

bulthaup culture

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Welcome to bulthaup culture

Space and Resonance

Sometimes, things just work so perfectly together and combine so seamlessly that it's almost impossible to explain exactly how they do it. It seems as though there is a very special relationship between people, things, and the space surrounding them – a relationship of resonance; an almost imperceptible, all-connecting harmony. Not so long ago, I experienced this resonance at the Inakaya restaurant in Roppongi, Tokyo. In this robata-yaki, the architecture, atmosphere and staff work together to ensure that guests experience a unique, pure presence in the room: After a short while, they're fully in the zone and completely in their element. Their awareness of the world grows, and the world rises to meet them. They taste. They celebrate. Everyone talks to everyone else. And they all agree.

But how do space, people, and things come together in such an almost magical way? This edition of bulthaup culture sets out to find the answer to this question. As well as Inakaya, we also visit the H-Farm just outside Venice, the first venture-incubator in the world aiming to help creative potential grow naturally, like in an eco-system. We also find out all about the culture of the blade from star chef Tohru Nakamura. We dip into the world of parties organized by artist Jennifer Rubell who, with her family, has established a legendary tradition of hospitality over decades. We also pay a visit to the culinary interaction hotspot of Bouley at Home, in New York. And we talk to Waltraud Riemer in Bodenkirchen to learn about the feel of perfect kitchen design.

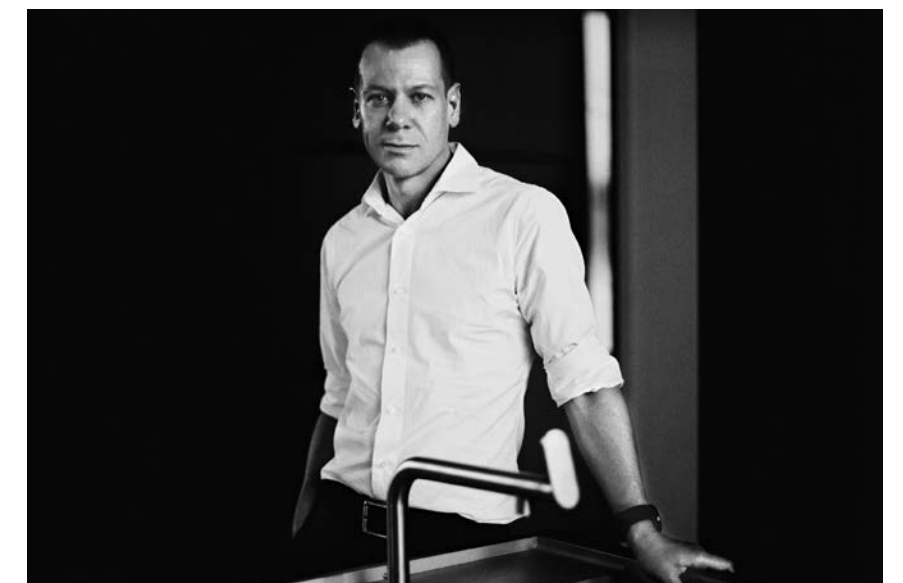
All of this has one thing in common: Resonance. Relationships and touch. Interaction and dialog. Concentration and liberation.

For this is where bulthaup's core element lies: The kitchen as a living space. The kitchen as a resonant space in which you experience pure presence.

We warmly invite you to enjoy our bulthaup culture.

Marc O. Eckert

CEO, bulthaup



"If you place two tuning forks close to each other and strike one of them, the other will vibrate too. This is called the resonance effect."

