

Press release

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Berlin Master Chefs 2017:

“Great potential for quality”

The “Berlin Master Chefs” of the year 2017 are selected. The 14 members of the independent Berlin Master Chef jury around the chairman, Dr. Stefan Elfenbein, have voted laureates in the categories “Berlin Master Chef 2017”, “Master Chef of the Region 2017”, “Newcomer of the Year 2017”, “Berlin Host 2017”, “Berlin Scene Restaurant 2017” and “Gastronomic Innovator 2017”.

Sebastian Frank, from the “HORVÁTH” restaurant, is **“Berlin Master Chef 2017”**.

The jury states in its reasoning: “Our Master Chef is famous for his virtuoso reinterpretation of traditional dishes from his home region, Niederösterreich. He has continued to refine his personal style, and made it to the very top. He grates celeriac, matured for twelve months and cooked in a salt crust, over fine strips of roast celeriac with green celery, celery seeds, whey and horseradish. He hides the chopped suckling pig’s head under “flowers” of luminous pinkish oyster mushrooms cooked with almond oil and sprinkled with parsley root oil. As a special indulgence, he has created non-alcoholic drinks to go with the menu: How about some spelt and oat milk with black salify decoction and strawberry seed oil? Sommelier Jakob Petritsch is charming.”

The award **“Master Chef of the Region 2017”** goes to René Klages, chef de cuisine at gourmet restaurant “17fuffzig” at Bleiche Resort & Spa in Burg im Spreewald.

The jury states in its reasoning: “Our “Master Chef of the Region” emerged with a drumbeat in Mark and the Lausitz, respectively. No one cooks quite like him all around. He had already attracted attention at “Le Noir” in Saarbrücken. With almost scientific precision, he sounds out the secrets and similarities between Japanese and French cuisine and creates anew - adding a dose of alchemy from the Spreewald. Gentle sweetness, acidity, umami and textures were ingeniously matched, for example, in the flambé stomach of hamachi in dashi and with sudachi, pomelo, calamansi, menton lemon mayonnaise, roast leeks, garlic sauce and cucumber-rice vinaigrette. ‘Brandenburg was a coincidence’, says René Klages. He hadn’t found a house anywhere else, where one believed in him. Thanks, Bleiche! There, in the spa resort in Burg, the “17fuffzig”, he creates his dishes.”

The title **“Newcomer of the Year 2017”** goes to Christopher Kümper of the restaurant “Schwein”.

The jury states in its reasoning: “Berlin’s best new youngster, our “Rising Star 2017”, has come to the Spree via Singapour. He had been sous-chef there, with the great André Chiang. Before that, he had already cooked for Nils Henkel and Daniel Boulud, in New York. At the “Schwein” restaurant in Mitte, Christopher Kümper demonstrated his skills. In doing so, he consistently bets on top quality produce from the region. He combines the Brandenburg goose in dashi-geese fat-decoction with goose liver marrow dumplings with silver ear mushroom and raw marinated red cabbage. ‘Berlin is the city that fascinated me already from afar’, he says. The “Schwein” has to close from 1 September. From the end of October, however, it will resume with just as much enthusiasm and energy, at its new location at Mommsenstrae in Charlottenburg.”

In the category „**Berlin Host 2017**“, the jury elected Ilona Scholl from the restaurant „tulus lotrek“.

The jury states in its reasoning: “Let it steam off for a moment, then go for the oysters - stuff yourselves! Our “Host 2017” does everything with a little difference, with verve, charm and bluntness, is a buoyant part of the complete artistic concept “tulus lotrek” - her workplace. Chef de cuisine Max Strohe serves the oysters with spruce shoot vinegar and juniper mayonnaise in a steel pot, on colourful pebbles and in dry ice vapour. Ilona Scholl grew up in Schwäbisch-Hall. ‘With coming of age, I pushed off’, she says, then took jobs in various dives. She met her Max, our “Berlin Rising Star 2016” at the restaurant ‘Frau Mittenmang’ in Prenzlauer Berg. The two of them opened the “tulus lotrek” together. Their motto: ‘Get across to the guests all the heart that goes into the cooking in the kitchen’.”

The “**Berlin Scene Restaurant 2017**“ goes to the “BRLO BRWHOUSE“ this year.

The jury states in its reasoning: Everything is just right, indulgence all around, for all senses. In our trendy eatery at the “BRLO Craft Beer” brewery at Gleisdreieck, Berlin lifestyle is ideally combined with new German drinks and cuisine. Visual appearance and building are signed by Berlin’s star architecture firm GRAFT. BRLO Porter, Pale Ale or Matcha Weisse and Maple Smoked Weizen are also served at the Craftbier bar. Ben Pommer, who was previously with Nils Henkel and more recently sous-chef at the “Kronenschlösschen”, provides the cuisine to go with it. How about belly of dry aged Mangalica pig with honey-whisky BBQ sauce and “German kimchi” from pointed cabbage marinated in ginger and cumin. The DJ is at the turntables from 10pm.”

