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Press Release

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Partner für Berlin Honors the Best of Berlin's Culinary Scene

30 Years of Berliner Meisterköche: Anniversary Awards Celebrate the Capital's Culinary Stars

At a festive awards gala held at historic Tempelhof Airport, one of Berlin's most distinctive landmarks with its eventful history and striking architecture, the city's leading culinary talents were honored for their outstanding achievements in seven categories: "Berlin Master Chef," "Rising Star of the Year," "Berlin Host," "Berlin Scene Restaurant," "Berlin Kiezmeister," "Berlin Bar Culture" and "Culinary Innovator."

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Berliner Meisterköche recognizes an extraordinary range of culinary concepts and personalities this year. From Berlin's long-established bar culture and innovative restaurant concepts to dedicated hosts and rising talents, the award winners reflect the diversity that makes Berlin such a vibrant international culinary destination.

Kai Wegner, Governing Mayor of Berlin: "Today, Berlin is celebrating its master chefs. Over the past three decades, our city's fine dining scene has gone from strength to strength. This year's awards once again reflect the quality and diversity of Berlin's culinary landscape. Innovation, creativity and sustainability remain central to the success of Berlin's restaurants and are once again being recognized through these awards. I congratulate all the winners and thank everyone on the jury and organizing team who helped make this year's competition a success."

Franziska Giffey, Berlin Senator for Economic Affairs, Energy and Public Enterprises: "Sometimes, all it takes is a pinch of something special to turn a good dish into an extraordinary one. Berlin's master chefs demonstrate just how much creativity and craftsmanship our capital's culinary scene has to offer. For 30 years, these awards have honored people whose ideas and skills help shape Berlin's culinary diversity. They take on entrepreneurial responsibility and, together with their teams, make Berlin an international culinary hotspot. That's good news for our taste buds, for tourism and for Berlin as a business location. Behind every successful restaurant are people who create jobs, train the next generation and work hard every day to give their guests an exceptional experience. Their achievements deserve recognition. I warmly congratulate all this year's winners and thank their teams for their dedication and hospitality."

Dr. Stefan Franzke, CEO of Partner für Berlin: "Thirty years of Berliner Meisterköche represent three decades of culinary excellence, creativity and entrepreneurial courage. Berlin's restaurateurs help shape the city's image far beyond its borders, continually inspire people to try something new and attract both Berliners and visitors alike. Over the past few decades, the capital has established itself as a thriving culinary destination, thanks in no small part to the Berliner Meisterköche. These awards not only recognize outstanding achievements but also highlight the innovative strength and diversity of an industry that makes an important contribution to Berlin's economy."

The award winners:

Berlin Master Chef 2026: Lode van Zuylen, REMI From the jury's statement:
Can you really be named Berlin's Master Chef without a Michelin star? Absolutely. And not just because our jury eats its way through Berlin with a level of expertise and dedication that no restaurant guide could match. But that's not really the point. Berlin's culinary landscape has changed, and this year's decision to honor Lode van Zuylen as Berlin Master Chef reflects that evolution. Here is a chef who is every bit as much a restaurateur and a host. He invites the entire city into his beautiful

restaurant in the Suhrkamp building on Torstraße without feeling the need to define REMI as fine dining, a social gathering place or a grand café in the Dutch-Flemish tradition from which he comes. The ingredients and their producers still matter, of course. But so does the moment itself: coming together around a table and celebrating the pleasure of sharing a meal. Nowhere is the balance between ambitious, concept-driven cuisine and the effortless appeal of simply delicious food struck quite as successfully as at REMI. So successfully, in fact, that it no longer feels like a compromise at all.