Hartmut Rosa, Professor of the Chair of General and Theoretical Sociology at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena
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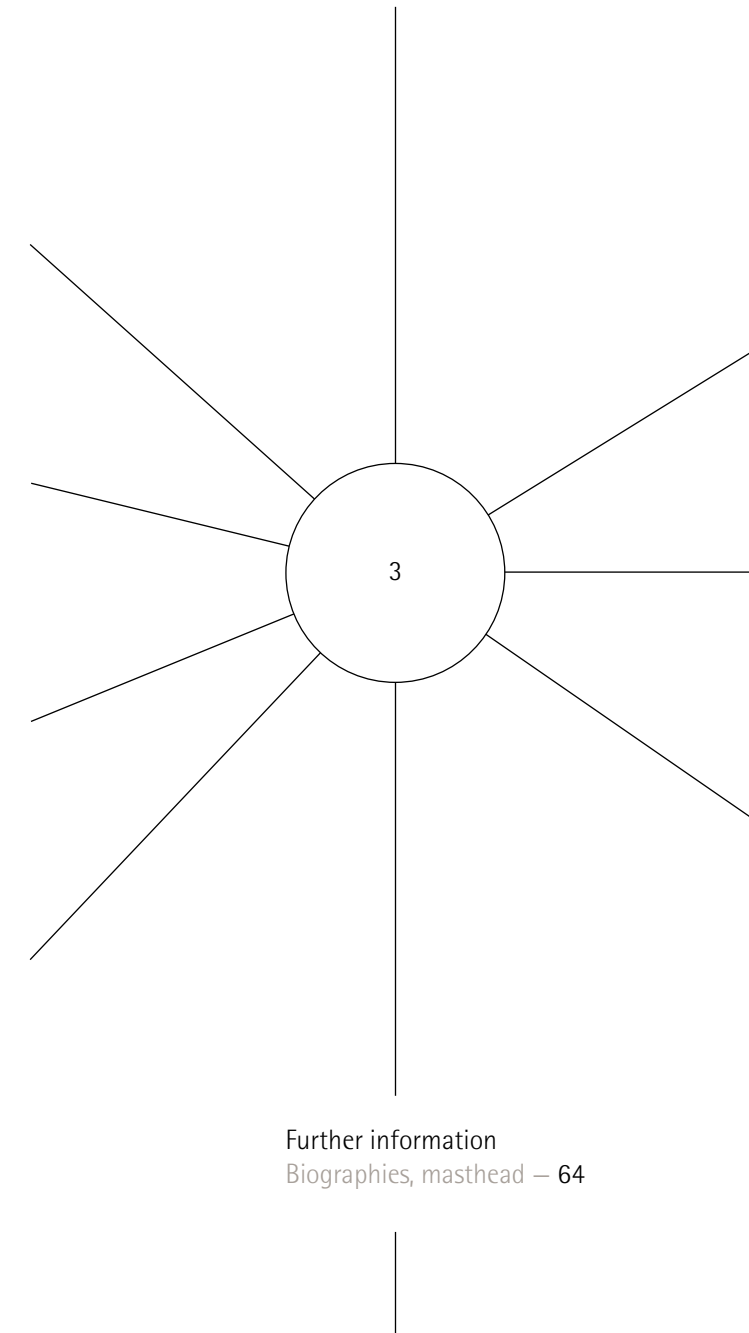
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The Farm

Riccardo Donadon has created a type of incubator for start-ups on a farm

Riccardo Donadon was only in his early thirties when he achieved something that many people dream of. He had founded an Internet start-up company, made it successful in a very short space of time, and then sold it for tens of millions. He had enough money never to have to need to work again, and as he later disappeared into his garden, it looked as though he was going to start a whole new life. On a small plot of land behind his house, a few kilometers away from Venice.

"I just needed it," he says. "I needed to be calm again."

Donadon is a quiet man in his early fifties, and he does not have to speak loudly for you to listen to him. He is sitting in a greenhouse that's actually a canteen. Weeping figs, lemon trees, banana plants, with long, rough wooden tables dotted in between, and an open kitchen serving fresh bread, pasta, tomatoes, meatballs, and cake: This could be one of those trendy cafés in New York, London, Barcelona, or Berlin, where the digital beau monde meet to work in their fast-paced worlds – and effectively that's what the young people who are eating, talking, or sitting behind their laptops are doing here, too. It's just that, when they look up, they don't see the city, any roads, houses, or pedestrians. They see the countryside, the landscape, nature, and the seasons.

"In other words, exactly what I saw in my garden at the time," says Donadon.

On a field upstate of the lagoon, he has created a type of digital Hogwarts – the only one of its kind in Europe, let alone Italy. It's a place away from everything and yet it attracts talented people, investors, and experts from all over the world. Once there was nothing, and now there are things developing that supposedly could only develop in the city, in a downtown area: Ideas, creativity, innovation.

