right straightaway."

The composition of the team allows
everybody to do what they can do best.

A one-week informal music festival is taking place in the "Michelberger" in September, in cooperation with Funkhaus Nalepastrasse. The objective is being able to concentrate on projects that give pleasure. They want everybody to share in this joy of creativity: "Our wish and aspiration is that the composition of the team allows everybody to do what they can do best." The "Michelberger Hotel" is thus evolving - as a collective space where everybody that is accommodated there can also evolve. ■

„Right, and now run to meet your maker”

About cooped-up chickens, no-meat diets and respect for living creatures. A conversation with Michael Köhle and Christoph Hauser from “Herz & Niere”.



For just over two years now, I have lived on a vegetarian diet. Now, I am supposed to conduct an interview with two people, who have set up their own business where their concept involves serving guests animal offal dishes. Oh well, I will just have to get on with it.

I eye up the interior of the restaurant. Polished wine glasses in all shapes and sizes gleam in the stylishly furnished bar. A vast collection of spirits. Copper-coloured dispensing equipment, a wooden wine barrel functioning as a side table. Brick columns line the way to the brightly lit forward dining room. The tables have already been invitingly set. Somehow, I imagined Hades to be different – darker, more gruesome, more terrifying.

And when Michael Köhle and Christoph Hauser appear, I begin to doubt my mental picture even more. The two of them don't really look like murderous slaughtermen. Michael grew up in his parents' hotel. He relates with a grin how he could operate a beer tap before he learned to walk. He is casually dressed. At the age of 23, he was already head sommelier in the Ritz Carlton Berlin, one of many prestigious restaurants on his CV. Köhle remained relaxed: "After more than ten years, I just didn't want to do it anymore. That's why I then chose self-employment."

The basic idea behind it: "be authentic. We always wanted to appear in public as we are." The corkscrew, which adorns his lower right arm along with other tattoos, is a signal. "I never wanted to do anything else other than provide hospitality", says Köhle in a firm voice.

Christoph Hauser radiates an irrepressible cheerfulness. He too has already worked as a chef in a large number of upmarket eateries in Germany and Austria. He needed to have free reign: "I just couldn't work as an employee anymore. The decision-making process here is short and sweet, which is great!"

I feel a real sense of liking rising up within me. But then we still have to deal with that offal thing. Both of them should just speak their minds. I ask whether they are occasionally subjected to militant criticism from the non-carnivore brigade. "Our name seriously polarizes opinion, of course", chef de cuisine Christoph replies. Yes, they are working on changing external perceptions.

"So that people understand that we also serve vegetarian food. Our concept is not only 'from nose to tail' but also 'from leaf to root'."

Vegetables are a major issue for "Herz & Niere". "We extract juice from carrot peel, in order to make a vegan gravy from it and then use the leftover pulp to bake bread. Our priority is not to waste anything. We want to encourage people to reflect." This doesn't sound like cold-blooded slaughterhouse ideology. I listen pretty surprised to what both of them have to say.

Every animal that gives its life
needs to be treated with respect.

"We want to raise awareness of the idea that every animal that gives its life needs to be treated with respect. So that means buying good-quality meat rather than any old chicken which has been cooped up all its life", Michael explains to me.

Christoph relates how calm and reverent the slaughtering process is outside of the industrial-scale slaughterhouse industry. How every animal is sent on their way with words of respect and good wishes: "Right, and now run to meet your maker."

"When the guest is served their pork main course in the evening, we tell them: 'That comes from Egon'. There are often particular tales to tell about the animals. If anybody then doesn't want to eat it anymore, then we have done our jobs properly. Those are people who can't get their head round the fact that every piece of meat was once part of a living creature."

Following our conversation, I remain standing for a while on the steps that I descended over an hour ago. Funny, I think, how quickly your perspective can change. Michael and Christoph - two smart, likable restaurateurs rather than a couple of callous butchers. ■

A black and white photograph of a woman, Tatiana Kovalenko, with dark hair pulled back, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark top and a small earring. The background is a blurred interior of a restaurant or bar, with warm lights and wooden structures visible.

**„For me, the most important
thing is to remain true to myself”**

Tatiana Kovalenko is the expert cultural ambassador for Russian cuisine at “Volland” in Berlin.

More than one hundred thousand people originally from the former Soviet Union today live in Berlin. One of them is Tatiana Kovalenko, owner of “Voland”, one of the city’s most popular Russian restaurants.

Tatiana lives for dining. She gave up her secure job at a business consultancy firm to realise her dream of having her own restaurant, and has been channelling all her passion into self-employment ever since.

The 33-year-old was born and raised in a small town outside Moscow. Her father, a physicist, went through a particularly tough time in the Soviet Union in the ‘90s, when people watched their country’s economy collapse overnight. “During this time, the budget allocated very little money to science”, says Tatiana. “Many scientists had to leave the country, because they simply couldn’t research anymore.” Reunified Germany appeared to be the only way out for many, including Tatiana and her family. When the Max Planck Institute in Göttingen offered her father a job, the family took the plunge and moved almost two thousand kilometres away to the university town in 1994. After a year in Göttingen, her father finally moved to Berlin to take up a post at the Humboldt University, where Tatiana has now lived for 20 years.

Tatiana has always loved cooking, baking, and receiving guests, and her greatest inspiration is classic Russian literature. “Eating and celebrating are very important parts of Russian culture, and are often written about in literature.” She particularly likes Mikhail Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*, in which the devil “Woland” wreaks havoc across all of Moscow.

Looking for a part-time job after graduating from secondary school, literature enthusiast Tatiana first came into contact with “Voland” because of the name. “It was love at first sight”, she gushes, thinking back to her first visit. “I was charmed by the music, the people and the warm atmosphere.”

And the magic endured – even when she joined a business consultancy firm after completing studies in economics. She worked in Berlin and Moscow, but that wasn’t her true calling. “I soon realised that the only thing which ultimately brings me lasting pleasure is the dining and restaurant scene.”

Tatiana was aware this was not the easiest of industries. She spent almost a year looking for the right venue for her restaurant idea. The Ukrainian owners of “Voland”, with whom she had stayed in contact, actively helped with her search. When the right place finally seemed to have been found, they both suddenly offered Tatiana their premises. And she jumped at the chance. She took over the premises in Prenzlauer Berg, along with all the staff.

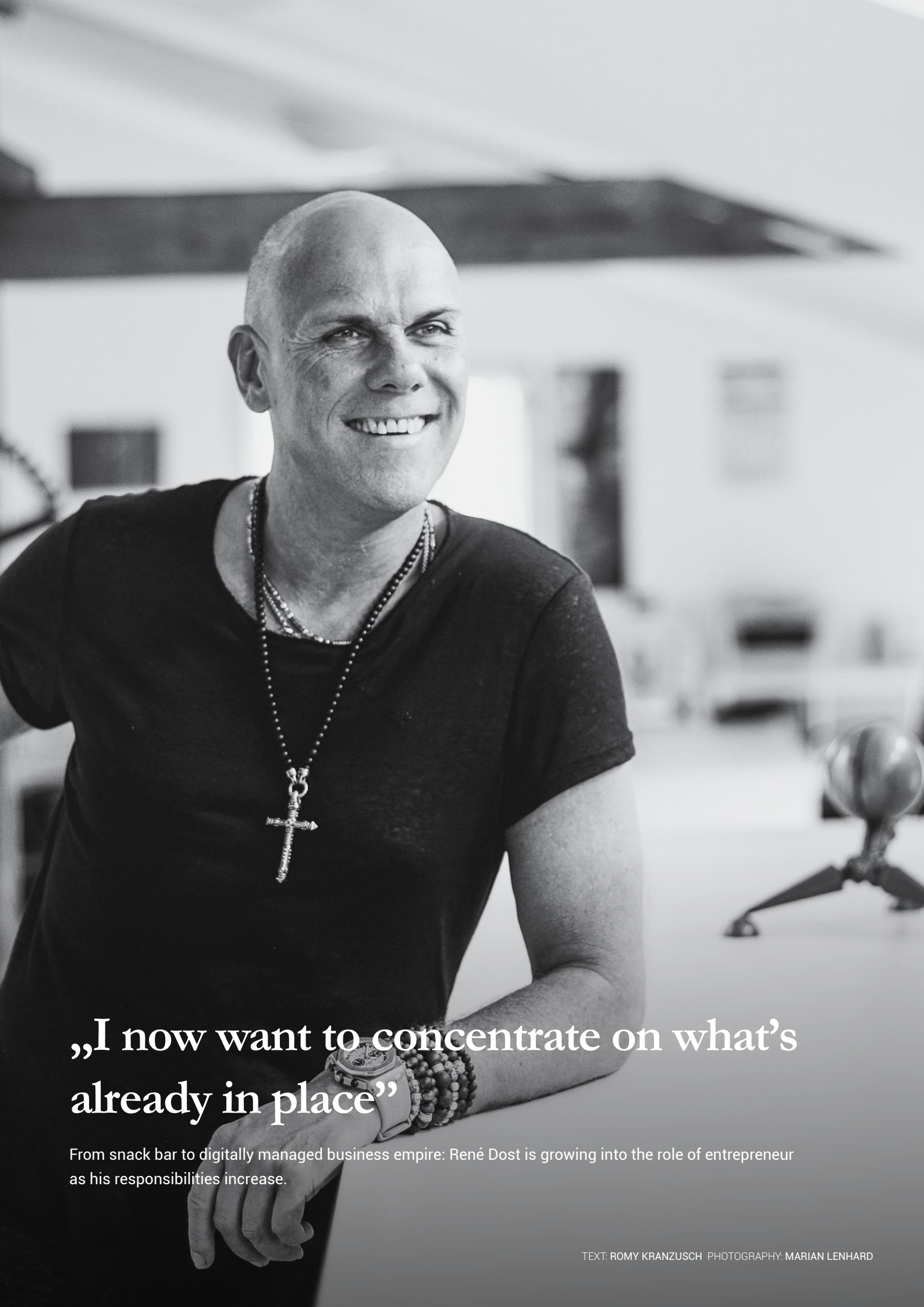
She has now been putting her heart and soul into it since 2011. “Hospitality is not a profession I studied for. It’s more of a calling to which I feel drawn”, she reveals. For her, it’s primarily about realising her own ideas, no matter what others say. “For me, the most important thing is to be authentic and remain true to myself.”

“Voland” incorporates various culinary influences. And it is precisely this diversity that Tatiana loves. “The Soviet Union was home to fifteen republics which all had their own cuisine somewhere.” She finds it particularly exciting to combine these and create something new out of them. But hers still remains an exotic establishment, even in seemingly cosmopolitan Berlin. “Russian cuisine just isn’t your regular Italian. That’s how it’s always been, and will continue to be.”

Half her patrons are native Germans who come for the classics like vareniki, pelmeni and borscht. “But many also only come to drink vodka and eat caviar”, she laughs. It’s an all-inclusive cultural lesson. Guests can learn a lot from Tatiana, such as which wines grow in the Caucasus, how and when to drink vodka, and that “Nadzorovye” is only used when Russians really can’t think of any other toast.

From a gastronomic perspective, Moscow feels like light years away to Tatiana. “In Berlin, less is more. In Moscow, however, the rule is still ‘more is more’.” There, the more expensive and ostentatious an establishment, the better. Whereas here in Berlin, it’s a case of ‘the more alternative, the trendier’.”

She takes a moment to ponder my question of whether she could imagine herself ever doing anything else. “I wouldn’t discount it”, she finally says. “But definitely not working for someone as a salaried employee. I don’t want to go back to that”, she adds with a grin. ■



„I now want to concentrate on what's
already in place”

From snack bar to digitally managed business empire: René Dost is growing into the role of entrepreneur as his responsibilities increase.

The Nauen Gate is one of Potsdam's busiest places. Tourists and members of old-established families are already bustling about in the morning on the terrace of "Café Heider".

The restaurant, which is steeped in history, is known not only as the "city's living room" but also as the location of culinary entrepreneur René Dost's latest 1-year-old project.

The first surprise comes right at the beginning: on this particular Thursday morning, the boss of more than 200 employees is standing in person behind the bar and busily making orange juice and coffee. René Dost's career resembles that much-quoted path from rags to riches. He started off long ago with his own mobile snack bar in Brandenburg. A quarter of a century later, Dost is running a mini culinary empire, ranging from possibly record-breaking XXL restaurants via a fleet of food trucks to his own media business.

What was so special about René Dost's snack bar that he became a culinary entrepreneur?

Instead of serving currywurst and fries, I tried from the very beginning to offer a little bit more in the way of cuisine. So, occasionally, I would serve goulash, which I had prepared at home. I even went as far as driving around the city serving roast duck. That's how I differentiated myself from the others. I have also tried to apply this approach for the last 26 years. Always establishing a unique selling point. It was exactly the same story with my XXL restaurants, I dealt with the creative process from start to finish. Every schnitzel, every coating, I created everything and it all tastes exactly like that because I created it.

You have created a wide range of concepts from XXL restaurants to the first Mexican restaurant in eastern Brandenburg. Where do you get your ideas from?

I usually have a vision in my mind. Let's take the Burger Bureau as an example. I always find it important to tell a story. Many people are sick of bureaucracy. We turn that into a positive: the walls are lined with ring binders, you have to fill out a burger request form and draw a queue number...

What is the typical pathway from idea to restaurant? Do you have a business plan?

A liquidity plan is drafted. I am not a big fan of business plans. You end up filling out 500 pages and you are still

no step further. In that time, I have already opened three new restaurants.

You have created your own restaurants and taken over existing establishments. Which approach appeals to you more?

Both are interesting. Creating your own restaurant is ultimately less strenuous. It's just a different kind of challenge. The advantage I have is that I myself have restaurant business experience. I know what I am talking about and can then electrify people. In retrospect, I would have liked to have brought a partner on board to take some decision-making off my hands. But I am also pleased that I am accountable only to myself for any mistakes that I make. On the other hand, I still have my operations managers, who are accountable for the figures in each of their areas of responsibility. Nowadays, it is relatively easy to keep track of everything thanks to the many digital options available.

Did you regard it as important to get into hospitality digitalisation early?

Yes, we were digitalisation pioneers at an early stage. All employees have to log in and out on their mobile phones. This is how we record the hours they work. That saves a substantial amount of space in the office that would otherwise be occupied by binders. On the other hand, we also have a digitalised billing system and for ten years have used a digital point of sale system. Given the size of my company at 200 employees, anything else would hardly work. The future will be even more digital. I am looking forward to METRO's concept that will improve ordering procedures. But, first of all, the next step is digital feedback. Customers will be enabled to provide their feedback via iPad directly to us, the management. I want to address their concerns first of all before they go on Yelp or Facebook.

How do you view your future?

Right now, I don't have the time to give the future any thought. At the moment, I need to stop expanding my business and concentrate on what is already in place. There is a lot of potential still to be exploited. ■



„It's not important who speaks what
language when cooking”

Ninon Demuth's "Über den Tellerrand" initiative has brought people closer together – in both a culinary and cultural sense. The idea is inspiring "satellites" throughout Germany.

2013. Oranienplatz, cordon fences, tents, the African refugee camp. A weird place, an isolated world covered with white tarpaulins. The student, Ninon Demuth, often passes by here. She wonders how the people are doing there.

A few weeks later. Plastic chairs, mattresses, an old sofa. Ninon is now sitting there surrounded by 15 people, who have gathered around her. Right, she thought, let's just go there and cook together. She soon realises "it's not important who speaks what language when cooking." It creates a bond.

Eight weeks' time, five Euros startup capital. The idea for "Über den Tellerrand" is born during a FU Berlin startup contest: a cookery book that gets off the ground with the aid of crowdfunding. "You heard so much about refugees in the media, but could not even put one single face to the problem", Ninon explains.

The combined cookery book: the medium becomes a message. It takes people on culinary-cultural journeys. 21 recipes, 21 cooks, all of them new in Berlin. Sara, Wajid, Diego and Mouhamad cook venison goulash, harissa cake, chickpea dhal and Kayadi soup and reveal something about themselves and their homelands while doing so.

The startup could also have entered the restaurant business with this idea of communal cooking. But that was never an option for Ninon. It would simply not have the same reach. The book turns out to be a genuine recipe for success and is reprinted. The fledgling startup entrepreneurs soon realise: "This is no part-time job." Ninon abandons her studies for the time being to focus on the newly established business.

In the meantime, the startup had grown up. A non-profit association has been set up, which is sponsored by the EU and has massive backing in the city. A total of three cookery books have now been published. It runs a stall in Kreuzberg's indoor market 9, runs cookery courses and the initiative now provides catering services.

And then there's "Kitchen on the run", the company's latest innovation. "A shipping container that tours the whole of Europe in search of refugees", Ninon explains. A "mobile integration incubator". There are images of

people laughing, dancing, sitting together and forming circles with their thumbs and index fingers to confirm the quality of the food. Everything is hunky-dory.

Is everything really hunky-dory? There has been criticism. Spicy Syrian dishes instead of political analysis. Ninon counters: "Obviously, we don't post pictures of people in tears, but equally we don't want to gloss over anything. We are creating something which all sides benefit from."

Ninon wants "people to be able to meet as equals." No teddy bears as donations. You cross out sympathy as an ingredient and replace it with a large pinch of "positive energy".

We want people to be able
to meet as equals.