Rising Star of the Year 2026: **Tanadon Santanaviboon** From the jury's statement:
If anyone knows how to rise through the ranks, it's Don. From a teenager who never completed his culinary training to the driving force behind the hottest restaurant in town, 31-year-old Tanadon "Don" Santanaviboon has followed one of the most remarkable career paths in Berlin's restaurant scene. As a teenager, he spent periods sleeping on the streets and never finished his formal chef training. Instead, he learned his craft by watching, asking questions and experimenting. Today, he is already running his fifth successful venture: Rram on Torstraße in Mitte. At this intimate restaurant with an open kitchen, he and his team serve Thai royal cuisine alongside the kinds of dishes found in everyday Thai home cooking. Since opening in late June, the restaurant has been fully booked. His philosophy? Bold flavors, uncompromising heat and respect for humble ingredients. . "I want people to cry over my food," he says

Berlin Host 2026: **Isabell Wendel, Bricole** From the jury's statement:
Once again, a member of the Bricole team takes the stage at the Berliner Meisterköche awards. Despite holding a Michelin star, Bricole sees itself as a welcoming neighborhood restaurant firmly rooted in everyday life. And no one embodies this sophisticated yet down-to-earth approach better than its host, Isabell Wendel.
She knows the culinary tastes and wine preferences of her Prenzlauer Berg neighbors. And as a sommelier, she also knows that sometimes the perfect pairing calls for a beer.
Isabell Wendel has broken down the barriers that can make Michelin-starred dining feel intimidating. At Bricole, guests can still enjoy excellent wine at a fair price – something that can no longer be taken for granted at a time when nonalcoholic wheat beer and Aperol Spritz seem to dominate the tables elsewhere.
With professionalism, warmth and empathy, Wendel ensures that great hospitality and exceptional dining remain accessible and welcoming.

Berlin Scene Restaurant 2026: **Saint Farah** From the jury's statement:
One of the pleasures of being on the jury is watching a chef develop over the years. We first encountered Nadav Kundel at Night Kitchen and later saw him take the helm at Papillon. It had long been clear that this talented chef needed a restaurant of his own.
Now he has one, together with his cousin Gil Azrielan: Saint Farah, named after his grandmother. But don't expect nostalgic Levantine cuisine. Drawing on influences from Berlin and London, Kundel has developed a contemporary style all his own. His cooking brings together personal memories and international influences: Farah's grilled Swiss chard with lamb meets the flavors of bún chả, triple-fried fries are paired with sambal butter, and mussels come with rice wine and chili crisp.
Saint Farah manages to be both intimate and stylish, relaxed and cosmopolitan – and above all, it's a place where the food is exceptionally good. Congratulations to Nadav Kundel and Gil Azrielan on being named Berlin Scene Restaurant of the Year!

Berlin Neighborhood Champion 2026: **Tresen-Treff, Wilmersdorf** From the jury's statement:
That a seemingly past-its-prime corner pub could become one of Berlin's most exciting culinary destinations of the past year is one of the bigger surprises in the city's recent restaurant history. Step inside Tresen-Treff and, at first glance, you might not suspect a thing. There are hydroponic plants in the window, a Hertha BSC flag hangs above the door, slot machines flash along the walls and a television plays with the sound turned off.
When the previous owner retired, Julia Bentzien, Laurens Friedl and Josha Karlborg preserved the charm of the old-school neighborhood pub while giving its menu a fresh start. The two chefs, both veterans of fine dining, now serve Berlin classics at affordable prices, prepared with impressive skill and dedication: bread spread with pork crackling fat on homemade bread, pork head terrine with horseradish and remoulade, tomato salad with tarragon and red currants, or mashed potatoes made with infused milk, crispy onions and chives. Add a freshly poured Helles lager from Franconia's Spalter brewery, and what's not to love?