Until Donadon disappeared into his garden, he was an Internet pioneer with a hundred and sixty staff and a full appointments diary. Afterwards, he spent all day on his own, sitting on his tractor, mowing his grass, and tending to his herbs, vegetables, and trees. He worked with his hands, not just his head, and slowly the noise that had been clamoring in his head for so long began to subside, and there was once again space for ideas. He had given himself a year to spend gardening, but of course that did not mean he would stop being an Internet pioneer.

At some point, he asked himself why there was nothing like an incubator for start-ups. A place where young people would have the time to first develop their ideas and try them out, talk to experts, and meet investors, before heading onto the market with their companies. There was no such place in Italy, nor anywhere else for that matter. So

Riccardo Donadon founded one himself. He sought partners and created the H-Farm, where H stands for human. It was the first start-up forge, the first venture-incubator in the world, and it developed not in America, in Silicon Valley, but in upstate Venice, in an open field. The logo is a tractor.

"I wanted somewhere that people can dream," says Donadon. "And keep their feet on the ground."

When he arrived here in 2005, there was just a farmyard that was typical of the region. A multi-story main building with exposed brick walls and an open courtyard, with a barn, stables, and a round silo made from corrugated sheet metal next to it – and all slightly dilapidated. The old couple who lived there had long since stopped working on the land that began behind the courtyard and extended as far as the eye could see, criss-crossed with avenues of poplar trees. During the 1990s, the area was one of the finalists in the bid to become the European Disneyland. Venice airport is not far away, and the idea of contrasting the old and venerable Serenissima with the new and modern park excited the Americans – but then they opted for Paris and along came Donadon.

Within thirteen years, he created the H-Farm, a place that is now an incubator, ideas forge, and campus all rolled into one. If there is such a thing as a role model for

Left page: Riccardo Donadon is regarded as Italy's Internet pioneer. He grew up near the estate that he has turned into the H-Farm.

Following pages: La Serra, the greenhouse, is at the heart of the campus: The canteen, hangout, and meeting venue for young founders. – In the kitchen, behind the glass pane, food is cooked daily with ingredients coming from the H-Farm's garden. – The campus is being expanded in the fall. The digital ideas factory will in future be attended by some 4,000 students.



"It was only in the garden that I realized that there are cycles that have been going on for eons, and that you can be in harmony with them without over-influencing them."

Riccardo Donadon, H-Farm

digital reclamation, then this would be it. Almost a hundred start-ups have been founded since it first opened its doors. Large companies and conglomerates award orders here. International developers and business angels convene at meetings and summer camps. There is an English-speaking school and master's degree courses in robotics, digital entrepreneurship, and artificial intelligence. AKQA, one of the leading international agencies for digital communication, has also set up a branch here, while Big Rock, a 3D animation school with graduates in all of the key animation studios, is just a stone's throw away. Riccardo Donadon has turned a piece of farmland into a field of dreams, where ideas and talent now flourish in place of wheat and corn.

He had the main building restored, created offices for administration, and built a large auditorium in the barn. On the paddock, he set up the greenhouse he's currently sitting in and which serves as the canteen for the more than five hundred people that now work at the H-Farm. To the right and left are the offices where the company founders sit. Stylish, single-story long buildings on one side, timber office cubes on the other, a single room with a broad windowed front bearing the name of each start-up. Everything looks simple, clear, and without any superfluous detail.

"The space we work in influences how we work and what results we achieve," says Donadon. "I'm convinced of it."

The offices feature a mix of open-plan spaces and small working corners. Bearded young men and determined-looking young women flit back and forth between screens. Large appointment diaries featuring a mosaic of colorful Post-its mark out when the next meeting needs to be called, when the next feedback needs to be given, and when the next step in the process needs to be taken. Quotes from Steve Jobs remind staff that we only have one life, and we should achieve something with it. The working atmosphere is similar to that of a cooperative in which the start-ups stimulate each other, rather than crowding each other out. This is because Donadon has put them together so that they all grow at different rates. The one thing they all share is the focus that they find in this place; this calmness that the space provides, where ideas are born. When they look out of the huge windows, they see the countryside, the landscape, nature, and the seasons.