"Totally different foundations are being laid by the cookery courses", Ninon explains. „The course leaders are looked up to. Nobody looks down on people pityingly." A club has been set up that provides a much wider framework for activities. There are now communal sports activities, language courses, language exchanges and education programmes. The concept focuses on intercultural communication.

Ninon is now just a part-time entrepreneur. She continued her actual degree course and nowadays is a permanently employed biotechnologist. She doesn't know what exactly her future holds. "Perhaps my friends and I will have a crazy idea ten years from now", she ponders and then laughs. For all her public success, Ninon does not forget her personal ideals: "Be it integration work or diabetes diagnoses, I want to be able to go to work with a clear conscience, help people in some way. I want to make a positive difference." ■

A black and white photograph of a man, identified as Michelin-star chef Thomas Kammeier, standing in front of a large, historic brick building. The building features several arched windows and a balcony on the upper floor. The man is wearing a white chef's jacket and dark trousers, with his arms crossed. The ground in front of him is paved with cobblestones.

„You’re suddenly involved in your social environment”

Startup canteen meets fine dining on wheels: Michelin-star chef Thomas Kammeier caters for the sustainable “EUREF Campus” urban district being planned in Schöneberg.

Thomas Kammeier, in his early 50s, a multiple winner of the Berlin Master Chef crown, and today wearing his bright white chef jacket, shakes my hand firmly. Numerous yellow stars are emblazoned on the jacket, with his name scrawled across the breast pocket in squiggly letters. A restaurateur who knows why he's doing what he's doing. "It's fun here", he says.

Kammeier grew up in Schermbeck, a village in the Lower Rhine region near the Dutch border. "My mother made sure we received a rounded education", he recounts. This included lending a hand in the kitchen even as a child – an activity that would eventually set the course for his professional career, which began with a baker's apprenticeship. But that wasn't enough for Kammeier at the time. After completing his civil service, he followed up with another chef's apprenticeship, "so that the first didn't completely go to waste."

His goal wasn't initially to "reach the top". It was through his "very dedicated instructor", Ernst Scherrer, in Hamburg that Michelin-star cuisine came into focus. He finished his apprenticeship as the top performing student. "During the apprenticeship, we thought we were really close. I can now look back and say we were very, very far from it", says Kammeier. His humble, down-to-earth manner is authentic.

Kammeier's career in gastronomy took him to Worms, Hamburg, France, the USA, Dusseldorf and finally Berlin, where he started working at the InterContinental hotel in 1996, and was promoted from sous-chef to head chef after just one year. He earned a Michelin star for the hotel's "Zum Hugenotten" restaurant (which later became "HUGOS"). This was followed by 20 years of "great dedication", before he started seriously questioning himself about his future. "I rarely had much time to spend with my family. At some point, the epiphany finally came, and I realised there must be other things to do."

The "EUREF-Campus" in Berlin-Schöneberg gave him his opportunity. It is in this place, where a unique urban district centred around sustainable energy is emerging alongside the old Gasometer, that Kammeier has been the catering manager of five different venues since 2015. "You're suddenly involved in your social environment", he laughs.

Kammeier gave up a star for this. Despite today serving lunch specials at the lower end of the market, he has remained his old self: "The old Kammeier is still around."

Such as when there are fine-dining evenings requiring food for up to 370 people. "But we're actually caterers", says Kammeier, describing the task of transporting meals by golf cart around the entire futuristic premises. He likes his new workplace. Because everyone knows each other: "Here, someone will stop you as you pass by to tell you 'it was delicious again today!'"

But not all reactions he has received in his life have been this positive. As a top chef, he learned to handle criticism coolly. "The people can all cook better than you anyway. You know that. But I've become more relaxed over time." His tone in the kitchen has also mellowed, he adds, laughingly. "The odd pan was thrown around the kitchen in the past. I always thought there had to be another way. If the people around you are afraid of you, you must be doing something wrong."

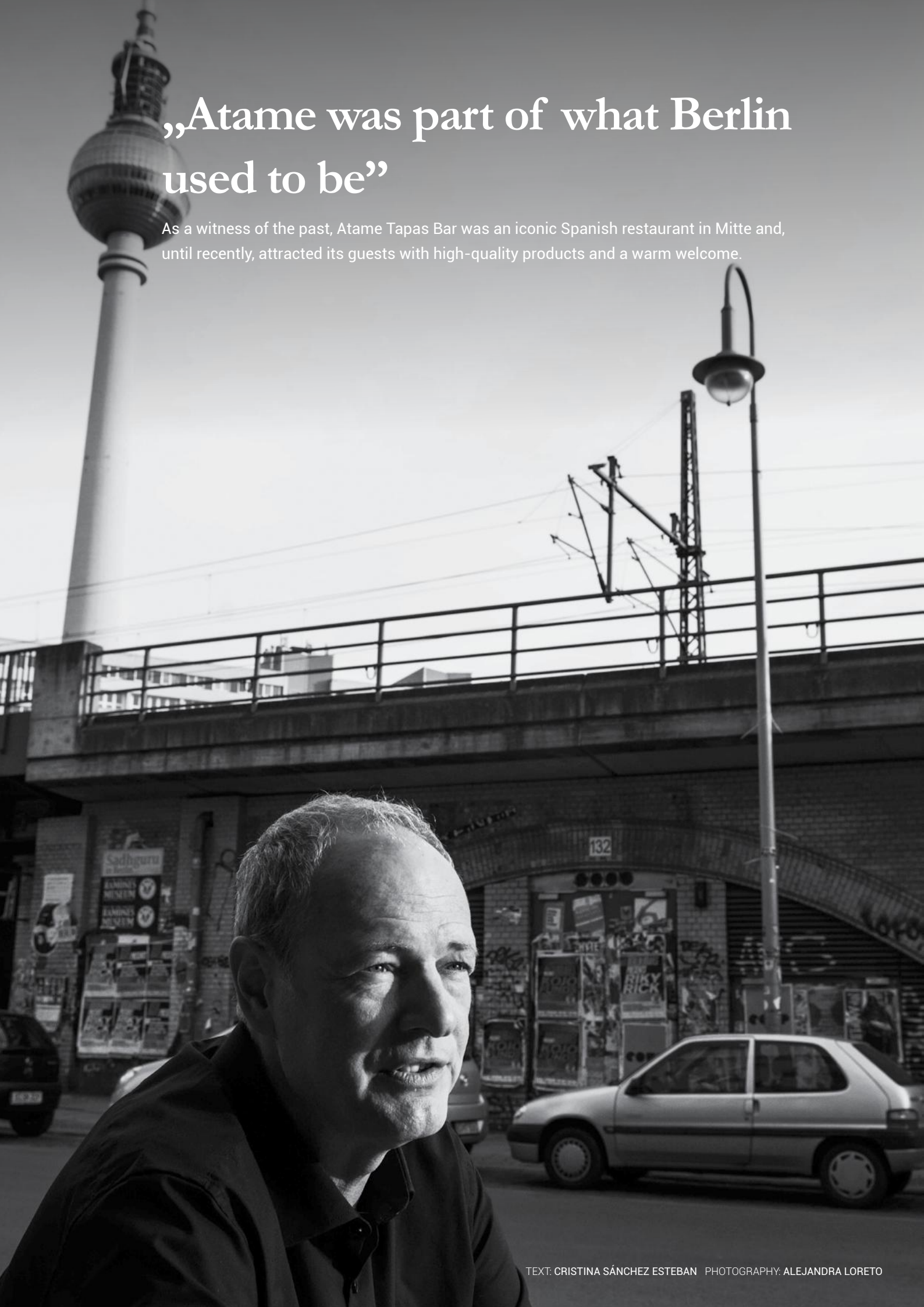
Putting himself under pressure every day is not something Kammeier wants to label as stress just yet. "We're not carpenters; we can't say the cupboard is only coming in two weeks. Every guest is paying money and coming with great expectations, and we want to meet these as quickly as possible. You need to be able to deliver 120 percent every day. And in the end, that's what makes the difference between the regional league and the Champions League."

Kammeier has yet to open his own restaurant. And this doesn't seem to be something this creative go-getter in Berlin's sustainable new urban district really misses. He has some advice for people wanting to try the "restaurant adventure" being their own bosses: "Do what you enjoy. You may end up falling flat on your face, but in Germany, we don't take that too seriously anyway."

For Kammeier, the right location is the most important thing. And he himself seems to have found the perfect place. The startups and businesses focusing on renewable energy and driverless electric buses in the EUREF district remain on the right culinary track with star chef Thomas Kammeier. ■

„Atame was part of what Berlin used to be”

As a witness of the past, Atame Tapas Bar was an iconic Spanish restaurant in Mitte and, until recently, attracted its guests with high-quality products and a warm welcome.



Can one of the greatest Spanish restaurants in Berlin be run by a lover of Spanish culture who was born and raised in Holland? The answer is yes! Its commitment to quality started in 1997, when Atame Tapas Bar opened and its owner, Rikj van den Berg, started to offer his guests a piece of real Spanish food culture in Berlin-Mitte. Twenty years later, the restaurant's longevity is evidence of success. Even some former clients - now living outside the city - often drop by when they return to Berlin, while others come back to celebrate important events in their old habitual restaurant. "When we started, we had a lot of people coming in but most of them went away once the district began to be appreciated. Now, it's filled up with tourists. Old customers like that man who comes every evening", Rikj points out an old man with a glass of wine, "are the kind of nice reward from this profession that is becoming less and less frequent."

With little to no changes in its design during its long run, Atame has become a symbol of all that Berlin was in its old days, as well as an iconic and recognizable place – the walls painted in yellow and the wooden furniture combine Spanish folklore with Northern Europe's straightforward tastes. "I chose this location in Dirksenstrasse because I've lived here since I first came to Berlin in 1992. It is quite sunny during the daytime. Perfect for a terrace."

The menu, however, has evolved significantly. From its beginnings as a traditional Spanish tapas restaurant, Atame is now more oriented to modern Spanish cuisine. "Now the menu is a mixture of three cultures: Spanish, Japanese and Latin American"

What has remained is the care with which the Spanish-Latin working team in Atame prepares tapas, and the quality of the ingredients. They are obtained from carefully selected Spanish suppliers and are grown organically. Nevertheless, it is not all about a better taste: Sustainability and fair trade are part of Atame's commitment to high quality food service. "Tapas were really unknown in Germany when we opened. Ever since, we have improved ourselves, especially the quality of the menu."

Atame, which means „tie me up“ - a term intentionally chosen - explains the reason it all started and also serves as a tribute to Rikj's career in Audiovisual Design. "The name comes from a Pedro Almodóvar film. It suggests

that you can be tied to food, attracted by it". When he arrived in Berlin in search for a job, Rikj married a Spaniard who wanted to establish Spanish tapas in Berlin and needed his experience to run the business. "Our tools are high-quality products, freshness, and care during preparation. I want to offer new and special things, so I often visit not only Spain but also other countries in order to check which direction gastronomy is taking."

The gentrification that took place at the turn of the millennium resulted in the disappearance of several iconic venues of Berlin, but others have since sprung up in less central districts. "Now, in the city center, there are more exclusive restaurants where people have higher standards. For me, the important thing is that everything works fine on the inside so that the staff here is receiving a fair treatment and feels like a part of the restaurant".

The Dutch confesses to feeling disappointed when he goes out in Berlin. Most of the restaurants have a low level of quality and their staff lack knowledge. "Here, many of the Spanish restaurants offer regular food because they care mostly about earning a living. Many of the owners do not even accept any advice".

Beyond blissful descriptions about Berlin's open-mindedness or its cultural movement – qualities that make Berlin stand out from Rikj's business perspective – is the low standard of living in the city. This promotes an underground economy that pushes down prices and the labor force's expectations: "Berlin is a very difficult city because people here have little purchasing power. So, you have to invest a lot of time and money. If you compare the result with other countries or main cities, Berlin is much too cheap to be profitable".

Despite Atame's success and its good clientele, Rikj is going to push himself further by starting a new business after twenty years of devotion to gastronomy. Next time, either in Spain or in Holland. "I would like to give Atame to somebody interested in its concept, so the restaurant can survive. But it's difficult to transmit your own idea in this kind of business."

As it turns out, he has now found someone who cares for this piece of Spain in the heart of Berlin, giving him time to continue his journey to follow his vocation. I'm looking forward to see where it will lead him. ■

NFT HALI

„Berlin has just exploded”

Robert Havemann and Lisa Meyer are contributing to Moabit's culinary revival at their "Rosa Lisbert" restaurant in the Arminius covered market.



Friday afternoon at the Arminius covered market in Moabit: young and old alike are sipping their coffee in between vegetable stalls and snack bars and the air is filled the constant sounds of frying, clinking and jingling. Robert Havemann and his life and business partner, Lisa Meyer, opened their restaurant named “Rosa Lisbert” here two years ago. French gourmet cuisine in the Moabit covered market – in addition to original Alsace tarte flambée from the wood-burning stove you can also enjoy selected specialities like coq au vin or Baeckeoffe or delight your palate with choice wines from Germany and France.

Now a child of Berlin, Robert grew up in Wissembourg in Alsace, the region that’s regarded as the birthplace of tarte flambée. “My entire childhood resembled a culinary awakening”, Robert explains. “My mother was a superb cook and at home everything actually always revolved around food.” One experience left a particular mark on him: “At the age of three I went to eat in a 3-star restaurant for the first time – something I will never forget.”

So it’s no surprise that Robert chucked in his career as a management consultant following his economics degree in favour of his passion and opted to train as a chef. “I realised that I had to create my own world in which there was space for my wide range of interests. I regard cooking both as a science and a passion.” So he doesn’t just serve the classics but also unconventional creations like tarte flambée with eel and foie gras or with bone marrow and crayfish. “When I create a menu, I think in terms of flavours not ingredients”, says Robert. What he loves most about Alsatian cuisine is that it is both refined and hearty at the same time. Robert says in a Berlin accent: “subtle and yet still in your face.”

Yet, what on earth made him want to set up his own restaurant? What led to the “Rosa Lisbert”? “Lisa and I met at cookery school. We had had the idea for quite a while. At some point, the time was right.” Setting up the restaurant was a conventional affair. “Lisa and I were in the covered market one morning and we realised that it is actually really nice here.” Things were tough at the beginning, but both of them struggled through. “The biggest two stress factors when you open a restaurant are the tax authorities and your staff. Your interpersonal relationships have to work.”

In 2016, both the founders were awarded “Berlin Masterchef” status. And they have won other accolades too: the “Rosa Lisbert” was the first German restaurant to make it onto the ‘Confrérie du véritable Flammekueche d’Alsace’ list. The honourable fraternity of Alsatian tarte flambée makers only accolades “genuine” masters of the tarte flambée art.

Berlin's culinary community is extremely lively,
you are constantly surprised and inspired
by the many international influences

And so, why Berlin? Robert Havemann has deep roots in the city, of course. He shares the name with his famous grandfather, a resistance fighter against the Nazis and chief GDR government critic. Lisa und Robert felt attracted by the open-minded culinary community in the new Berlin: “Berlin’s culinary community is extremely lively, it’s a really happening environment to be in. You are constantly surprised and inspired by the many international influences.” Has the city changed? Robert has to laugh and promptly answers in the affirmative: “This place has just exploded.”

And why exactly Moabit as a location? Robert knows the neighbourhood, he has lived here for eight years: rents in the former working-class district have still been comparatively low for a long time. Lisa und Robert really value the cultural diversity of their neighbourhood: “Actually, we are very satisfied with our clientele. However, it could be a tad more cosmopolitan.”

We still have far too many ideas floating
about in our heads to retire any time soon.

Can Lisa und Robert imagine no longer working in the restaurant business at some point down the line? Robert needs to think about that one briefly. “We still have far too many ideas floating about in our heads that are crying out to be actioned. But my retirement home will definitely be a vineyard”, he says laughing. “Lisa also approves of that idea.” ■



Kotticafé Cocktail
Wein

Korea
Kaffee
Tee

FCL

„This is where you learn about
global realities”

Ercan Yaşaroğlu always has his eye on one of Berlin's social flashpoints from inside his "Café Kotti".
Its cultural diversity is where he feels most at home.

It was 35 years ago, when Ercan drank his first coffee in Berlin. Located between vegetable stalls, snack bars, junkie meeting places and casino ads, in the café that he was soon to reopen – “Café Kotti”.

The area surrounding Kottbusser Tor has generated headlines for many years. A place “to be afraid”, a “no-go area” is what Berlin’s daily newspapers call this neighbourhood and report on pickpocketing, drug dealers and violence. Passers-by hurry into the metro station. Two grey-haired men embrace each other fraternally. Cars sound their horns and bikes weave their way through the traffic. If something happens in the streets surrounding the Kreuzberg Zentrum residential complex, the proprietor of “Café Kotti” is one of the first to know about it. He gets calls from snack bar owners or those involved in the middle of the night. He lives at Kottbusser Tor and acts as “everybody’s social worker”.

Chai tea with lashings of sugar, stacked cappuccinos and fresh mint are passed over the counter at short intervals. People of varying ages and appearances are sitting at each table and conversing with folk sat several tables away. The air is filled with at least five languages. Opposite, a blond-haired boy is teaching a Syrian German vocabulary. When Ercan steps into the café, most people turn and look at him. He sees nods from all sides. He strides through the room with a broad smile and strokes his grey-streaked hair away from his face. He greets everyone, taps a couple of people on the shoulder and asks for a coffee. Ercan knows most of his guests personally, knows their faces. Ercan never sits with his back to the large glass panels in his cafe. He always wants to have his eye on everything, in the café itself and also what going on in front of it.