Berlin Bar Culture 2026: **Rum Trader** From the jury's statement:
Had Charlotte Fedtke and Sahand Zamani not decided to take over Rum Trader in 2019, one of Berlin's most treasured bar institutions might now be a thing of the past. Since 1976, this self-styled "Institute for Advanced Drinking" has been expertly helping guests enjoy a drink in just 32 square meters of dark, old-world elegance. And remarkably little has changed in all that time. Guests must ring the bell before being admitted, smoking is permitted and everyone is addressed formally. There's a Chancellor Cocktail, original Singapore Sling glasses from the Raffles Hotel and plenty of

stories to go with them. The focus is on gin, Champagne and, naturally, rum cocktails, including classics such as the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club and Planter's Punch. Berlin's oldest privately run bar is a place where time seems to have stood still – and that is precisely what makes it timeless. Fedtke and Zamani run Rum Trader with deep respect for its history and a keen instinct for keeping that history alive.

"Culinary Innovators 2026: **Anja and Carsten Schmidt**

From the jury's statement:

Innovation in the restaurant industry? That might conjure up images of disruption, robots in the kitchen or foam on the plate. But innovation often begins with something much simpler: asking how things could be done differently. And better. For Anja and Carsten Schmidt, the answer lies in wine. Their wine shops helped bring German wine out of its niche in Berlin. When Rutz opened in 2001, it filled the gap between the neighborhood pub and the grand restaurant. What began as an unpretentious wine bar is now the city's only three-Michelin-star restaurant. At Zollhaus on the Landwehr Canal, Berlin's culinary traditions are being reinterpreted, while Schmidt Z&KO passes on a passion for food and wine through classes and seminars. Their establishments have also become training grounds for talent, nurturing chefs, sommeliers and hosts who now help shape Berlin's restaurant scene. Anja and Carsten Schmidt didn't transform Berlin with a single spectacular restaurant. They did it by creating an entire culinary landscape.

The expert jury includes the following members:

- Dr. Stefan Elfenbein, Jury Co-Chair and correspondent for Der Feinschmecker and Business Traveller
- Tina Hüttl, Jury Co-Chair, restaurant critic for Berliner Zeitung and other publications
- Felix Denk, editor at Der Tagesspiegel
- Prof. Dr. Dieter Großklaus, Honorary President of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs
- Lorraine Haist, freelance journalist and contributor to various newspapers and magazines
- Stefanie Hofeditz, freelance journalist
- Alexandra Laubrinus, Managing Director of Berlin Food Week
- Clemens Niedenthal, editor and Culinary Editor, TipBerlin
- Nikolas Rechenberg, Gourmetwelten
- Annika Schönstädt, writer and restaurant industry consultant
- Dr. Erwin Seitz, freelance journalist, author, and restaurant critic

A complete list of Berliner Meisterköche award winners since the program began in 1997 is available in a historical overview. For more information about the Berlin Master Chefs initiative and its history, visit:: www.berliner-meisterkoeche.de. You can also follow Berliner Meisterköche on Instagram at @berlinermeisterkoeche.

Our press kit, featuring background information on all award winners and the history of Berliner Meisterköche, is available here. The latest photos (which will be uploaded by noon on Monday, November 9, 2026) can be found in the Impressions section of our website. To download an image, click on the selected photo and then select "Download." Please observe the photo copyright: © Berlin Partner / eventfotografen.berlin.

Berlin Master Chefs

Since 1994, Partner für Berlin, the city's capital marketing organization, has been dedicated to promoting Berlin. Its mission includes developing, supporting and implementing initiatives that benefit the capital and strengthen Berlin as a business location. Through the Berlin Master Chefs brand, Partner für Berlin showcases the capital's high-quality restaurant culture and the diversity of its hospitality scene – both an important economic driver and a key part of Berlin's appeal. A thriving culinary scene and a thriving city go hand in hand.

Since 1997, the Berlin Master Chefs awards have honored outstanding culinary professionals and innovative dining concepts in a range of categories. Past winners include Nicholas Hahn, Max Strohe, Sarah Hallmann, The Duc Ngo, Sebastian Frank, Sonja Frühsammer, Tim Raue and Cookie Heinz Gindullis. An independent jury of Berlin's leading food journalists and industry experts evaluates not only the quality of the cuisine, but also the originality of the creations, presentation, service, and overall experience.