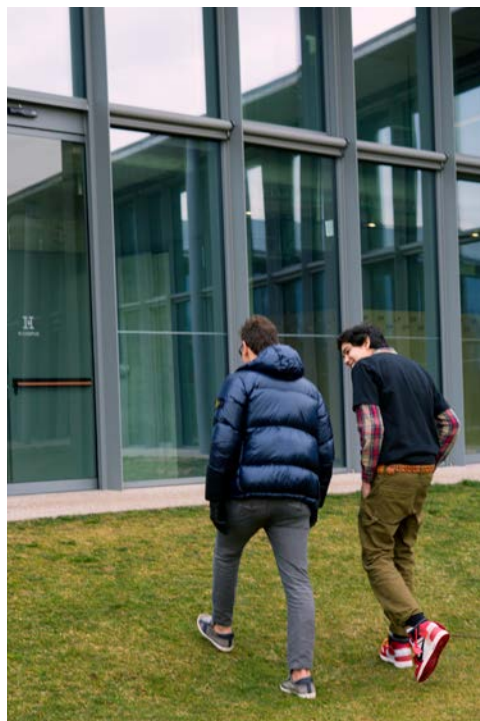
Whenever the founders and students are traveling back and forth between their workstations on one of the three hundred bicycles or golf carts, whenever they are taking one of the twenty shuttle buses from the commuter villages in the nearby area, or whenever they are walking from the office cubes to the canteen, this difference is obvious to them.

"In Silicon Valley, they believe that people have to shape their environments," says Donadon. "I believe that the environment should also shape people."

This is a concept that he, too, only realized recently. Of course, when he set up a virtual marketplace for the fashion group Benetton in his early twenties, creating Italy's first online retailer, he still believed that the new technology would turn the old world completely on its head. He still thought that when he founded his own company and Italy's corporate elite came to him to get onto the Internet. This was at the end of the 1990s, the period of the first major Internet boom. He was sitting in his office and working round the clock. If he was hungry, he would order pizza. In one year, he ordered more than a thousand. A masseur would drop by every now and then and, if it got late, there was a couch for him to sleep on behind his desk. The world he was seeking to change was a stranger to him.

"It wasn't until I was sitting in the garden that I realized that there are cycles that have been going on for eons," says Donadon. "And that you can be in harmony with them without over-influencing them." During the first few years of the H-Farm, it was no easy task to attract talented people, clients, and investors to an area that was not only far off the digital map, but barely a speck on a real one. But when they did come, they recognized that the H-Farm was a place where humans and technology were intended for each other, and came back again. Every year, Donadon invested two to three million euros in start-ups, which were then given four months to mature in one of the incubators, supported





by experienced entrepreneurs and experts until the idea was ready to be sold to a major corporate customer. The word used in the industry is exit. This is how it was in Silicon Valley, and this is also how it was at the H-Farm to begin with until Donadon wanted more and expanded the H-Farm to include its own school and university. He had become a father in the meantime, and fathers always think about the next generation.

"Educating people is like sowing seeds," says Donadon. "You're planting a new level of awareness." In a few weeks, on the farmland behind the greenhouse, where the brown earth still sticks to your shoes, the construction equipment will be moving in. The markers for Donadon's next project have already been laid out. Together with his partners, he will be investing 100 million euros, all told, in a campus that will house all of the H-Farm's educational facilities – from a kindergarten and elementary school to a high school and university. Then, four thousand children, young people, lecturers, and founders will become the produce of the H-Farm and its philosophy.

Watching the seasons go by. The coming and going. Seeing how nature is organized into cycles. The changing shapes. The eternal nature of it all. The captivating nature of a simple solution. Proportionality. Beauty.

"Do simple things. Focus on specific benefits. Use your resources effectively. That's it, basically," says Donadon.

From the plans, of which there is already an aerial view, the farm still looks like the farmyard from which it first originated because, from above, the six new glass and concrete building complexes looks for all the world like cold frames, with a large paddock in the middle, below which is a library. The design is by Richard Rogers, who planned the Pompidou Center in Paris and the Millennium Dome in London. Now, he is building here, on a field in upstate Venice that was once situated on the edge of nowhere and is now hurtling into the middle of the digital era. But in fact, there is barely anything more persuasive than an idea whose time has come.

*Text: Marcus Jauer
Photos: Roberta Ridolfi, Outdoor shots: H-Farm*

Students at the campus will be able to complete master's degrees in digital entrepreneurship, robotics, and artificial intelligence. Experiments with VR goggles and dreams of the digital future will also be part of life between the old courtyard buildings and new campus architecture. – The idea for the farm's logo, a tractor, came to Riccardo Donadon while he was gardening. The H in the name stands for human.