Every ceiling panel in the café has been painted by a different guest. The colourful mosaic reflects the diversity of his clientele. It’s supposed to be a living room, a place to meet people, where your ethnic background is irrelevant. “If you walk along the street you see a Turkish café, a French café, a German café. We wanted to break that mould, we wanted a café that everybody can identify with.” The space does not belong to him, Ercan emphasises, but to every guest that abides by these shared values and that feels a sense of responsibility, which he calls “transculturality in action”. The rules are written on large boards on the walls. Standing together against rac-

ism, homophobia, sexism and violence. Drug dealers are barred from entering.

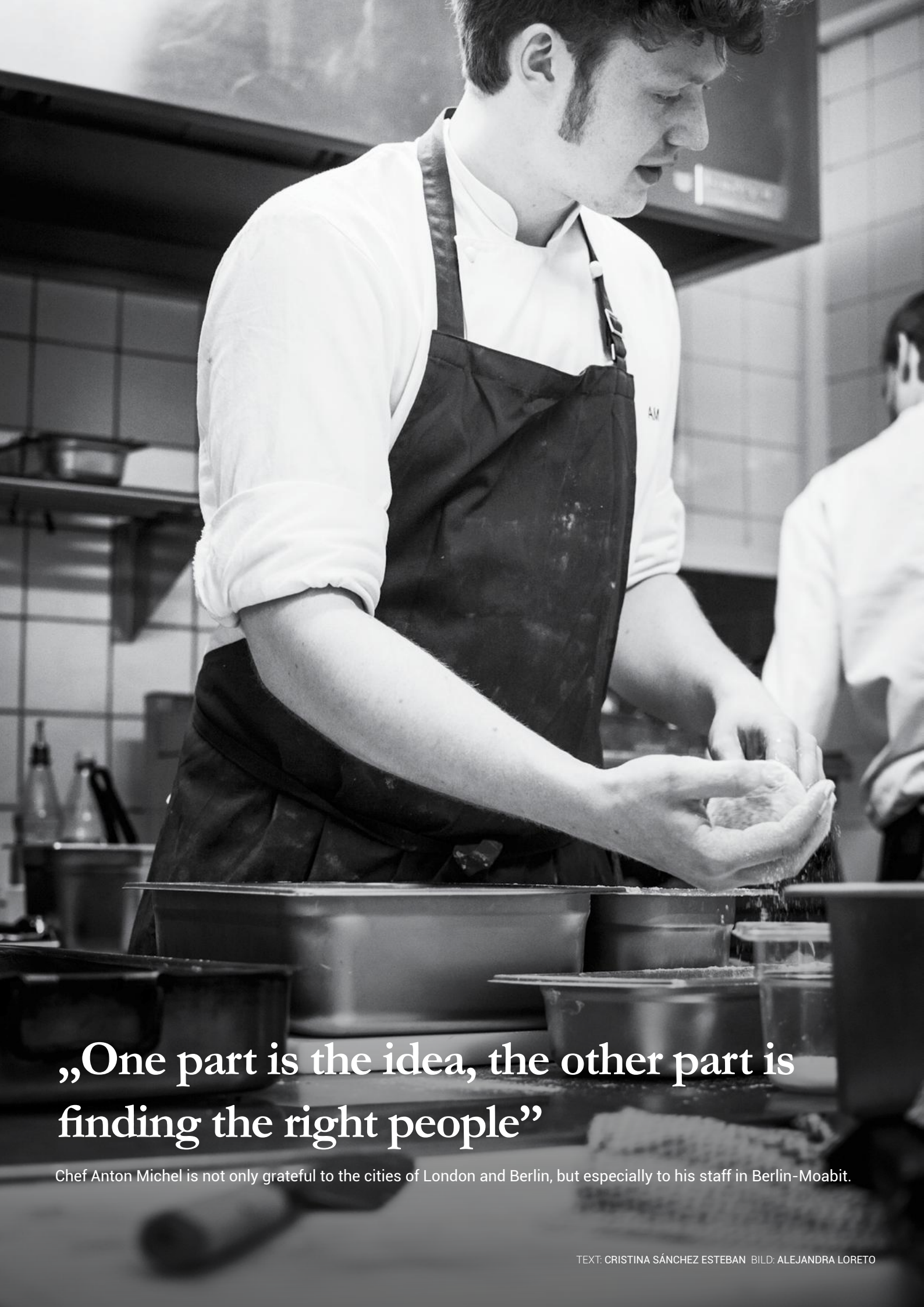
Ercan grew up on Turkey’s Aegean coast – together with the children of Albanians, Kurds, Jews, Christians, Turks and Greeks. Religious differences were not perceived as a problem. The experience of religious festivals was shared on the Aegean coast: Eid al Fitr, Christmas and the Jewish Feast of Sacrifice were celebrated together.

Because of his left-wing political beliefs, Ercan flees the Turkish military coup in 1980 to Syria. He seeks refuge in Lebanon, until war breaks out there in 1982. He arrives at the GDR’s main airport in Schönefeld without any papers. The People’s Police escorts him to the former Friedrichstrasse border crossing. He finally ends up at Kottbusser Tor.

We wanted a café that
everybody can identify with.

The former neighbourhood café is a meeting place of the left-wing community and asylum seekers in exile in Germany. He makes friends and finds like-minded folk, discusses Kreuzberg’s problems, Berlin’s problems, global problems. He soon begins to question everything that focuses on the nation-state. Every national and religious pigeonhole carries a weight of expectation with it that impedes a genuine meeting of equals. He treats every foreign person with friendliness and respect. “My first marriage was not one between a German lady and a Turkish man, but the marriage between Christina and Ercan.”

He campaigns, launches initiatives against drug dealing and dealers, encourages people to adopt a culture of welcome and champions refugees’ rights. Ercan feels as “free as a wild boar” in his café at Kottbusser Tor. Again his deep, chortling laugh resonates. “What would I do if I didn’t have Kreuzberg? Here you get an up-to-date impression of what’s happening in the world. You get to know realities.” Diversity enables him to think and act more freely. After fleeing from Turkey, Ercan spent a long time searching for a new home. He found it at Kottbusser Tor. ■



„One part is the idea, the other part is finding the right people”

Chef Anton Michel is not only grateful to the cities of London and Berlin, but especially to his staff in Berlin-Moabit.

He's young, unexpectedly so, for someone who not only trained under two Michelin-starred chefs, but has also already opened his own restaurant: At only 24 years, chef Anton Michel runs the Richwater & Mitchell. The restaurant is a project that emerged from the fusion of his Anglo-German origins and as a tribute to the two cities that have made him the top-notch chef he has become. The result is stunning: The guests are a diverse blend of people from all corners of Berlin, the decoration a mix of the previous Greek-themed interior combined with the ambiance of a London club, and the menu a marriage of innovative food and the legacy of the paternal wine shop "Weinmichel". One can feel the enthusiasm of a team that's committed to authenticity and the new trends that are bubbling up across this city of contrasts.

What makes Richwater & Mitchell special compared to other restaurants?

Since we opened last January, we are the only restaurant in Berlin which has decided to produce British cuisine on a high level. Something that is not just fish and chips or pub food but more a sort of odd cuisine level. We take British ideas and use local products. There are a lot of influences from London but most of it is just my own idea to show what's happening in England. Gastronomy plays a large role in culture, you have to check what is normally on your plate, especially now that we are facing more nationalistic overtones in a lot of stuff. It is important to note openness in culture by openness in food.

Which were the main challenges that you faced at the beginning?

On one side, the cost of renovating an old restaurant. It was higher than expected because anywhere you looked you found something that hadn't been changed in the last 20 or 30 years, so you have to either leave it or invest a lot of money to replace it. On the other side, the search for good people to work with, who share your vision, who love what they do and who are not afraid of working a bit more, especially at the beginning.

Apart from the higher costs involved, are there any mistakes you made at the start?

There was not one big mistake we made, but lots of things that we have had to adjust during this three months. The important thing is to recognize if you are doing something which is not working, and not to continue doing

it because you thought it was a good idea. For instance, we changed the style of our drinks menu, we changed the portion sizes in the kitchen... So far, we have reached much more than we expected, we are full almost every evening. People are coming here from Neukölln, or farther away, because they've thought the idea was interesting enough to be checked out. I'm really thankful for the fact that we have created something that people find attractive.

What do you find special about Berlin?

I've been living in Berlin for seven years now and I really enjoy its atmosphere as the gastronomy scene is really relaxed and open to new ideas; it's a good place to start out with your own restaurant. Of course, you have to be aware of the regulations and do your homework first. Do not expect anyone to do it for you and be sure that you have a plan b and also a plan c. Apart from that, I think this is a good city for the food sector since a large part of the population here is interested in trying new things.

Have you felt a change within Berlin's lifestyle since you came here?

There's more interest in the food scene than when I first got here. In these last years, you get a lot more mixed people coming into restaurants in search of what typically guests wouldn't try; something new that they've seen in young restaurants. That's something which is happening in all of Germany. We chose this neighborhood due to its nice and relaxed atmosphere and because it hasn't been overloaded with restaurants and many people with creative ideas yet. Also, what I enjoy is that all the young people who had been opening businesses here are really open in their attitude. There's a lot of exchange on what we are doing here. For example, there's an ice cream shop down the road which makes fantastic ice cream that we sell here in the restaurant as well.

What are your future prospects for the next 5 years?

I'm really focusing on what we need to achieve and improving the service in this restaurant. However, this is definitely not the last thing I will do in the gastronomy sector. For now, I can only offer my deep gratitude to all my staff and the people who have worked here, who do a lot more than I can reasonably expect from them. This is the most important part of a business. One part is the idea, the other part is the people you find to make it come true. ■



„We want to familiarise our guests with the concept of sharing”

Lale Yanik and Arzu Bulut are “Osmans Töchter”. Both of them are doing away with clichés about Turkish cuisine in Prenzlauer Berg.

TEXT: ROMY KRANZUSCH PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Nearly everybody dreams of getting off the career ladder at some point and opening up their own restaurant or café at least once in their lives. While some keep on daydream-

ing, others make their dreams come true. Just like Lale and Arzu. Their biography alone would fill half a book. Lale und Arzu grew up in Germany as second-generation Turkish immigrants. Concomitant conflicts between

tradition and a Western lifestyle were therefore inevitable. Lale makes it as an actress in Munich, while Arzu studies Business Administration in Berlin. Their shared love of cooking and providing hospitality enables them to come up with a plan to open their own restaurant. .

The idea behind it sounds simple: to free great Turkish cuisine as passed from generation to generation in families from its domestic confines, modernise it and familiarise Berlin palates with it. After all, a fair number of Berlin insiders associate Turkish food with old-fashioned tiled kebab joints, where skewers of pallid meat rotate lethargically, ayran is poured from plastic buckets and the bright neon lighting is not exactly inviting enough to make you think, I'll hang around here for a while.

Lale and Arzu intend to do away with these clichés when they open their restaurant in Prenzlauer Berg. In the vicinity: Italian restaurants with good-value lunch specials, hip artists' cafés and spaceship-like startup workspaces. Old ivy-clad buildings flaunt their newly renovated facades. Young families stroll by at a leisurely pace beneath the colourful awnings. Tourists stand in front of the restaurant's window frontage, leaf diffidently through their travel guides before they walk in full of expectation. Inside, they come across grand dames from Charlottenburg and hip artist couples. Behind a glass panel, the chefs are calmly going about their craft. The waitresses zip casually by between the tables, get things organised, provide recommendations and serve food. Anybody coming into the restaurant feels like a welcome guest at a dinner with friends.

The walls are plain, bouquets hang from ceiling lamps made of preserving jars above the unpretentious wooden tables. Industrial Berlin charm. Only the family photos dating from the 1970s remind you of both startup entrepreneurs' immigrant backgrounds.

The menu also reflects Lale's and Arzu's own path between traditional and modern: cream ewe's milk cheese with brittle and truffles meets fish kofta. Caramelised onions with goat's cheese are rounded off with oven-baked beetroot. Their favourite source of inspiration is Istanbul: "Why leave such wonderful things in Turkey?", Arzu explains. "Most restaurateurs don't have the confidence to do that, they stick with what they're used to." However, the way they present their food is more of a classic affair –

lots of small portions that you share at the table, as is customary in Turkey. Lale admits: "We want to familiarise our guests with the concept of sharing by doing away with main courses."

It was a long journey for "Osmans Töchter". It all started with a tip from a friend that they should go and have a look at the property in Pappelallee. "Never ever!", they both agreed. There is only a dreary tax office in this street. A few weeks later, curiosity gets the better of Arzu. They buy chalk, spend days on end in the empty premises and start planning. From grease traps to water connections, they sketch everything out and go through several potential restaurant scenarios. But they only sign the tenancy agreement six months later.

The following period pushes the novice restaurateurs to their limits. Craftsmen that want to talk them into having unnecessary work done, the complexities of preservation orders and slowly exhausted reserves. Everything as tough as old Turkish resin chewing gum.

Did they get any advice from other restaurateurs back then? Arzu nods: "We visited other restaurateurs, ate in their restaurants and got useful advice. Quite honestly, all these conversations just gave me sleepless nights. Everything just scared me."

Now they only had two options left - give up the restaurant or battle their way through. They were rescued by a simple piece of paper on which they once again listed all the problems and the appropriate solutions in tabular form. This piece of paper still hangs in the office like a kind of trophy. It reminds them that it is often better to make decisions based on your own gut feeling and above all make them yourself.

Arzu and Lale still handle a lot of work themselves. They find it difficult to delegate. Ranging from major decisions to minor details – everything carries their own personal signature.

At the end, one last quick question: could they imagine opening more restaurants? The reply is prompt: "No, we are 'Osmans Töchter'. It wouldn't be the same without us, we couldn't abandon all this here." With a twinkle in her eye Arzu says: "On the other hand... at first we said 'never ever' about this place too." ■

**„We want to achieve consistency -
as a business too”**

Tim Raue in conversation about personal energy, creativity, team spirit, profitability and alternatives in the gourmet restaurant business.



Tim Raue the human being – where do we start...
Netflix has already come calling.

I take a somewhat ambivalent view of my episode in this chefs' series. That's because it was approached in a distinctly American way: from ghetto kid to star-rated chef. The egomaniac who thinks that the world revolves solely around him – that's not who I am, at all. I am a reticent kind of guy. For decades, I have been surrounded by people, who have helped me action all these projects. They would not have stuck around if I were not a team player. I am only a cog in the wheel. But nothing against Netflix. The series brought us a massive amount of attention and guests.

But ambition and a passion for new ideas has always been a Tim Raue thing...

Definitely, I am a very decisive person and the one that always leads from the front. I never take a backward step. I always want to discover new things, make progress and improve what I do and who I am. When I became a chef de cuisine at the age of 23, I really was a brash, boisterous prat. I suffered from a serious lack of empathy and social skills. I was only interested in my next success. If I was awarded 13 points, I immediately wanted to score 16 or 17. But we then realised that you have to create something that endures and that you can't just follow trends. I want our guests to experience memorable wow moments. I don't want to do what we have seen in Spain. A style of cuisine that is all the rage for a short period and then disappears. We want to create something that is still awesome in 30 years' time.

And you can only achieve that with the help of a great team...

That I have learned over time as well – to develop, challenge and nurture your staff. The chefs have mastered the art of cooking after a few years, then they need to turn their attention to the next stage in their development – learning to work profitably and efficiently, passing on knowledge or having the self-motivation to create new dishes themselves. Sometimes you have really great guys, whose work is efficient but gruesome or who forget in the delirium of their creativity that the restaurant business is not just meant to shock. You have to teach them that guests are supposed to come in to the restaurant and need to be wowed. And then keep on coming back. We want to achieve consistency - as a business too.

What do you need most to achieve business success?

You need somebody who lives and breathes this issue. Fortunately, my wife Marie is still on board as a business partner.

She handles the business management side of things and has effectively run the business for twenty years. I tend to be one of those people that if you give them five Euros, they will spend six. She is the one that says let's put the one Euro aside. That is also something you first have to learn: you may be pretty good on your own, but you can only grow, if you are surrounded by people, who are good at things that are less your forte.

To get to a certain level is one thing, but maintaining that level is quite another.

And how do you keep the creative process ticking over?

That is the biggest challenge for me personally. I can't just employ a creative chef to do that. The team does indeed generate ideas and we do share them. But nine out of ten ideas don't appeal because they lack the common thread I have or want. Often, it's a combination of coincidence and a great deal of luck. That's how dishes like this winter's combination of Brussels sprouts and bananas are created. If you have already created a very large number of fabulous dishes, it's really tough constantly coming up with something that appeals to guests in exactly the same way but isn't just bland. Earlier, I used to knock out 30 to 40 dishes a year, now it tends to be six or seven. To get to a certain level is one thing, but maintaining that level is quite another.

How has the Berlin public evolved?