The Duc Ngo, with his restaurants, such as “Kuchi“, “Cocolo Ramen“, “Madame Ngo“, “893 Ryotei“, “Golden Phönix“ etc. is awarded the title „**Gastronomic Innovator 2017**“ by the jury.

The jury states in its reasoning: “He is an ur-Berliner, so to speak, and yet an emigrant. He was born in 1974, the father was Chinese. After conflicts between China and North Vietnam, the family had to flee to Hong Kong on an overloaded junk. Germany gave asylum. A stroke of luck for us, and for Berlin! The success story took its course. The young Duc worked in burger joints, sold ice cream and learned the art of sushi. In 1999, he opened the legendary “Kuchi” in Kantstraße, his “Shiro i Shiro” was reputed in 2005 to be the first trendy eatery in Berlin’s new Mitte. With his “893 Ryotei”, he brought Mitte flair to the West, in “Madame Ngo”, mama’s dishes are served. And he has recently opened his eleventh restaurant, “Funky Fisch”.”

Dr. Stefan Eifenbein, chairman of the jury, „Berlin Master Chefs“: „The best are chosen, the jury has decided: And what characterises it, the 2017 “Master Chef cohort“, what is its essence? Top quality, brilliant variety, more potential Masters and Berlin’s cuisine continues its positive trend, emerging headwinds notwithstanding. In detail: A full 76 potential candidates were chosen by the members of the jury to enter the competition this time - more than ever before. In the choice of the very best in the respective categories, there were races of very tight competition we had never seen before. All of them were simply good, a great year, as said before. Only: Quality needs a good climate. For the first time in 21 years of “Master Chefs”, one nominee was “lost”. Rising costs and commercial rents, red tape, such as the reduction in outdoor spaces for restaurants, investors and hotel operators without vision or courage take their toll. Only a few days ago our “Rising Star 2017” lost his kitchen. We the jury, have decided not to vote again. Instead, we send a signal against this changing climate. A laureate without restaurant is amongst the 2017 cohort for the first time - but don’t worry, new things are planned, good things remain!”

Dr. Stefan Franzke, CEO, Berlin Partner: “With the Berlin Master Chefs, top achievements in Berlin gastronomy are honoured every year. The Master Chefs stand for Berlin haute cuisine: They set trends, are ambassadors for Berlin and make the capital’s sophisticated restaurant culture visible as an important economic factor. In former times, talents used to choose their place of residence according to their chosen employer, today it works the other way round: the choice of preferred city comes first, and that’s where Berlin, in international comparison, inspires countless people with its cultural and culinary variety. The

gastronomy scene is varied, inspiring and international - it shapes the people and the city, and reinforces Berlin's attraction for creative heads from all over the world."

The award "Berlin Master Chefs" has been awarded by Berlin Partner since 1997. The great and increasing number of culinary talents is thus made visible and pointed out anew year after year: Cooking in the capital region is at the highest level. Apart from the culinary arts, criteria for the jury, which is made up of independent experts, include originality of creations, presentation of dishes, the service and atmosphere. The official accolade for the laureates, and the handover of the coveted award in the shape of a hand-painted plate from the Royal Porcelain Manufactory Berlin, as well as a personalised magnum bottle of Pommery Brut Royal, takes place on 21 October within the framework of a festive gala dinner at Jandorf department store. For the first time, select wines from "VDP. Die Prädikatsweingüter" will be served.

Press materials can be downloaded under:

<http://www.berlin-partner.de/meisterkoeche-pressebereich>

The "Berlin Master Chefs" can also be found on Facebook under

<https://www.facebook.com/BerlinerMeisterkoeche> and on **Twitter** under #berlinisst.

Additional information regarding the project „Berlin Master Chefs“ under:

www.berliner-meisterkoeche.de

The Berlin Master Chefs

Since 1997, Berlin Partner has been annually honouring the best chefs of the capital region Berlin-Brandenburg. With the award for Berlin Master Chefs, Berlin Partner distinguishes the capital's sophisticated restaurant culture and gastronomic scene as an important economic factor and flagship of the city. 123 chefs and restaurateurs have hitherto been honoured in the various categories of Berlin Master Chefs. Amongst the previous laureates are, amongst others Kolja Kleeberg, Tim Raue and Markus Semmler. The award takes place on 21 October 2017 within the framework of a festive gala dinner at Jandorf department store.