Next double page:
The new campus architecture in the midst of the green fields offers young people plenty of space to relax.







The School of the Senses

Two-thirds sight, one third touch: How Waltraud Riemer checks the quality of bulthaup kitchens

Close up, every surface is deep. For Waltraud Riemer, kitchen surfaces therefore become touch territories, feel fields, and scrutiny spots. There are highly subtle highs and lows, breaks that are wanted, and surprises that are not.

Every bulthaup kitchen must satisfy the quality checker's eyes, hands, nose, and indeed all of her experience. Only then can it leave the factory.

What actually is quality? Before a bulthaup kitchen is shipped to Bangkok, Los Angeles, Middlesex in England, or anywhere else around the world, Waltraud Riemer decides from her base at the plant in Aich, Lower Bavaria whether a kitchen front meets the specifications of the bulthaup quality standard and also satisfies the customer's wishes. This question is asked anew with every single kitchen – whether the surfaces be made from lacquer, real wood, or leather. It's a task that no computer in the world could accomplish.

We spend a morning in the surface processing production hall. The ceiling lights and the individual production islands give off a milky brightness that is similar to the early spring light outdoors. One of these islands is Ms. Riemer's base.

The quality checker can usually spot a flaw at first glance. And as her eyes get to work, she carefully touches the edges and surfaces at the same time with her hands. Seeing and touching are two senses that, for Ms. Riemer, are indispensable. Added to these is her experience. She knows which color differences are acceptable with the various wood types and painting methods. She knows when an edge is fine enough, and when it is cleanly glued. She knows where something could use a little

reworking, and what surface changes can be removed without leaving a trace. Just like the ones on the matt-painted front she's looking at right now:

"If you look here, there's some misting, for example." She points to a couple of streaks on the edge of the front. "They'll be removed using a special paint treating agent." She reaches for a second piece of the kitchen fronts. "Here, there's an irregularity in the surface: Depending on the paint technology the customer chooses, the feel and look criteria for a surface are defined differently. We have appropriate reference samples, which I use to check the front parts against if need be. Here, we call an irregular surface 'cellulite!'"

Ms. Riemer laughs and walks over to a display wall on which the individual parts of another kitchen are already neatly arranged. She takes one of them and checks the front and back.

"At first glance, this detail looks like a fine crack, and this is allowed, for example. Especially since the wood here is freshly sawn."

Depending on how it is processed, wood can have finer or coarser structures and pores that give every kitchen its unique character.

The mark here looks like a little dash. Could it have come from an earlier processing step?
"It's OK as it is; it's part of the natural pattern of the wood that nature has created."

How do you know if something is a real flaw or just a natural property of the material?
"I know the various timbers and the characteristics of the surface – even with the painted versions. We also tolerate a tiny degree of difference from the standard; we have the bulthaup quality standard for this. A tiny, even, flat dot, for example, is OK; a 'zit', a raised spot, is not acceptable.

If in doubt, I use my judgment: If the tiny spot isn't in a directly visible part of the kitchen front, for example if it's on the back, then I'll approve the part for further processing. But it mustn't be obvious."

How do you go about your work? "I sort the kitchen fronts on a display wall so that they mimic how they will look later on in the customer's home. No pieces can be missing. With wood, I then look at the grain. Is it consistent? Do all of the unit doors and front pieces close properly? Or the color

Left page:
With a spotlight shining from the side, Waltraud Riemer checks the surface and color of the kitchen fronts. She looks at some pieces again in daylight – just to be on the safe side.

Next double page:
When Waltraud Riemer touches wooden and painted surfaces, gloves would only get in the way.



graduation: If the wall units are lighter than the units underneath, this might be due to the growth of the timber, the staining process, or the painting process, because certain timbers only get their final surface color once the paint has been applied. And also, no two timbers are the same. Sometimes, a kitchen front will look more gray than it does on my template sample. I then look into the situation more closely: Is this a natural phenomenon? Or has the surface not been treated correctly?"

How important is the touch, the feel, of something for your job? "Two-thirds sight and one-third touch: that's my formula. I also prefer to run my fingers over surfaces without gloves on, because I can feel a lot more that way."