That is a long story. There was already an influx of people into Berlin at the beginning of the 1990s, but not as massive as it is these days. The city was relatively easy to split into the East and the old West with its traditional restaurants. At the end of the 1990s, people realised just how much potential there was in East Berlin. The public that goes out on the town there is different. The market consisted and still consists of tourists and new Berliners. Once, when there was a strike at Tegel Airport, we immediately had 60 percent cancellations, because nobody could reach the city any more. The proportion of international guests in our restaurant is sometimes 100 percent. Now we have to work on becoming more of a part of this city.

How do you manage to work at this level for so many years?

I asked myself four years ago how much longer do I have the necessary speed of action and assertiveness. In the kitchen, I am standing next to guys who have just reached 20. When I put in an 18-hour day, I notice that I need to take a break occasionally. My difficulty is that I still work far too hard. I find it difficult to say no if somebody asks me. I have already thought about taking a sabbatical. But I simply cannot imagine not working for a whole year. Then I thought, OK, maybe a three-month break, but I know that I can forget that right now as well. I am down to three weeks at the moment. I need to cut down so that I have more time to be creative and for the people around me.

You need so much energy and drive if you have to do everything from scratch.

It's better to have one concept that can be applied at several locations.

How does a top chef plan for the future?

My best friend once told me that I am not only a chef de cuisine but also a restaurateur and host. I never wanted to be, because I had far too authoritarian views of how guests should behave. But he was right – I then mapped out the perspectives I had and suddenly had seven different new concepts in my mind. That was not very smart. You need so much energy and drive if you have to do everything from scratch. It's better to have one concept that can be applied at several locations. That is what I have achieved with the Tertium Premium Residences in Constance, Munich and Berlin. In all three residences, we have defined what senior-citizen-friendly breakfasts, lunches and dinners could (or should) be and have developed a brasserie concept named Colette. Or the next step a year ago – a concept for a TUI cruise ship. I am already working on the option of broadening that out. Yes, I still need to work for a while to fill up my pension scheme, but I still think in terms of one-year plans. And I then see them through come what may. ■



„I love talking to my guests”

Extensive hospitality is what Mesut Can and his wife Corina serve alongside tasty coffee and homemade food in their organic and sustainable Cafe Dots in the heart of Neukölln.



Few places in the world can boast such a wealth of history and culture as Berlin does, not to mention the youthful energy and creative drive. Especially around neighbourhoods that have experienced gentrification processes, urban culture is thriving; the lively streets are flanked by small shops and cozy cafes. With its colorful entry and welcoming atmosphere, Mesut Can's Cafe Dots fits right in.

In a place where the design alone will lift one's spirit, Mesut and his wife Corina have created a warm and quiet refuge for those living on the border between Berlin's Kreuzberg and Neukölln districts, two of the city's most culturally active areas.

"The Government promoted Neukölln through low rental prices which attracted artists and people in search of a creative atmosphere", explains Mesut, „now, it is a vibrant place where people spend most of their day outside, talking in the street, on terraces...and that's really good for a business like ours." Proof of this are the always occupied wooden tables, that were hand-made by the owners themselves - just like most of the furniture and decoration. "We want everything to be very personal and detailed."

Since the beginning, the core idea has been to do everything organically without making compromises on taste. Mesut takes care of the coffee and Corina improves her recipes in the kitchen. Their trust in organic products, not only for better quality but for a positive impact on nature, has led Dots to a menu where there are all sorts of original and photogenic delicacies. These are prepared mainly from regional and organic food and on request, there's also vegan or gluten-free breakfast.

"For us, the main thing is to offer a relaxed place where taste and health merge and where customers do a good thing just by coming in. At Dots, they are supporting organic food and its cultivation." Besides serving coffee specialities made from organically cultivated fair trade beans produced in Mexico that are then roasted in Berlin, they also offer self-baked cakes and oven-warm tartlets to ensure an additional endorphin release.

Guests are entertained in a variety of languages, as the host himself has Turkish roots. "I love to talk with customers, not because of my business but because inter-

acting with people was one of the reasons for opening a cafe. Dots is our idea of what a coffee place should be." Here, people read newspapers, get their cappuccino or breakfast and sit by their laptops in perfect harmony. Although the latter are not as common due to the lack of WiFi. This may seem surprising since Mesut is a computer enthusiast who has devoted thirty years of his life in front of a screen. "After 10 years of working in animation, I realized I spent too much time inside an office. So now, I've found something that gets me out of the office, lets me talk to people and work more with my hands".

We want everything to be very personal.

Mesut believes in connections that have to do with people, that can only be provided by a good cup of coffee and a quiet conversation with your habitual waiter. "We're having a lot of good feedback - people like the food, the place... and everything we do here is by ourselves. It took us a year to realize our idea and renovate the place to host it".

It should be noted that none of the owners come from the typical background in gastronomy. Mesut studied Computer Science and still has an animation studio called Dyrdee, while Corina graduated in environmental landscapes and her experience in the food sector comes from working in a fair trade organic company. At some point, both felt the need to do something else, and they came up with the idea of finding a business where they could make a positive impact. "I started doing coffee at home and got better each day, so we said look! It tastes so good, and there are already so many coffee places here that the city can definitely host one or two more".

His plan for the future is to improve the quality of Dots further and to provide customers with the greatest experience in Berlin's coffee scene. "It's always difficult to retain a good level of service in a city where people pass through, especially in this sector. But we are lucky to have a great team that truly identify with what we do here. In the summer, we are planning to offer dinners and our chef, who is originally from Peru, has developed some fantastic new organic recipes." ■



„You just have to keep picking yourself up off the floor”

Rapid rise, crisis and then comeback including a Michelin star: Markus Semmler, Berlin Master Chef in 2016, in lounge-conversation about a life in the restaurant business.

Markus Semmler welcomes me to the cigar lounge of his restaurant. “Masculine” is how this space is described on his website. Rightly so. As I sit opposite this friendly 2-metre-tall guy, he artfully lights a Havana with a huge flame.

How did the man, now leaning back casually in the crumpled upholstery, get into the highly competitive restaurant business? Markus Semmler has actually always been a part of this business. Born into a restaurateur family in Hesse, he helped out with waiting as a nipper. This was followed by a chef’s apprenticeship in a factory canteen, a hotel management qualification and military service in the German Armed Forces. He then immediately celebrated his first hotel kitchen successes. “And that’s despite not having a clue.”

Semmler, incidentally a fan of fast cars and a successful Porsche racing driver, steps on the gas during his rise through the culinary ranks: chef de cuisine at the age of 25, “Shooting Star of the Year” in 1996 and “Master Chef” in 1998 in Berlin. In 2000, he is voted Restaurateur of the Year by Gault & Millau.

Yet, as rapid as his rise was, his fall from culinary grace was just as dramatic. Ripped off by partners, he and his two restaurants, Mensa and Stil, slid into bankruptcy in 2000. “After that, I worked like a dog for two years to pay off my debts.” He does just that in the catering business and in a new restaurant on Sylt. His motto is: “You just have to keep picking yourself up off the floor.”

He is keen to make a comeback. In 2011, he is again under starter’s orders on Sächsische Strasse and can’t wait for the off. But he is no longer competing alone in the “Rallye Haute Cuisine”. By this time, Markus Semmler has met his wife, Tatiana, who ensures that “Das Restaurant” keeps a firm grip on business reality. Semmler is grateful: “You should always have a partner at your side, who is good at the maths.”

What, besides the business risk, is actually the biggest challenge in the restaurateur profession? Markus Semmler takes a deep drag on his cigar. “Self-motivation”, he says and blows a smoke ring into the air. “If you really want to make it and stand on your own two feet, you need to make very major sacrifices.”

If it had not been for Tatiana, Markus Semmler may well have turned his back on Berlin. He now feels right at home in Charlottenburg and Wilmersdorf. “The neighbourhood culture makes living in Berlin like living in a village.” And what three adjectives would he use to describe the culinary community in Berlin? Markus Semmler thinks briefly. “Multi-faceted, sophisticated and exceptional.”

If you really want to make it and stand on your own two feet, you need to make very major sacrifices.

Semmler is particularly delighted “that colleagues, who visit us here, salute what we are doing every time.” His cuisine is awarded that coveted Michelin star in 2015 and he is once again voted “Berlin Master Chef” in 2016. As proprietor, he offers just one menu in “Das Restaurant”, but lets his guests choose between four and nine courses. His culinary concept involves the classic art of cooking premium-quality basic ingredients to create imaginative, modern compositions. The guests stream in through the doors and the critics are fulsome in their praise.

In addition to his restaurant, Markus Semmler also manages to run a catering service, which can also feed a thousand people in an evening. Semmler derives self-confidence from that: “I would be so bold as to say that we are Germany’s best caterer.”

Can Semmler imagine a life without the exertion, the adrenalin and the appreciation that is part and parcel of the restaurant business? At that point, he has to give a throaty laugh: “Definitely not. I will eat my last meal in the kitchen and will keel over standing next to the stove.” But then he admits to a second passion - diving. A diving school somewhere by the sea, with a restaurant attached... Yes, he could envisage that. But there’s a way to go before he reaches that point. Meanwhile his Havana has long since gone cold. Time for Markus Semmler to return to work. ■



„What’s most important is to quickly recognize and correct your mistakes”

In his Schönebergian restaurant, ballet dancer Yorai Feinberg has reinvented himself - as well as the best Hummus in Berlin.

TEXT: NITAY FEIGENBAUM PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Modern oriental-pop lays the bassline to the multicultural soundtrack of Schöneberg’s Feinberg’s. Add in loud peals of laughter, conversations in five different languages and the clinking of glasses filled with Arak and wine. To our left, a huge family is chatting in

Hebrew across three tables. Across from us, Yorai Feinberg, 35, founder and owner, tells us his story.

„Most people have this romantic dream of owning a restaurant or a bar,” he says as he crosses both arms behind his head. „But as soon as they open up, they’re in

for a bad surprise: You won't be successful unless you're willing to sacrifice a lot first. That's why you need to have unconditional discipline." Spoken like a true veteran of the infamous Berlin restaurant scene. It's hard to believe Feinberg's only opened up four years ago, and that Yorai had absolutely nothing to do with gastronomy before that.

Born and raised in Jerusalem, Yorai decides to drop out of school at the age of 16 in order to pursue his big passion: „No, not cooking," he laughs. „Ballet!" Ever since he was a little boy, Yorai has been dancing, though as the years pass, he feels less and less challenged in Jerusalem. His teachers recognize his talent and send him to London and Stuttgart to train with ballet legend Petr Antonovich Pestov.

Everyday life as a ballet student: Practice for ten hours a day, then go home to study German, English and even Russian, just to understand the dancing teachers. Ballet turns from passion to obsession. Eight years of the intensive training pay off in the end: The ballet academy is followed up by an impressive international career. Yorai dances at the Vienna Staatsballett, gets the title of official court jester in Stockholm, performs in Paris, Tokyo, Leipzig, London, Tel Aviv and San Diego.

Still, his life doesn't get any easier. „I never allowed myself any time off. No matter how hard it got or how tired I felt, I always thought: I'm just going to keep doing this until I reach my goal."

But at some point Yorai just can't stand the ballet world with its intrigues and never ending routine anymore. He decides to quit dancing from one day to the next at the age of 29. Time to draw the line and start a new chapter.

Having never even graduated high-school, he is now forced to reinvent himself. Yorai 2.0 is going to be a businessman, he decides and dives headfirst into the world of import/export. Once again, he won't take any timeouts. Within the next two years he goes from being unemployed to managing a textile company in Nairobi. And still his new position doesn't feel quite right either. „There's too much corruption and crime in this city. That's no way to live, only being able to leave the house if you have an armored car."

In 2013, he sets his next challenge: Opening his own Jewish-Sephardic restaurant right in the heart of Berlin-Schöneberg. „Berlin is big, liberal, diverse," he muses. „I wanted to try that."

Once again, he starts from scratch, having a rather sober outlook on the future: „I was doomed to fail - all the requirements were there. I had close to no money, no experience in gastronomy and no family to back me up. I made every possible mistake you could think of," he sighs. „But problems will always come up sooner or later. What's most important is to quickly recognize your mistakes, and correct them even quicker."

And so he once again works relentlessly. „Every day I tried to get a bit more perfect, and my guests saw that," he says somewhat proudly. The restaurant does surprisingly well. After two weeks there already are regulars coming in. Three months later reservations fill up almost every evening.

So what's the secret to this quick success? Hiring celebrity chefs? Sophisticated marketing strategies? Yorai raises an eyebrow. No, none of these. „You just need to have a close relationship with your guests. You are more than just a restaurant manager, you are their host."

Despite the constant stress, he takes the time to sit down and talk with every single one of his guests. He is curious, wants to get to know the people, how they liked the food. In the following months, many keep coming back to check on the progress he's making. „The people of the Kiez adopted me."

Funnily enough, in the beginning Yorai had meant to bring Hummus and Israeli salads to the Berlin supermarkets. The result of those initial experiments was an exceptionally good Hummus, which critics went on to declare best of Berlin. But Yorai wouldn't be Yorai, if he were satisfied with just that. „I still try new variations. Hummus can always get better."

Will he stay in gastronomy for good or will he soon completely change direction once more, we want to know. Yorai smiles and pours us another Arrak. „I don't know what I'll be doing in a year from now. But for now, I'm living the moment." ■

A black and white portrait of a man, Till Harter, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, a dark tie, and a fedora hat. He has a short beard and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some architectural elements and lights.

„The great freedom of just letting go”

The ideas conjured up by enthusiastic business founder Till Harter are legendary. The philosophy on the Berlin scene is one of change.

When Till Harter doesn't want to be recognised, he leaves his hat at home. He has at least ten of them. An acquaintance in the elevator of Berlin's exclusive Soho Haus business hotel jokingly asks whether he also wears them in bed. Till just smiles without answering. To complement his hat, he is wearing a blue suit whose sleeves are adorned with gold embroidery. Sitting in the restaurant's lilac armchairs overlooking the city of Berlin, he looks like a character from a Wes Anderson film. The hip restaurateur is a familiar face at the Soho Haus, with people greeting him virtually wherever he goes.

When asked about his life, Till Harter only begins with his move to Berlin. His birth and youth appear to be hardly worth a mention, unlike the way we has changed himself over the years, which has always tied in with the changes going on in Berlin.

Harter arrived in East Berlin shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The hip scenes were mainly centred around the Prenzlauer Berg and Mitte districts, where occupied buildings and vacant premises were converted into bars and clubs. Some were only big for a couple of nights, before disappearing again. Harter let the night carry him away, making contacts in the process. He worked as bartender for a while, but he soon wanted to open something of his own. His own shop, Club 103. Which later became Bar 103.

He didn't spend a lot of time thinking about the decision. Everyone was trying out new things at the time, he recounts. "I let myself be swept along with it." Harter and a friend started looking for suitable premises. At that time, no one thought too much about contracts or landlords. There were enough vacant buildings.

Anyone who remembers the '90s wasn't there. He laughs at this saying. "That's what they say about every decade." For Harter, the years after German reunification were a time of freedom, openness and new possibilities. Everyone could just let go and try things out for themselves. Harter believes this Berlin attitude continues to be a defining factor to this day. Something not found anywhere else in Germany.

Back then, event details were printed on small flyers and distributed to selected people. Social media was still a

long way off. Exclusivity still plays a role in Harter's approach. Bar 103 taught him what he now considers to be one of his greatest talents: Interior design. Unique spaces which he fills with his passion and enthusiasm. Where he makes his mark.

After the success of Bar 103, he rode the wave and opened a bar in Kreuzberg. But this time none of his faithful followed. It was a huge blow. Looking back, however, Till Harter believes it was a positive thing he learned a lot from. At that time, Kreuzberg wasn't the place it is today. He shifted his attention back to Mitte, opening the bar TAUSEND, a louche joint right under the railway arches of Friedrichstrasse, where Berlin's in-crowd mixed with the international jet set.

Having spent several years making a name for himself as a hip restaurateur, he started to feel Berlin hemming him in. In 2014, he sold his establishments, tested hotels, and helped found the Stue Hotel in Tiergarten. He travelled to Tulum in Mexico, where he was part of Papaya Playa, and opened a pop-up club house in Rio de Janeiro, overlooking Sugarloaf Mountain. Players from the German national team even stopped by during the FIFA World Cup.

Back in Berlin, Harter can continue to live off what he loves most and does best: Thinking up and implementing concepts. Such as the branding and communications for Das Stue Hotel in Tiergarten, created by star designer Patrizia Urquiloa, and which soon became the city's premier address.

When it comes to his own ideas, Harter doesn't like making compromises: "But it worked incredibly well with Patrizia Uquiola."

He believes a good restaurateur needs to keep evolving with the city. Be and remain curious. Find projects which inspire them. Harter doesn't clock off like most people. Even when on holiday, he is often thinking – about new projects, and the people he can bring together to realise them. Be it in Berlin or elsewhere. Next up on his agenda is Eastern Europe, labelling Georgia as his latest secret tip. "Then we'll see." More projects are set to follow. He adjusts his hat. He has more than enough ideas. ■



„The restaurant business functions as a result of competition”

Future for small businesses: Ludwig Horn, founder and proprietor of the “A.Horn” and the “B.Horn” in Berlin-Kreuzberg, swears by digitalisation.

TEXT: VALENTIN KARL WAIBEL PHOTOGRAPHY: MARIAN LENHARD

Ludwig Horn calls what brought him into the restaurant business life in practice. Following his ‘Abitur’ (German university entrance qualification), he does a carpentry apprenticeship

that kills off any inclination he has towards creative craftsmanship. Then long trips abroad, “living in a bus” and loads of hours on his surfboard. He ends up in Bremen, where he studies “Applied Leisure Studies” – yes,

they actually offer this degree course there. But he does not graduate. "I took too much time off and was simply never there."

He does casual jobs on the side, in the restaurant business of course. When his father dies, the family closes ranks. He moves to Berlin with his wife, where they open the "A.Horn" together. Siblings and friends help to create a concept. His brother sets up his own bike shop business in the next-door building. "Doing something together" – a plan that they had already conceived as young boys. This symbiosis has been successful for six years now; Ludwig opened his second establishment, the "B.Horn", in June.

Ludwig, would you describe the restaurant business as something that makes you really happy?

Well, I would say for the most part – the restaurant business is something that I am keen on. It entails a whole lot of stress as well as physical and mental effort – and is time-consuming above all. I am well aware of that, but I like doing it. The restaurant business and self-employment mean that I can make my own decisions.

How does digitalisation help you to save time and remain your own boss?

My very personal opinion is that it is unstoppable. That is a very similar situation to when mobile phones first came on the market. Everybody said "I will never own or use one, it's so embarrassing." And now? We all have one. The fact is that the restaurant business functions as a result of competition. It's not just that we are competing against each other, the restaurant and catering chains are increasingly putting us 'old-school restaurateurs' under pressure. These companies have hundreds of people, who analyse, optimise and trim costs. Margins, volumes and upselling are all that count in these organisations. They have both the capacity and financial resources and they use them too to generate more and more profits. Human resources are expensive. I keep on asking myself – can I even afford that, how can I cover my costs?

Can a small business defy the restaurant and catering chains only if they start adopting some of their methods?

If you as a "normal" business don't keep on reinventing the wheel, but just offer great products, then you have to find other ways to compete. That is why digitalisation is incredibly useful. Digital point-of-sale systems, digital

human resource planning, digital purchasing, digital inventory management systems, digital hygiene training. These digital solutions enable me to analyse very accurately where my weaknesses are and to deal with them, instead of having to fight on all fronts simultaneously. Of course not every solution makes sense. If I place 20 iPads in my restaurant, that doesn't mean the joint will be any more successful.

What do you believe make for good solutions in practice?

If I focus on what suits me and my restaurant, I can ease my workload considerably. Take digital point-of-sale systems as an example. In the past bills were all written out by hand. But this paper chaos offers little transparency and is usually rejected by the tax authorities. Furthermore, I would have to rent an entire sports hall just to store all this paperwork. I can also manage my apps, alter prices, add new dishes etc. myself. As far as those long-serving electronic point-of-sale systems were concerned, I always used to have to call in a technician because programming them was so complicated. And that's not all. Now I can also display how much I am earning at any particular time of day. That enables me to calculate how many employees I need and how I should set my opening hours. I also have a staff scheduling app. My team can sign in to the schedule using their smartphones, can move and swap shifts, and at the end of the month the app tells me accurately to the minute who has worked how many hours. I can then send these figures in that exact format to the tax authorities and don't have to spend hours doing umpteen calculations. Then there are inventory management systems. For example, I enter how much flour I need for my focaccia. The app then reminds me in good time to reorder when I have used up a certain quantity. My chef can now concentrate fully on cooking and does not have to keep checklists several times a week in our storerooms. That all saves money and also generates less waste.

That means you now have more free time?

Well now, we self-employed have a major problem – I have freed up resources in many aspects of my business and at last have half an hour a day more at my disposal. I am filling these 30 minutes up again straightaway by opening a second restaurant. But that is all my own fault. (Laughs). ■

A black and white photograph of a woman, Barbara Jaeschke, sitting in a dark leather armchair. She is positioned in front of a rough, textured brick wall. She is looking upwards and to the left with a slight smile. She is wearing a dark blazer over a patterned top, a patterned skirt, and dark high-heeled shoes. Her legs are crossed at the ankles. To her left, a small, round, metallic side table is partially visible. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the brick wall and the leather of the chair.

„Doggedly hanging on to a great idea like a terrier on a trouser leg”

Barbara Jaeschke has transformed the old Oderberger Municipal Baths into a flourishing language school and a wonderful hotel.

Barbara Jaeschke loves marathons. New York, Paris, Barcelona – a new city every year. But she does the Berlin Marathon every year. Endurance all the way to the finishing line. She seems to achieve everything she sets out to do. Newly (2016) opened “Hotel Oderberger” is evidence of that.

The Oderberger Municipal Baths were opened in 1902 as public swimming baths. Since most of the barrack apartments in Prenzlauer Berg had no bathrooms, residents performed their ablutions in the white-tiled cubicles of the public swimming baths. When Barbara Jaeschke moved in here along with her language school, she wanted to retain as much of the interior décor as possible. The public baths’ soap holders and wall tiles were retained in the refurbished seminar rooms. The old doors to the washing cubicles are now bathroom doors in the hotel rooms.

“Hotel Oderberger” is part of the GLS Language School campus. Jaeschke’s concept of combining a starred hotel with public bathing facilities and seminar rooms was a risky balancing act in financial terms. It’s fortunate that an innovative lifting floor technology helps her to transform the swimming pool into a majestic event venue. Conferences, corporate presentations or even weddings now take place where people otherwise go swimming.

Barbara Jaeschke talks about her setbacks with the same degree of reflection as about her successes. She had no previous knowledge of running a business and no sound source of funding when she established her language school. She was once part of the surplus of qualified female teachers: “I had to look for alternatives, but I always had this notion in the back of my mind that the teaching profession was not my vocation.”

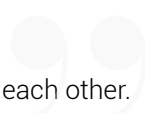
She complies with her parents’ wish that she might consider helping out as a teacher during the long summer holidays at her parents’ country home in southern Lower Saxony. Barbara Jaeschke soon begins to organise mini language-learning trips.

Her husband, Dr. Hans-Dieter Jaeschke, is an architect. When they relocate with their family from Göttingen to Berlin, the now-established “Göttingen Language School” is renamed the “Global Language School”. Barbara Jaeschke views Berlin as cosmopolitan and tolerant.

The ideal city for a language school. Jaeschke aims to use the GLS to create an environment where international contacts can be made and maintained.

Jaeschke views education as contributing to tolerance: “Here we get people talking to each other. We ensure that they get to know and accept contrary opinions.” Barbara Jaeschke regards languages as a medium of intercultural understanding.

She advises young startup entrepreneurs to give plenty of thought to financing at the beginning of their journeys. She herself started dealing with the issue of financial resources far too late. Setbacks could have been avoided, But the most important thing, she reemphasises, is to believe in yourself and your idea and to steadfastly pursue it by displaying doggedness and explicit self-confidence.



Here we get people talking to each other.
We ensure that they get to know and
accept contrary opinions.

Barbara Jaeschke’s aspiration is to provide premium-quality language training in a pleasant ambiance. But there is still a lot to do – the hotel has been completed, the school is growing, there is again a lack of classrooms. Barbara Jaeschke wants to erect buildings on the campus in Prenzlauer Berg that are positioned closer together. A preliminary planning enquiry has already been approved.

Any other plans? Barbara Jaeschke is not contemplating retiring any time soon. The plan is that her children start managing the company at some point, they already work in the family business. And then? Perhaps another hotel, but in a warm country. One idea is Malta: “We always require accommodation there. Another hotel there would be a really exciting project for me.” ■





TEIL 2

Startups



„If it works here, then it will work elsewhere”

August Ullrich and Philip Morsink from Moonshine O'Donnell want to sell 120,000 jars with quality liqueurs. Soon also throughout Europe.

TEXT: ALEXANDRA KETTERER PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Sometimes, the neighbors come by and ask what kind of honey we sell.” The two founders, August Ullrich and Philip Morsink, have their small office on the Udtinger Straße in Wedding. The answer is: O'Donnell Moonshine – which is liqueur in a jar. August had the idea while he was in America. There, the term moonshine has been around since the prohibition era.

Spike O'Donnell was the „most shot at gangster of the country” and one of the protagonists in the bloody wars between the gangs during the prohibition of the 1920s. Even if today the founders produce their liqueur quite legally, the notorious jars, in which the alcohol was secretly transported then, is a leftover from those times.

Production started in their own living room. After suitable distilleries were found, they both moved to Berlin. The two evaluate Berlin as an interesting test market: „If it works here, then it works in other cities.” Meanwhile, besides the original, they have produced new liqueurs flavors like hard nut, baked apple and bitter rose. The

hazelnut-nougat-caramel mixture is the newest creation of the two Colognians.

Both had no desire to go into a big company after graduation, so they just decided to jump into the cold water. The two have learned to value small successes and to have a lot of patience. With their six-headed team, they were able to sell 80,000 glasses last year. The target for 2017 is 120,000 glasses. A second office has just opened in London, and further internationalization is planned across Europe.

August and Philip have a special focus on the quality of the liqueurs. The segment of high quality liqueurs needs to be filled, and taste is the most important factor. This is also the most basic element in the food startup scene, says Philip. “Good marketing and a nice packaging alone will not get you far. For a product to be sold, it's all about the taste. That has worked quite well for us so far”, he says, smiling. „If it tastes good to us, it tastes good to everyone.” ■

www.odonnell.de



„Every fruit is beautiful”

Active against the throwaway society: The Dörrwerk team around Zubin Farahani processes leftover fruits and vegetables into delicious chips and fruit paper.

TEXT: VALERIA TRUSCHINSKI PHOTOGRAPHY: MARIENPARK BERLIN

Every day in Germany, tons of food end up in the garbage. Food which is actually still edible, but due to aesthetic defects is not recycled or sold. Often, there are only a few tiny spots, dents or pressure points, which disqualify the fruits and vegetables from being traded.

Dörrwerk, a small Berlin manufactory, has made it its task to change that. Since 2015, the founders Zubin Farahani, actually a doctor by profession, and the two operators, Jonas Bieber and Philipp Prechtner, are buying fruits and vegetables directly from farmers and wholesalers and process them into chips and delicious crispy fruit paper.

It all started in Zubin's small kitchen. After weeks of experimentation, he had found the perfect recipe and began to sell the snack at the weekly market. The so-called fruit paper went over so well that he took a break from medicine to devote himself completely to his new project together with his friends.

With the help of a crowdfunding action on the startnext.com platform, they were able to buy their first big drying oven and get bigger rooms. „The biggest challenge was certainly to transfer the small production steps from our own kitchen to large machines,” says the team today.

They regularly go to the wholesale market or directly to the farmers and offer retailers fair prices for apples, bananas, mangoes or pineapples that are not declared more than class 1 due to their optical defects.

The fruits are then first washed, peeled and processed into a fine puree. The puree is then dried for several hours at low temperature in the drying oven. The basis for all varieties is apple sauce, which is then mixed with other fruits. The result: smooth, crispy fruit paper. Without sugar, additives or preservatives.

The three aim to become Germany's most sustainable manufacturer for healthy snacks and to save thousands of tons of fruits per year. It seems their goal is in reach. ■

www.doerrwerk.de



„Berlin offers startups a broad network”

With his sample sets, Jörn Gutowski aims to incite conscious indulgence.

TEXT: VALERIA TRUSCHINSKI PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Everyone knows the situation: you stand in front of the shelf at the supermarket and just can't decide. The selection is huge, but how exactly do you find the product you are looking for without taking the entire shelf home with you?

Try Foods founder Jörn Gutowski has asked himself the same question. According to the motto „the proof of the pudding is in the eating”, he has set himself the task of encouraging people to try out food as well.

Since 2013, he has been offering Try Foods sample kits, which make high-quality food experienceable. Each of the nine kits deals with only one type of food and includes five different versions of the respective product.

For example, you can drink coffee from five different coffee cultivators or test the entire olive oil flavor spectrum, from mild-fruity to intense-nutty. If a certain product is particularly tasty, the original size can be ordered at Try Foods.

A few years ago, Jörn had received a Scotch whisky set with samples from different regions from his brother. He had been fascinated by how different the whiskys tasted. „As a teenager, I only knew whisky and coke, including the hangover the next day. It was something new for me”, laughs Jörn. When he later tried to find a similar

sample set, he couldn't find one. „There was no company that offered it on a larger scale.” Then the idea was born.

Before Try Foods, however, Jörn had nothing to do with the food sector. In Boston, he first studied marketing and worked for a PR agency as well as for a language travel company. For two years, he traveled with a non-profit organization all around the world. During his many travels and stays at guest families, he had discovered the true power of eating: „Food connects. Even if you do not speak the same language, you always get together at the table. „

He also finds inspiration in various organic and Slow-food fairs. For each of his kits, Jörn takes a lot of time to research and talks a lot with dealers and experts until he himself becomes an expert. He then packs the entirety of his collected knowledge, practical tips and personal stories into thick booklets, which are enclosed in each of his food kits.

The fact that he founded his company in Berlin was self-evident to Jörn. „No other city offers startups such an incredibly broad network. Besides, no one gives you an odd look when you come up with a crazy idea.” It is no wonder that Jörn has dedicated one of his sets to the city of Berlin. ■

www.tryfoods.de

A black and white photograph of a man with a beard and short hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a graphic and dark shorts. He is sitting on a low, curved concrete wall in front of a brick wall and some bushes. His hands are clasped in his lap. The background shows a brick wall and some foliage.

„Vegan dishes from all over the world”

Whether online or out of the vending machine: The team of LunchVegaz successfully distributes vegan gourmet food.

TEXT: CRISTINA SÁNCHEZ ESTEBAN PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

When health meets convenience

„We have committed ourselves to provide you with a healthy alternative to the usual fast food”, say the founders of LunchVegaz. Who said that vegan, delicious and convenient food do not go together? The wish to offer a nutritious and varied meal lead a group of food and cooking lovers to create a company through which to share their tasty and healthy recipes with others on a large scale. LunchVegaz is a unique project that promises biological, ready-to-serve vegan meals of the highest quality. Whether a stressful everyday life, shifting schedules or the lack of time for cooking, with the first eight vegan main courses available online or in LunchVegaz’s vending machines you can get a wonderful variety of delicious handmade organic food.

“We combine organic and plant-based ingredients with our favourite dishes from all around the world”. At LunchVegaz, preservatives and flavour enhancers as well as pasteurising are taboo. We use fresh, organic ingredients and soja instead. Thus, a tricky process of gently cooking and vacuuming is needed to guarantee a long shelf life for our products. Even after 3 weeks, all meals taste like freshly cooked and preserve all the minerals, vitamins and nutrients. And what is genius about our vegan, partially gluten-free dishes is that they can be eaten by everyone quickly and according to their desires.

What is additionally original about LunchVegaz is the distribution channel. The meals can be sold in vending machines that one can order for the bureau, the company or for any place. Access to those vending machines is already given in specific organic and supermarkets. LunchVegaz is now working on an automatic warm-up function and a heating module that shall improve the service in the future. If you are hungry, you can find out where to find the vending machines and what kind of dishes are offered in those machines via the homepage and the future app.

Cooking is and remains a craft

For LunchVegaz, cooking is not an industrial branch. Their core goal is to contribute to an overall recognition among people of all ages that packaged foods are not only unhealthy and greasy meals. This contribution appears to be working. “A few weeks ago, a young mother wrote to thank us for such tasty and healthy food. She now can devote more time to her children instead of cooking”, say the founders. But also older ladies have proved to be a perfect target group, as they have been cooking over the last 50 years and prefer now to enjoy their free time rather than being in the kitchen. “We are a family business. That means that quality is of great importance to us. And accordingly, so is the support of our friends and relatives” ■ www.lunchvegaz.de



„A solution that combines quality and efficiency”

An enthusiastic and multicultural team from Berlin-Mitte offers a smart alternative to the company restaurants with its virtual canteen and makes employees happy.

TEXT: CRISTINA SÁNCHEZ ESTEBAN PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Food deliveries are needed
Shivram Ayyagari was born and raised in India, where he studied Engineering and Business Management. After his studies, he started working for a venture capital firm which brought him from home to Singapore and later to Vienna. Personally involved with gastronomy as a food lover, he moved to Berlin in order to start his own business but ended up working for the online delivery service Delivery Hero. There, Shivram Ayyagari gathered valuable experience in the gastronomy sector and also met Oliver Hüfner, the co-founder of his very own food startup. While working at Delivery Hero, both Shivram and Oliver came up with a fantastic idea: a virtual canteen that delivers good and healthy food straight to the office.

Smunch - smart lunch - supports midsize companies in bringing together their teams and helps them improve communication and interaction between them in order to strengthen the image of the employer. But how does “Smunch” do that? The founders are primarily concerned with contributing to a comfortable working atmosphere without the costly installation and operation of a canteen. With an intelligent tax structuring, the extraordinary variety of the dishes is made affordable.

Food makes you happy

Smunch is a solution that combines quality with efficiency. People can decide what they want to eat the very same morning and what’s even better is that customers can also plan their whole week menu by choosing from a wide range of dietary choices. The meals come from a different restaurant every day to ensure diversity. Thus, Smunch guarantees a vast offer of meals and the restaurants involved also profit from the startup’s concept, because they can easily calculate and prepare their orders in advance.

Success factor Berlin

Berlin has helped the founders of Smunch with one of the biggest challenges of starting up: to build up a great team of highly qualified and diverse people. “Ten persons from six different countries are working for Smunch. This only happens in entrepreneur hubs such as San Francisco”, says Shivram. Shivram and his co-founder want to internationalize Smunch in the following years. “Oliver and I have worked in international companies and are going to orient Smunch globally”, says Shivram. “It is a creation of influences from all over the world, which is meant to influence and change this world”. ■

www.smunch.co



„Standing out is the biggest challenge”

Mealy makes it possible: the app inspires with recipes from the most fashionable food blogs and saves time for cooking and enjoyment.

TEXT: VALERIA TRUSCHINSKI PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

For gourmets who want to get their daily dose of food inspiration on the smartphone, the cooking app Mealy is finally on the market. The startup compiles unique recipes of popular bloggers and the latest trends in the food scene compactly and free in an app, thereby offering culinary inspiration in abundance.

Mealy was founded in 2015 by the Berlin TU graduates Jenny Boldt, Tim Strehlow and Florian Feigenbutz. The three friends are passionate hobby chefs and always look for new recipes that they can try out. They like to cook the recipes from the gurus of the scene, however, they find keeping up with so many food bloggers regularly to find something new to be quite the effort. During one of their shared cooking sessions, the penny dropped: „With the quantity of bookmarks with which I had previously marked recipes on blogs, my browser overflowed”, says Jenny. The others had the same problem, so they decided to change the situation.

The idea was to develop an app that combines high-quality food blogger recipes and offers the user personalized recipe suggestions - depending on the diet, blog favorites or other preferences. The individual newsfeed changes

daily. Favorite recipes can be stored in their own cookbook and the required ingredients can be placed on a shopping list. If you want to save even more time, the ingredients can even be delivered to your home through the delivery service that they installed.

My browser was overflowing because
I had so many bookmarks.

With their studies, the three founders have already created a good starting position for the project. Jenny is a business engineer and the guys are computer scientists. Not quite impractical when you want to launch an app on the market. Nevertheless, there were some difficulties, especially at the beginning, which were to be mastered. „The biggest challenge for an app is to make it stand out and attract users”, the founders explain.

With their all-round offer they were able to win the users over. Shortly after Mealy was launched on the App Store, it was listed among the „best new apps”. Meanwhile, the Mealy team is already working on an English version of the app. ■ www.mealy-app.com



„Berlin is a great city to start up a business”

The founders of Popkonditorei Knalle astonish their customers with crispness, exotic flavours and a cool marketing concept.

TEXT: CRISTINA SÁNCHEZ ESTEBAN PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Turning the ordinary into the extraordinary. The passion for quality has driven the two professional cooks Lucie Krautien and André Göbel to make a gourmet experience out of popcorn and to conquer the snack scene of Berlin Friedrichshain. The fact that popcorn also tastes good outside the cinema brought the founders of Popkonditorei Knalle to a business idea. But actually, there is much more than oven-baked popcorn behind the company founded by the two patissiers Lucie and André in 2016. Together with the talented marketing professional Christopher Peters and the creative director Johannes Laue, they brought popcorn to a whole new level. Knalle is the very finest handmade popcorn whose flavours one associates with opera rather than cinema.

More than just plain popcorn

With the Popkonditorei Knalle, there is a new highlight in Berlin's snack scene. The founders' professional experience in high-end patisserie, design and marketing have brought Knalle Popcorn to the next level. They not only offer sweet flavours such as buttercaramel-Tahiti-vanilla or Belgian chocolate with roasted almonds, but also salty bangers like malabar-pepper-salt or barbecue with smoked almond. Anyone who comes to the new store in Friedrichshain can share the fascination for exquisite

popcorn while the production runs simultaneously in the back room. The corn pops, is covered with a caramel mixture, placed briefly in the oven, and finally packaged. Thus, pile bags are durable for about three months. Although, they will be probably be eaten much earlier.

The people here don't hesitate to try new things.

Constantly searching for new ideas

The founder quartet is always searching for new recipe ideas and has cultivated diligently the entire appearance of their popcorn so that they appeal also to the customer's eye. Behind this, there is a lot of work. "Our expectations focus towards a crunch experience merged with the use and taste of premium ingredients", say the founders of Knalle.

Everything started in Berlin, and now Knalle is making its way to all those who appreciate the special popcorn outside of supermarkets or cinemas. "Berlin is a great city to start up a business", says Christopher. "The people here really enjoy eating out, most of them have a well-educated taste and they don't hesitate to try new things." ■

www.knalle.berlin



„Energy for sherpas, nomads and organic grocery stores”

Michaela Peschanel and Domenico Varuzza use Tsampa, a tibetan grain flour, for a healthy energy bar.

TEXT: CRISTINA SÁNCHEZ ESTEBAN PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

Snacks for body and soul

Our world is becoming more conscious about health, nature and resources. People are increasingly aware of the impact that their nutrition has on their life. Michaela Peschanel and Domenico Varuzza had exactly this effect chain in mind when they created a healthy energy bar based on one of the oldest foods in the history of mankind: the Tibetan Tsampa, flour from roasted barley.

Being an enthusiastic and curious cook, Michaela got to know Tsampa through a good friend, who brought the idea from Asia to Germany. For two years, Michaela was experimenting in the kitchen until she created the recipe that brought her and her colleague Domenico the breakthrough from the domestic kitchen to a fine organic bakery in Berlin.

An ancient source of real energy

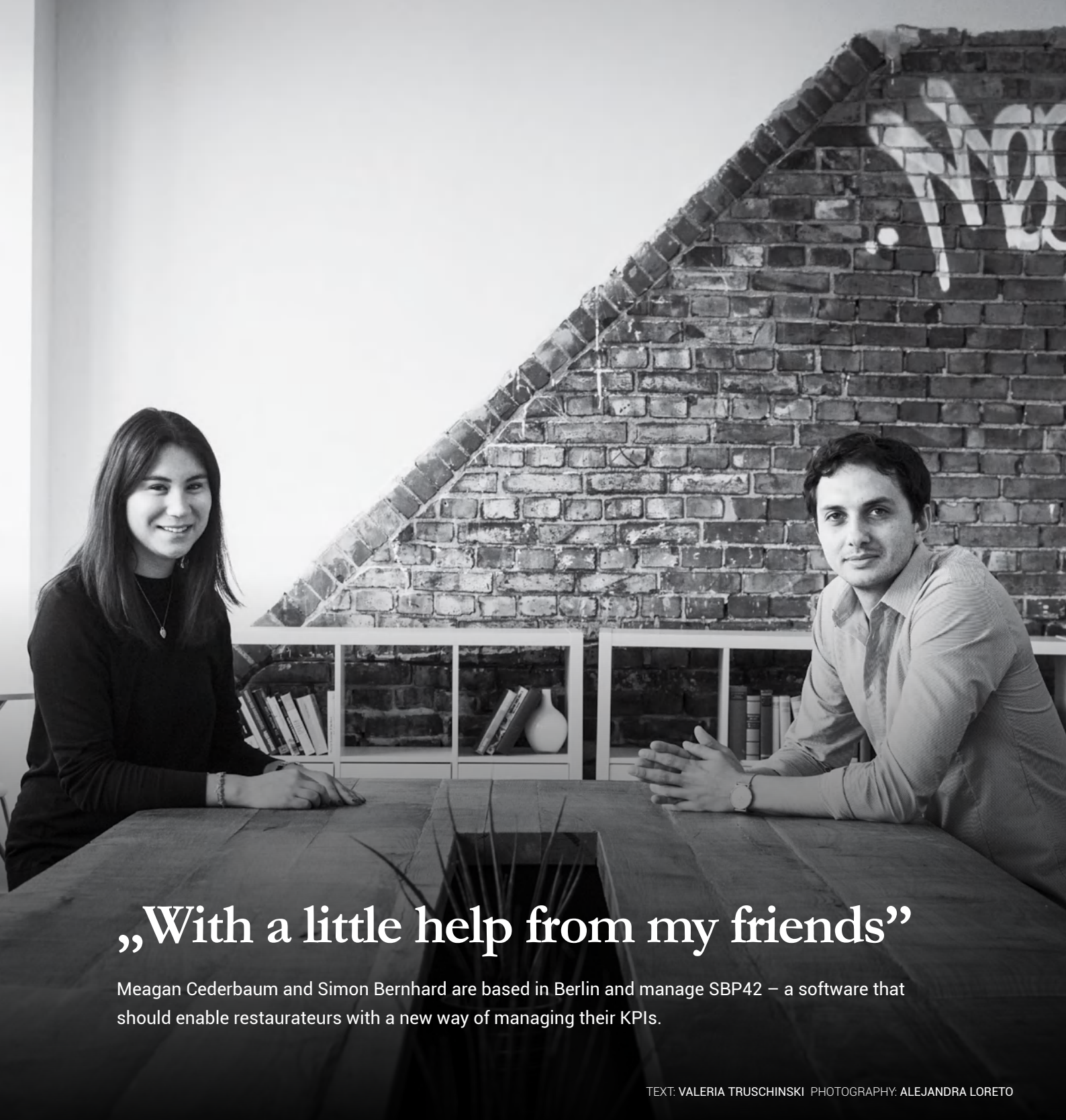
Since the beginning, the aim of Michaela and Domenico was to bring Tsampa to Germany on a larger scale. It is highly nutritious and rich in vitamins - and an ancient culinary source of energy, still used today by sherpas and nomads in the Himalaya region. Those people almost solely rely on Tsampa as a food source since it contains a lot of long-chain carbohydrates that provide en-

ergy over a longer period. Additionally, barley contains little gluten and is an alternative for allergy sufferers. It actually contains more proteins than chicken or eggs.

In this city, people are very open and curious, which allows one to live out his creativity fully.

The challenges of starting up

With the founding of the REN Roasted Energy Food GmbH, Michaela and Domenico are still at the start of their journey. Step by step, they try to build up a functioning system in which everyone has their tasks. The two founders want to be authentic and commit themselves to sustainability. Therefore, they also pay special attention that the electricity used for the production of the Tsampa bar is 100% regenerated energy. At the moment, the biggest challenge is to define the channels through which they can introduce Tsampa to the people and increase their awareness. Berlin is, according to Michaela and Domenico, a very good place for it. „The people here are very open and curious, which allows one to live out his creativity fully.” ■ www.tsampa-food.de



„With a little help from my friends“

Meagan Cederbaum and Simon Bernhard are based in Berlin and manage SBP42 – a software that should enable restaurateurs with a new way of managing their KPIs.

TEXT: VALERIA TRUSCHINSKI PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

It is rare that a student shortly after graduating from university goes as quickly from theory to practice as it happened for Meagan Cederbaum and Simon Bernhard. Both are from Basel and graduated from „École hôtelière de Lausanne“ (EHL) in Lausanne, one of the most prestigious hotel management schools in the world. The METRO Chair of Innovation is part of the EHL curriculum. Its mission is to conduct studies and

research the gastronomy and hospitality sectors. In their last year, Meagan and Simon were both part of so-called SBPs, Student Business Projects. Simon was part of a team outlining the “Restaurant of the Future”. Meagan’s team picked up on a concept developed by METRO subsidiary HoReCa.digital and investigated how individual restaurateurs could be supported in their economic decision-making, with help of a software.

The outsourced digital innovation firm of METRO had previously worked on the so-called „Gastronomy-Cockpit. Frédéric Schumacher, Director Innovations of Horeca.Digital had developed the concept and assigned a team of developers around Benjamin Döll, to program the tool. Döll, who is also owner of his own Cupcake-Café and his team are working from Aschaffenburg. The process is agile - according to the Scrum methodology – where each step of the project is defined and realised in sprints.

Horeca.Digital-Director Kai Schwabedal and Frédéric Schumacher, who also initiated the cooperation with EHL and is overseeing it, could not have wished for better project leaders than Meagan and Simon. The offer from Horeca.Digital was compelling: making the Cockpit into a marketable product – while being based in Berlin. And that is what they are doing now. Based in a former factory building on Ritterstrasse, in the heart of Kreuzberg – right next to another gastronomy startup, called Orderbird.

SBP42 – the working title of the gastronomical cockpit tool – will provide restaurateurs with a whole new perspective on their KPIs. It will provide answers to questions that every restaurateur has to ask himself on a daily basis: “With which products, do I make the biggest profit? What is my revenue today and what revenue can I expect for tomorrow? What are the sales number of each service employee?”

Restaurateurs nowadays have to focus on many different things at the same time.

They rarely find time to focus on what really matters.

Meagan describes the initial situation: „Restaurateurs nowadays have to focus on many different things at the same time. They rarely find time to focus on what really matters.” Meagan and Simon are coordinating with designers and developers – however, their main focus lies with test customers and partners for data exchange. The two have come up with “User-Stories” that will help Benjamin Döll with the fine-tuning for their tool. Meagan



and Simon are convinced that in order for the tool to become successful, it needs to be extremely user-friendly with a compelling visualization of a restaurateur’s most important KPIs.

To promote digital restaurant management within the eco-system of METRO has its perks. HoReCa.digital is fully committed to promoting digital innovations in the restaurant industry. Meagan and Simon praise the venture’s flat hierarchies. The two new-Berliners profit from intensive but simplified exchange with a big network of experts. Being handled like an inhouse-startup, allowed them to focus on the product from day one. The two also received support from other divisions like Sales and Marketing.

For their testing phase, it was important to find various types of restaurateurs to test and help develop their cockpit. Meagan and Simon personally approached and convinced 16 restaurateurs to provide their qualified and valuable input. And additionally, the cooperation’s environment proves to be helpful beyond the borders of Berlin: at this year’s gastronomy fair Internorga in Hamburg, Meagan and Simon were the rising stars as part of the METRO-stand.

When we last talked with Meagan and Simon in Summer, they were currently defining the last stages of their prototype to final launch, including the launch-event, marketing and sales strategies. Meagan: “There’s still a lot to do.” But the two remain optimistic that as part of this network, they will reach their goal in time. ■

A black and white photograph of three men in a brick hallway. The man on the left is crouching, wearing glasses and a sweater. The man in the middle is leaning against the wall, wearing a dark button-down shirt. The man on the right is standing, wearing a sweater over a collared shirt. They are all looking towards the camera.

„We need strong relationships with the local market”

Out of Kreuzberg, startup Orderbird – the leading ipad-POS system – is looking for an intensive exchange with the restaurant scene.

With the aim of developing an affordable point-of-sale solution that adapts to the modern gastronomy scene, Jakob Schreyer, Bastian Schmidtke, Patrick Brienens and Artur Hasselbach founded the iPad-POS system Orderbird in 2011. The multiple award-winning company quickly grew from small startup to one of the most popular POS systems in the restaurant scene.

Since incorporating their business six years ago, Orderbird has rapidly grown. Today, its client base includes over 8000 restaurants, cafes, bars, clubs, ice cream parlours and beer gardens. Additionally, Orderbird has won numerous prizes in the digital startup scene. In June 2016, the founders won additional important investors, among others the METRO group. With the help of METRO, Orderbird, by now a corporation of more than 150 employees, wants to tackle new markets and further promote the expansion in the European market. With first offices in France, Spain and Italy will follow next.

Jakob Schreyer is reflecting on a fast-paced year: "In terms of size, we have probably doubled in the last year only." He never regretted having chosen Berlin as their headquarter destination: "Berlin attracts people from abroad."

With all this recent change – some things have remained consistent at Orderbird. Not only, the weekly breakfast with all of the team. Mainly it's the vision that all employees share.

"We have the vision, to create modular solutions and apps, which can support whole ecosystems and facilitate the restaurateur's life", says founder Jakob Schreyer. Besides their POS system, Orderbird wants to assist their clients with inventory management, staff allocation planning, Wifi and table reservations. Those solutions will be available as packages. "Nowadays, if you're planning on opening a café, you eventually will need to be able to compete with the big coffee house chains like Starbucks in terms of IT, purchasing, service and marketing."

According to Jakob Schreyer, the direct contact on-site, consulting and personal online support are factors that have strongly contributed to the previous success of Orderbird. "It is crucial to have the constant exchange with the clients", says Schreyer, "Additionally, you cannot

operate everything from Berlin. Therefore, we will need a distribution on-site and a strong relationship with the local market."

We have the vision, to create modular solutions and apps, which can support whole ecosystems and facilitate the restaurateur's life.

With help of the Gastro-Gründerpreis for restaurateurs, Orderbird is promoting this dialogue within the restaurant scene. By now the prize, which is awarded yearly, has become an institution. Meanwhile, the biggest competition for newbies of the restaurant scene has gained the support from numerous partners. Its jury consists of renowned jurors with long-lasting international experience in the restaurant and entrepreneur scene. Besides the assessment of creativity, the jurors also evaluate the business plans of all competitors. Besides a small starting capital, the winner also gets to be part of a mentoring program, with support of the aforementioned experts. Schreyer: "We want to motivate participants to put their own concepts to test and up for discussion." ■

www.orderbird.com







PART 3

Berlin

„The capital is a trailblazer when it comes
to gastronomy”

Frédéric Schumacher knows the whole world of gastronomy - literally. In order for him to analyze global trends, Berlin seems to be the right spot.

If you are looking to observe global developments of the gastronomy-sector, push innovations of the industry, connect big players from the industry with startups and the capital market – then Berlin is the place to be. This is the reason why Frédéric Schumacher travels to Berlin nearly every week. He is enthusiastic about the city and the freedom that restaurateurs and startups are able to experience. Frédéric is head of the METRO-subsiidiary HoReCa.digital and as such performs the task of innovation leader and president of their US branch. He is at home in the world of gastronomy: the German-French with roots in Neckar grew up in South America. As a student, he opened his first bar, earning his money working seasonally in the Swiss alpine gastronomy scene before attending and graduating from the prestigious Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL). After which he travelled the globe for in his various management positions: Zurich, Vienna, Madrid, Santiago de Chile, Duesseldorf. Frédéric Schuhmacher also is initiator and co-founder of the METRO Chair of Innovation at EHL, where he provides startups and restaurateurs with his knowledge. Which he also provides to family's business, who produce first-class Iberico ham in Spain. Ultimately, it was Schuhmacher who motivated our young authors to make their conversations with founders and restaurateurs of the city, into a book. We met Schuhmacher at Hotel Le Provocateur in Berlin to talk with him about the future of the individual gastronomy scene.

Frédéric, how come that you, as a co-publisher and non-berliner could give us young authors and photographers, so many various references of the dynamic development of the Berlin restaurant and startup scene?

In every conversation that I have with international partners that I meet in Berlin, they tell me about the newest trends for restaurants, bars and hotels in the city. Every day that I spend in this city, I am surprised and enthusiastic. Behind each restaurateur and startup is a personal story. A founding story. It takes enthusiasm and a decent amount of courage to take the step to create your own business. They need stamina and a lot of know-how to keep up. In the many conversations held for this book, you asked about this personal drive and motivation. The book is an expression of the long overdue respect for these restaurateurs and what they do. It also includes important suggestions for young founders.

Do you see similarities in the founder mentality of digital startups and restaurateurs?

Yes, at the moment in Berlin you can feel this entrepreneurial spirit all over. I enjoy to be part of both industries at the same time. The idea of this book is two show the interdependency of both sectors and how they manage to transform Berlin into an extremely dynamic and attractive city.

METRO has an extraordinary relationship to restaurateurs. You personally observe the industry very carefully, not only in Germany.

Yes, during the more than 50-year long company history of METRO Cash&Carry, independent restaurants have always played a key role. Without the close relationship with those approximately 200.000 clients, only in Germany, the fast-paced growth of METRO would have been impossible to cope with. Hence all the more reason to observe and analyse the evolution of hotels, restaurants and caterings (HoReCa) worldwide. We have great interest in knowing what expects our restaurateurs.

What are the biggest challenges that you see for this industry?

There are two main trends that we are currently observing. On the one hand, there has been a consistent growth of highly systemized restaurants. They are growing everywhere. We see this trend on a global scale. This puts a lot of pressure on individual restaurateurs. But we believe that restaurateurs and entrepreneurs are able to compete in the tough market with globally systemized chain restaurants. Especially in Berlin we see a great future for creative concepts with local customer loyalty. Thanks to qualitative products, great taste and knowledge of their close surroundings, they have managed to outplay some of the globally acting chain restaurants. It is crucial to organise this efficiently. This trend presents an opportunity to the other big trend of the industry – the digitalisation. The restaurant of the future is digital.

The digital restaurant? Chefs are not necessarily known to be pioneers when it comes to digitalisation...

I see many activities and processes of restaurateurs that can and have to be digitalised. This in order for them to have a clear mind to stay creative. At HoReCa.digital we do not define the digital restaurant for our own purposes. Online-Marketing, table bookings, point of



sale and payment systems, personnel management and accounting – this is something small restaurants need to efficiently manage too. But it needs to be quicker and easier to link those tools with each other. Therefore, we heavily get involved in this matter. We want to enable restaurateurs to survive as independent entrepreneurs. We promote startups by developing them together with partners in so-called accelerator programs to become companies that can compete in the market and assist them with their distribution. Naturally, we try to focus on solutions and ideas that will make the life of our clients easier in the global food industry.

Frédéric, from your experience, can you tell us the aspect, that entrepreneurs underestimate the most?

Cost controlling and communication are underestimated the most. The formation of a business, and carefully assessing the financial risk, is a tiring and sometimes painful experience. To be able to thrill both friends and family, the local bank and customers, is not as easy as it sounds. Beautifully compiled excel sheets will be of little help. Entrepreneurs should consult with experienced people from the industry, make use of educational programs and primarily be prepared to challenge themselves – these are key success factors.

How can restaurant entrepreneurs limit their financial risks and keep an overview of their economic business?

Fixed costs, especially those for personnel, should be kept as low as possible at first. Variable costs should be kept variable and cost of materials should be carefully assessed. Entrepreneurs need to budget enough capital for dry spells. To only approach a bank once it is going down-hill is a terrible idea. Banks expect to see precise data. Therefore, it is not a luxury to invest in innovative tools, that help you assess the KPIs of your restaurant at one glance. This is what HoReCa.digital aims to tackle – restaurateurs should know their daily business better and be able to manage it efficiently.

Recent studies from EHL show that restaurateurs in Germany are hesitant when it comes to digital tools and mobile payment options.

Unfortunately, that is true. Also in other European countries, we observe this scepticism. This is one of the reasons why in our digital age we still must pay in cash in many bars, restaurants and cafés. But the digital restaurant with enhanced service quality for customers has become reality and restaurateurs will eventually have to lay of their prejudice. I am sure that the startup capital Berlin will be a trailblazer for this. ■

„People, people, people. They are the key to success”

The Berlin blogger Fabio Ziemssen scans startups for new ideas for the future of the food industry.



TEXT: VALERIA TRUSCHINSKI PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEJANDRA LORETO

The queue at the entrance of Unicorn Berlin is enormous. The guests are patiently waiting to go on a culinary discovery at the first start-up food market in Berlin. Over 20 startups are presenting their products and ideas of tomorrow for the first time.

Fabio is not only event planner and founder of an e-food blog, but also „Head of Food Innovation und Food Tech” at Metro Group. He sees himself as a „pioneer and networker”. He occupies himself with the food chain cycle in principle - the „food system”, and not only the status quo but also the future of such. Anyone who is develop-

ing ideas and solutions for the challenges of world nutrition and the changes of the food industry can be sure that Fabio is interested in it.

How will we feed ourselves in the future? What will future trade look like? How will megatrends, such as urbanisation and climate change impact our nutrition? These are only a few questions, which Fabio deals with on a daily basis.

Early on, Fabio discovered another major topic, which is strongly affecting the food-sector: the comprehensive and continuous digitalisation. At first, he solely focused on the food e-commerce, by now he is looking for innovative food technologies and startups together with Metro. Approaches that contribute to food security for the growing world population are of particular interest to him.

Fabio maintains his network and contacts with the startups. It depends on different factors, which startups are supported by him. Whether he sees the startups from a personal or professional perspective, the team and human factor are always the most important to him. „People, people, people. These are the three success factors“, summarizes Fabio. „Only a good team recognizes, reflects and challenges its own ideas“

Fabio likes to share his knowledge. Thanks to his blog he is connecting entrepreneurs from the food sector. www.efood-blog.com is a platform for conversation, which

will further promote the exchange and development of the industry.

„Our food system and our value chains will drastically change in the future“, he says. Due to the rapid development of the world's population, there will be more and more food needs to be satisfied in the future. However, the worldwide usable area is limited and still available farmland is shrinking continuously. Solutions are urgently needed. Fabio thinks that Urban Farming could be one approach. Also known as Vertical Farming or Indoor Farming, the concept enables food to be stored in a space-saving manner with little use of resources directly at site of consumption.

Fabio sees further exciting solutions in alternative forms of nutrition. „Products that are alternatives to meat consumption, thus alternative protein sources such as algae, fungi, but also insects,“ he explains. Another trend in the food-tech sector is the Internet of Things. It drives the digitization of the entire value chain. „This also includes the development and interlinking of various devices which, apart from transparency, provide more traceability.“

Fabio is strongly convinced that the German capital is the ideal location for entrepreneurs. „Berlin is a very eclectic and experimental-friendly city. It offers an incredibly good infrastructure of different networks.“ Fabio's mission: to connect the right people with each other. One can expect the crowds to be even bigger at his next startup event. ■ www.efood-blog.com





„The customers decide what's on the shelves”

Metro regional manager Guido Mischok talking about upcoming trends and the internationalisation of Berlin's restaurant scene.

TEXT: VALERIA TRUSCHINSKI PHOTOGRAPHY: METRO AG

Guido, you spent almost eight years in Ukraine and Russia for METRO. Why there?

I've always felt a wish to go abroad and further develop. 2007, I had the chance to take over the wholesaler in Kiev and to help building it. Beforehand, I had

already been interested in this region. Therefore, I was neither surprised nor disappointed when I moved there.

Is there any special memory from your time there that has stuck with you?

If there is one thing that I learned, it's that the customer's

needs and wants essentially are the same everywhere. It doesn't matter if you work in Ukraine, Russia or Germany. Customers want good service, the right products with equally good quality. The most important thing is to listen to your customer. I was deeply impressed by the employee's motivation over there. There is a constant striving to evolve, create something new and above all to learn new things. This is what stands out when I think of Ukraine and Russia.

Since 2015 you are back in Berlin. What are your responsibilities today?

As a regional manager, I am responsible for Berlin and Brandenburg market. My focus lies on the following three matters: customer satisfaction, personnel management and reaching the predefined key performance indicators. However, our greater goal is to evolve from a traditional pick up store to a leading multi-channel wholesaler. In the past, our clients would come to our store and buy and pick up the goods. Today, many of our products are directly delivered to our clients. Others get delivered some of their goods but still come in our store to pick up fresh goods in order to be able to quality-check the products and seek inspiration from new offers. We want to be able to serve to ideally serve our clients through all distribution channels.

Are you able to detect the internationalisation of Berlin's restaurant scene?

Definitely. Berlin has seen a downright revolution in its gastronomical development, which started off small and has become bigger and bigger. Especially in the last years there's been an immense evolution in this city. It's not only star-chefs that define Berlin's restaurant scene. The spectrum of culinary offers is tremendous. No other city in Germany has the culinary bandwidth to the extent of Berlin. The Berlin-based startup scene strongly contributes to the restaurant scene of the city.

Where do you see the connection of startups to the market?

The startups have good and above all creative ideas. We have the experience and know our customer base. We know, where and to who a certain idea or product might fit. We connect startups with customers. We allow them to individually get an idea of the startup and make their decision on whether or not to support it. A great example is Infarm, which we offer in our Berlin-Friedrichsheim

branch. Various kinds of herbs and vegetables are grown in a space-saving, vertical complex without any additional pesticides. The harvesting happens on-site and therefore only shortly before being consumed. Like this, the products maintain the full flavour. Another example is our Hauptstadtbarsch from the ECF-farm. This startup works with Aquaponik, which is combination of breeding fish and crop growing in the midst of Berlin. Several times a week we get delivered our bass without long transportation routes.

In that case, also smaller and regional producers have the chance to get into the METRO shelves?

Certainly. What's on the shelves is not decided by us but by our customers. We are the intermediary. We listen to our clients and try to match our offer with their needs and wants. Regionality and seasonality play a big role and we put a lot of focus on it. ■





„The personality of the founders
is what counts”

Jens Lapinski from the METRO Techstars Accelerator supports startups, which develop digital facilitations for restaurateurs, to market-ready young companies.

Jens Lapinski knows he is exactly in the right place. In Berlin, on the fourth floor in the side wing of a former city council building, where Erich Honecker once resided and Gerhard Schröder held office from 1999 to 2001.

„It is a historic place with an alternating and exciting history. Now, it serves as a training ground for creative, unconventional startups. What a symbol for the new Berlin“, he says. No doubt, 50 percent of the German startups are in Berlin.

The postdoc biotechnologist has his own experience in entrepreneurship and previously worked in London for the global accelerator-network Techstars. He happily followed the call to Berlin. „The city with a motivation for fundamental change is much closer to Silicon Valley than Paris or London“, he says as he rates the atmosphere of the city.

What exactly happens in the accelerator programme? Who is the target market, if the accelerator is initiated by the commercial enterprise METRO? Jens Lapinski's task within the historical DDR walls is to develop the digital future of the restaurant industry. This means, to find the right startups amongst the thousands of worldwide incorporations, and to nurture and turn those into companies, who have really good ideas for a special community: the chefs, restaurateurs and caterers of this world.

„These are people, who work 80 hours per week in the real world, hence traditional style.“ It is a demanding task for startups, to develop solutions, which match their needs and simplify their life. „Chefs are not computer programmers“, says Lapinski. Yet the global business community of restaurateurs has big potential. To find people, who can tap into that potential, is Jens Lapinski's responsibility.

„So not only in Neukölln and in Prenzlauerberg. Two indispensable elements in my professional life: Skype and Tegel.“ For Lapinski and his eleven employees, they are imperative to get to work.

Whoever thinks, entrepreneurial investors sit around sullen and dull long numbers of business plans and only assess from a financial point of view – is wrong. Jens Lapinski looks at people. He listens to founders. Everyday

over Skype or in person, at meetings or the growing number of startup events. „The CEOs, the personality of the founder, that is the crucial factor.“

Alongside Techstars comes a worldwide network of mentors. Jens Lapinski can call 150 global and established founders and restaurateurs anytime and ask for their advice. Power-Networking is his world.

Approximately 20'000 startups apply to the 15 worldwide Techstars locations. In five years the number is expected to reach over one hundred thousand. A gigantic number for the global startup frenzy. „The knowledge to recognize, which startups can be turned into real companies and which concepts can be made market-ready is what differentiates Techstars“, summarizes Lapinski.

Firstly, there is the recruiting, the contacting and the application of the startups. The subsequent selection is hard. It is up to Lapinski and his team to decide according with help of clearly defined clear criteria and best knowledge. In 2016 more than 600 startups applied. Only 20 were selected.

An intensive time lies ahead of the winners. They run through work models for their business development. With Techstars they get to shape good ideas into viable and scalable young companies in all branches of technology around the world. Elements include: strategic positioning, analysing the market maturity of the product, and incorporating the systematic feedback of the market.

It is quite simple - what the startups are missing is money.

All of which serves for the final fundraising of the supported startups - the acquisition of real money. Because that's what it's all about. „Money - is what the startups are missing. Quite simply“, says Lapinski. „You start without a budget. And need to grow out of it.“ Many therefore happily accept direct contribution of up to 120.000 euros in the form of equity from METRO Techstars.

Techstars and METRO entered a partnership in fall of 2015. One of the startups, was revamped and helped to

get market access, is „Frag Paul“ - a starting point for all services around the complex subject of personnel planning and management in the restaurant industry.

What does a cooperation between a successful global trading group and „tech people“ look like - why and how does it work together? Jens Lapinski is sure: „It also depends on the CEO.“ This includes the willingness to accept own concepts not as final truths, but as hypotheses to be tested in practice. This also applied to the partnership with Techstars. „We had to find out how we would best cooperate,“ Lapinski says.

METRO is a huge distributor for the digital startups with solutions for the restaurant industry. „How should a startup ever access a fragmented market with millions of customers with the related large market entry costs?“, asks Lapinski.

We want to help the restaurateurs
focus on their strengths in the kitchen
and behind the counter.

The hundreds of point of sales in METRO markets worldwide, the successful sales force, which has positioned itself as one of the strongest commercial companies – all that is promising. But so far, it has been strongly analogue. „Different rules apply to acquiring new business in the restaurant industry“, Lapinski analyses. The distribution of the digital solutions from the startups is outsourced to the digital unit of METRO. Part of the strategy is the „Pilot“ project with test customers. „With the help and support from METRO, they can try out digital products with the help and support from METRO.“

For the next accelerator round, it still stands: „We want to help the restaurateurs focus on their strengths in the kitchen and behind the counter.“ Jens Lapinski is certain that the startups will contribute new digital ideas to the future of the independent restaurant industry. ■





„Berlin is incredibly adventurous”

The diversity in the Berlin restaurant business is an economic factor. Dr. Stefan Franzke, CEO of Berlin Partner, also markets Berlin as a restaurant business location abroad.

TEXT: HANS GÄNG PHOTOGRAPHY: BERLIN PARTNER/FOTOSTUDIO CHARLOTTENBURG

The situation in Yorai Feinberg’s Jewish restaurant in Fuggerstrasse is absolutely typical of the new Berlin. That is where we had an appointment with Stefan Franzke, CEO of Berlin Partner. There are definitely no tourists sitting at any of the tables in the restaurant, which is the size of a living room in a typical old Berlin apartment block. The diners are businesspeople drinking Coca-Cola with their meals. You listen in to scraps of conversation without wanting

to: “Accelerator, seed capital, Silicon Valley, strategy...” People are talking English and Hebrew.

“Yes, the links between Berlin and Tel Aviv as well as New York have become closer”, Stefan Franzke confirms. And the head of the Berlin business promotion agency has played a role in making that happen. Start Alliance Berlin is the vehicle the city proactively uses to attract startups interested in testing out Berlin and the

European market. Franzke not only casts his nets out to Tel Aviv, New York, Shanghai and Paris. Following the Brexit vote, he has been doing a great deal of fishing on the Thames. All these efforts are bearing fruit. The city boasts 500 new digital startups every year. Berlin is way out in front of the rest of Germany in terms of successfully raising startup capital. London, Paris and Berlin are the top three in Europe. Franzke sees the basis for this boom in the entrepreneurial spirit and creativity that every business visitor gets a real sense of when visiting Berlin.

“The culinary community is now an integral part of creative Berlin. It is the foundation on which the success we as a city are currently enjoying is built”, of that Franzke is convinced. The holder of a doctorate in mechanical engineering, who headed up the Federal State of Lower Saxony’s innovation agency for many years before starting in Berlin, quotes some figures. They emphasise the importance of the restaurant business to Berlin. There are 1500 restaurants in the city. There is a high level of fluctuation, as everywhere. DEHOGA, the hospitality industry association, has provided a total figure of 2000 new openings and closures in all segments of the hospitality industry.

As everywhere, that is often attributable to a lack of experience and business qualifications on the part of startup entrepreneurs. Franzke therefore regards restaurant business training as being absolutely key: “There are 3500 trainees in addition to the roughly 50000 jobs.” Many of them want to become master chefs, some - like Berlin’s most well-known chef, Tim Raue - have made it right to the top this way.

That’s why Berlin Partner - that is not only the Berlin taxpayer but also around 270 Berlin-based companies - launched the annual “Berlin Master Chef” awards. Franzke: “Berlin Partner is using this project to profile the capital’s upmarket restaurant culture and the diversity of its culinary community as important economic and image factors and as the city’s marquee feature.”

The sustainable success of every single one of the “Master Chef” award-winners is just one aspect of how the world now visualises the city. In his conversations with potential investors Franzke no longer has to point out the 25 Michelin stars awarded to Berlin restaurants. He

much prefers to talk about the lively food startup community that is trying out new things here in Berlin, ranging from craft beer to Israeli startup Bitemojo’s digital city guide. “Berlin is incredibly adventurous”, says Stefan Franzke and then lists half a dozen new company names that I have never heard of before.

As has happened in the fashion and the artistically creative communities, dedicated communication platforms have been launched. Berlin Food Week, Eat Berlin, Stadt Land Food and the startup, Food Market, also attract companies from the industry to Berlin as investors. “Here too we are seeing major companies like METRO getting actively involved in Berlin, because of its climate of innovation and creativity.”

The new Ecosystem is therefore playing an increasing role in marketing Berlin within Germany and abroad as well. Berlin Partner brings Berlin’s cultural and culinary diversity and its open-mindedness to life in foreign countries too as part of the capital city’s ‘beBerlin’ campaign. Be it Stuttgart, Munich, London, Tel Aviv, Brussels or Los Angeles - the capital’s marketers always take culinary Berlin with them wherever they go. The tourism promoters at visitBerlin also guide conference visitors to the culinary community’s hotspots. “The 31 million overnight stays in Berlin, incidentally twice as many as recorded in 2006, in turn have a positive impact on immigration by international restaurant business startup entrepreneurs”, is how Franzke describes an important economic correlation.

He himself goes out dining with a large number of visitors to Berlin in the culinary community, which keeps on surprising him. Be it Berlin entrepreneurs invading the culinary hotspots in their organised “Delicious Riding” motorbike convoy, inquisitive Chief Digital Officers of DAX-listed companies, ungrudgingly amazed business development promoters from other German states or an Israeli media delegation - visitors to the city frequently communicate their enthusiasm very personally to the city’s chief business development promoter. “So there’s one thing I have to honestly admit”, Stefan Franzke then acknowledges at the end of our conversation. “At the beginning, I wasn’t really aware of how incredibly important the restaurant business is for enabling people to establish a bond with Berlin.” ■

BERLIN MASTERCHEF

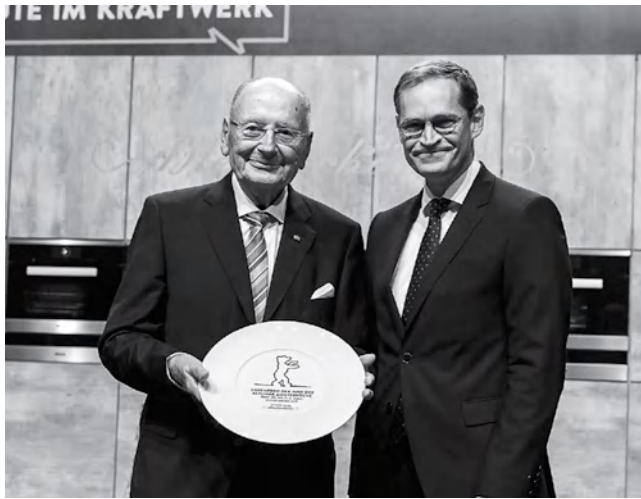
The annual award honors excellence and creativity in
Berlin's gastronomy scene



PHOTO: MARIAN LENHARD

In true foresight, the office for economic development created a showcase for excellence in Berlin's gastronomy scene: The annual award "Berlin Masterchef". Berlin is a magnet for creative minds who want to make an impact in a culinary sense and need a place to make that happen – this is continuously emphasized and supported by the "Berlin Masterchef".

This is exactly what the founders of the award had intended. Dr. Volker Hassemer, CEO at that time, and Prof. Dr. Dr. hc mult. Dieter Großklaus, the doyen of haute cuisine in Berlin who received his lifetime achievement award last year, were the pioneers of the movement that aimed to raise the level of quality of restaurants in Berlin. Prof. Dieter Großklaus is not only the city's most



well-known veterinarian, but also carries the honorary title of „Bailli Honoraire“ of the prestigious Chaîne des Rôtisseurs in Berlin-Brandenburg. At over 80 years old, he is the honorary chairman of the jury.

Since the first presentation of the award in 1997, it has become a showcase for Berlin's food scene. Nothing highlights the rapid development of the gastronomy scene in Berlin more clearly than this award. In total, 123 chefs and restaurateurs have been awarded in the different categories.

Former recipients include chefs whose reputation has grown beyond the confines of the capital: Kolja Kleeberg, Tim Raue, Ralf Zacherl and Markus Semmler, to only name a few. The list of restaurateurs that we have spoken to in this book, which is given on the right, is only a short excerpt as well: The ten-page long chronicle of all the award winners, which can be downloaded on the homepage of Berlin Partner, is a culinary "hall of fame" of the capital.

As part of a festive gala dinner, this year's laureates are announced on the 21st of October. The award is divided into the following major award categories:

- Berlin Masterchef
- Regional Masterchef
- Newcomer of the Year
- Berlin Hospitality
- Berlin Scene Restaurant
- Gastronomic Innovators

For more information about the Berlin Masterchefs project, please visit: www.berliner-meisterkoeche.de

Berlin Masterchefs in this book:



Maximilian Strohe
Page 14



Thomas Kammeier
Page 30



Willi Schlögl
Page 18



Robert Havemann
und Lisa Meyer
Page 34



Michael Köhle
Page 22



Tim Raue
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Ninon Demuth
Page 28



Markus Semmler
Page 48



FOOD ECOSYSTEM BERLIN

Berlin's food scene connects via events meets at market places. This is just a small selection.

FOOD EVENTS

Stadt, Land, Food

The „Stadt Land Food - Festival für gutes Essen und gute Landwirtschaft“ takes place every two years in Berlin. Other than a large farmer's market with vendors with handmade food there's a street food market and food-related workshops.
www.stadtlandfood.com

Berlin Food Week

Since 2013, the „Berlin Food Week“ is the networking platform for gourmet chefs, restaurateurs, companies, journalists, foodies and everyone who loves and appreciates good food. During the week-long festival, exciting and innovative formats demonstrate to the visitors what Berlin has to offer in terms of food, quality and indulgence.
www.berlinfoodweek.de

eat Berlin

Food aficionados can look forward to an extensive program consisting of cooking events, degustations, panels and music events during the gourmet festival „eat Berlin“. Celebrities from the food and entertainment industry indulge together with the visitors and share their love of food.

www.eat-berlin-festival.de

Gastro-Gründerpreis

This award, initiated by orderbird, honors the most compelling gastronomy concepts from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The award is presented as part of the Food Week.

www.gastro-gruenderpreis.de

FOOD MARKETS

Markthalle Neun

The Markthalle Neun in the Kreuzberg district aims to show how „eating and shopping differently“ in the city is possible: By treating people, animals and the environment respectfully and merging that with the support of local products.

www.markthalleneun.de

Arminius-Markthalle

The Arminius-Markthalle in Moabit is the perfect place to get to know the authentic Berlin. Opened in the December of 1891, the Arminius-Markthalle offers a combination of traditional market stalls and modern gastronomy.

www.arminiusmarkthalle.com

Bite Club

The „Bite Club“ was launched in August of 2013 in Kreuzberg and offers visitors top-notch street food directly at the Spree. Apart from the bathing ship, a vast amount of food vendors can be found here every second Friday.

www.biteclub.de

Thaiwiesen

There's a new, colorful and exotic world right in the middle of Berlin, especially at the weekend. The Thai Park, also called Thaiwiesen, invokes the feeling of being transported elsewhere, far from Berlin. Its main focus is the flair and food of Thailand.

www.thaipark.de

Winterfeldtplatz

The Winterfeldtplatz in Schöneberg is not only geographically situated between the trendy Kreuzberg district and the more bourgeois Wilmersdorf. With its stylish bars, cafés and restaurants, it's a lively nightlife spot. To experience the extraordinary atmosphere, be sure to visit Winterfeldtmarkt on Saturday. It's the most popular and largest weekly market in Berlin.

www.winterfeldtplatz.winterfeldt-markt.de

A.HORN

Carl-Herz-Ufer 9, 10961 Berlin
www.kaffee-ahorn.de
See page 54

ATAME

Dirksenstraße 40, 10178
www.atame-tapasbar.de
See page 32

CAFÉ DOTS

Weserstraße 191, 12045 Berlin
www.ilovedots.de
See page 46

CAFÉ HEIDER

Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 29, 14467 Potsdam
www.cafeheider.de
See page 26

CAFETERIA EUREF-CAMPUS

EUREF-Campus 1-25, 10829 Berlin
www.euref.de
See page 30

CAFÉ KOTTI

Adalbertstraße 96B, 10999 Berlin
www.cafekotti.de
See page 36

CORDOBAR

Große Hamburger Str. 32, 10115 Berlin
www.cordobar.net
See page 16

DAS RESTAURANT

Sächsische Str. 7, 10707 Berlin
www.semmler-restaurant.de
See page 48

DIE SCHWARZE HEIDI

Mariannenstraße 50, 10997 Berlin
www.schwarzeheidi.de
See page 16

FEINBERG'S

Fuggerstraße 35, 10777 Berlin
www.feinbergs.de
See page 50

HERZ & NIERE

Fichtestraße 31, 10967 Berlin
www.herzundniere.berlin
See page 22

HOTEL ODERBERGER

Oderberger Str. 57, 10435 Berlin
www.hotel-oderberger.berlin
See page 56

MICHELBERGER HOTEL

Warschauer Str. 39-40, 10243 Berlin
www.michelbergerhotel.com/de/
See page 18

OSMANS TÖCHTER

Pappelallee 15, 10437 Berlin
www.osmanstoechter.de
See page 40

RESTAURANT TIM RAUE

Rudi-Dutschke-Straße 26, 10969 Berlin
www.tim-raue.com
See page 42

RICHWATER & MITCHELL

Wicdefstraße 30, 10551 Berlin
www.richwatermitchell.de
See page 38

ROSA LISBERT

Arminiusstraße 2, 10551 Berlin
www.rosalisbert.de
See page 34

TULUS LOTREK

Fichtestraße 24, 10967 Berlin
www.tuluslotrek.de
See page 14

VOLAND

Wichertstraße 63, 10439 Berlin
www.voland-cafe.de
See page 24





GESUND BRUNNEN

● VOLAND

BRUNNENVIERTEL

● OSMANS TÖCHTER ● RENZLAUER
BERG

● HOTEL ODERBERGER

KOLLWITZKIEZ

MITTE

OABIT
TSCHELL

ISBERT
SAVIERTEL

● ATAME

● CORDOBAR

BERLIN

RGARTEN

FRIEDRICHSHAIN

RESTAURANT TIM RAVE

PRINZESSINNENGÄRTEN

MICHELBERGER HOTEL

KREUZBERG

● DIE SCHWARZE HEIDI

EINBERG'S

● CAFE KOTTI

SCHÖNEBERG

● A.HORN

HERZENIERE ● ALT-TREPTOV

BERGMANNKIEZ

● TULUS LOTREK

● HÜTTENPALAST

● CAFÉ DOTS

● EUREF CAMPUS

● NIGHTSHOP 44

TEMPELHOF

NEUKÖLLN

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After „wird Wirt. Stuttgarter Gastronomen im Gespräch“, „Gastro.Startup.Berlin“ is the next educational project of the small publisher local global GmbH in Stuttgart. Many people have contributed to the creation of this book.

THE WRITERS

Nitay Feigenbaum (born in 1996) lived in Israel for a long time. He now studies creative writing in Hildesheim. He's probably working on our next book, which will be about the diversity of Jewish cuisine in Berlin.

Rebecca Hoffmann (born in 1984) is the daughter of a Berlin chef, studied media design and came back to Berlin after completing her degree in creative writing in Hildesheim. Together with Su Song she runs a blog about gastronomy.

www.fraeuleinchen.de

Alexandra Ketterer (born in 1994) studied economics in Canada and Berlin, and is currently studying creative writing. She gathered gastronomical experience in the capital working as a waitress in a café and a Jazz bar. She motivated most of the other writers to participate in the project.

Romy Kranzusch (born in 1990) is originally from Berlin but very much drawn to the West. Studies in Belgium and the Netherlands, an ongoing love for France. She works in PR, concerning herself with all things creative in Berlin.

Cristina Sánchez Esteban (born in 1994) studied in Madrid, a stronghold of Spanish cuisine, journalism and law. Doesn't wonder about the great number of Spanish tourists and talents in Berlin.

Hannah Schraven (born in 1992) lives in Berlin and Hildesheim, where she studies literary writing. The pleasure of gastronomy in Berlin taught her survival skills, which she has worked into a poetic potpourri that she publishes on her blog.

www.dernewsschredder.com

Carlotta Sturm (born in 1996) studies literature in Hildesheim. Knows the food industry as a waitress and from her grandparents' inn, whose life inspired her to publish her first book on restaurateurs in Stuttgart.

www.wirdwirt.de

Valeria Truschinski (born in 1993) is originally from Kazakhstan and studied international economy in St. Petersburg and Heilbronn. For four years, she has worked in a hospital's visitor's café. She coordinated the production and made sure that this book was actually finished.

Valentin Karl Waibel (born in 1995) studies political sciences in Berlin and spends his nights, after a first experience as a barkeeper in Neukölln, much rather as a guest or working on his writing.

www.valentinkarlwaibel.de

PHOTOGRAPHY AND LAYOUT

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www.alejandraaloreto.com

Marian Lenhard (born in 1990) comes from Bavaria, studied theology and literature in Erlangen, and now lives in Bamberg and Hannover. Has trained under a Magnum-Photographer in New York and also does photography for GEO Magazine.

www.marianlenhard.com

Julia Steiner (born in 1991) is a freelance designer in Stuttgart and, on the side, finds the time to manage the office of an Italian restaurant. She has also conceptualized and layouted the book about restaurateurs in Stuttgart.

www.wirdwirt.de

PARTNER

Frédéric Schumacher is - after being taken with the book on Stuttgart - now the true initiator of the Berlin book. For the METRO subsidiary HoReCa.Digital, he searches the world for new perspectives for the gastronomy sector and finds them in Berlin - see the conversation with him in this book.

www.linkedin.com/in/frederic-schumacher/de

Myriam Sztayn und Christian Stigler maintain the gastronomy network for Berlin Partner and have, thanks to the Berlin Masterchefs award, a close eye on the food and gastronomy scene in Berlin: we owe them valuable tips and contacts for this book.

www.berlin-partner.de

Hans Gäng, journalist, founder and publisher in Stuttgart, grew up in an inn at Lake Constance and has studied - before the fall of the Berlin wall - politics at the FU Berlin. As an economic journalist, he has yet to stop being astonished by Berlin during his many visits to the city.

www.localglobal.de

Gastro.Startup.Berlin

is also available in German!



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Culinary diversity, internationality and innovative ideas can only be found in a few places in Europe as pronounced as they are in Berlin. Gastronomy and startups transform the world's view on the city. A new "ecosystem" has transformed in the food industry, that magnetically attracts talents. Young authors examined the entrepreneurial spirit of the city. They have had many conversations and interviews with various inspiring restaurateurs, but also with startups and networkers that are part of Berlin's food scene. Even if there's only a small selection of those had a chance to speak in this book - as a reader, you will learn a lot about the personal drive of people who have shaped the image of Berlin.

"The authors have portrayed restaurateurs who have taken the liberty of doing something completely new, thereby developing the city at a fast pace."

Olaf Koch, CEO METRO AG

"The food scene is an integral part of creative Berlin"

Dr. Stefan Franzke, Berlin Partner

"Behind every restaurateur and startup, there's a personal story. The book pays overdue respect to the people in the gastronomy sector and contains important suggestions for young entrepreneurs."

Frédéric Schumacher, Co-Publisher