She is now checking a front piece on the wall using a spotlight that generates extremely harsh light from the side. It makes even the tiniest shadows visible. "It shows up any 'zits' and uneven areas that I might have missed or that I've run my fingers over without feeling them."

In the next step, yellow and blue fluorescent tubes (a combination of warm and cold light) simulate daylight in a kitchen with windows. "If I'm still not sure after all that, then I go under the ceiling lights here in the hall. Only then, if nothing stands out, do I classify the piece as perfect."

How many kitchen parts do you get through a day? "Maybe two hundred, two hundred fifty. With this amount of work, you really need to know what you're doing."

And are you still able to spot every detail? "If I spend eight hours a day only inspecting white kitchens, then at some point, I'm going to struggle. The images in front of my eyes start to swim, and I start seeing spots where there really aren't any. White is also very dazzling. That's why I take a dark wooden surface in between. Or something different: a leather or silky soft touch front, for example. Then my senses get the chance to recover."

You carry out the final check before the kitchen fronts are attached to the carcasses and are loaded for shipping. Doesn't anyone look at them before this stage? "Timber is checked when it is being selected. The veneers are then put together and a seamless joint pattern is checked on the light table. The ve-

neers are then glued onto the backing panels, and these are cut according to the specifications and given edges. After each step in the process, the worker will take another close look at it. Only after the many processes involved with sanding and painting do I get to see the kitchen fronts. If a part doesn't match the specifications at this stage, it gets sent back to the relevant processing stage."

Do you ever miss anything? "It does happen, but not often."

And are there also fronts that you completely reject or send back? "Barely more than half a dozen a year. Ultimately, we treat our kitchens like fragile glass."

"How rare are those who do their work and do it well," said the Spanish mystic Teresa of Ávila. Ms. Riemer appears to be one of those rare people. Almost as if she cannot wait for her next job to come in, she flits back and forth between the display walls.

"I was more like a boy even as a child. I'm constantly on the move. So it's really great that I don't have to sit still with my job."

This profession is my life, and my calling. I have responsibility and variety, because there are always new criteria. And I work with people, coordinating with them and arranging things with them."

How do you actually become a quality checker? "In the 1970s, they were desperately seeking people. So even though I'm a qualified retail saleswoman, I applied to bulthaup. I got taken on, and I was put in charge of this task. I've gradually built up all my technical knowledge over the years."

Do you have any particular traits that have been useful to you? "Good common sense. Would you like a kitchen that has lots of obvious knots or too many streaks? Probably not. I also never rely on a single procedure. I always check every time whether the specifications on the sheet and the kitchen I'm seeing in front of me match."

Sometimes, the customer will even send in special veneers. Or they want to process the surface themselves and order a kitchen in untreated wood. In that case, we can't put any labels on it! The next difficulty is that I don't know whether they're going to use light or dark paint. I assume that they're going to use varnish, and I approve the kitchen based on

this assumption. It's about using your best judgment. That's something a computer can't do."

Have you ever come across anything bizarre? "Bizarre, perhaps not. But between the veneer shop and me, we've had a few loose branches fall off a knotty oak a few times. And there were fronts painted orange with a neon-green cabinet in the middle. Or very colorful ones. And one time, a customer from America ordered a kitchen that spanned three rooms."

Do you take your work home with you in your head at night? Do you maybe see flashes of wood grain when you close your eyes in bed at night? "No, I don't." She laughs again. "I always involuntarily start staring at my friends' furniture. Otherwise, the habits adopted over forty years tend to order themselves: Kitchens that were OK are forgotten, but I can tell you very precisely where there was a flaw in one. Even after four weeks. However, after work, I tend to swap the background noise of the production hall for the rustling of the trees with a long walk in the woods."

Text: Larissa Beham
Photos: Heji Shin



Right page:
Waltraud Riemer comes to agreements many times with the veneer or surface craftsman. Even if she finds a flaw during the final inspection, the kitchen must reach its destination on time. — Anyone concentrating so hard needs mental breaks. "Some processes occur almost mechanically," says Waltraud Riemer. "The flaws jump out at me anyway; I've become so attuned to them after forty years."



Guests of the Chef Food must taste delicious, be healthy, and be enjoyed in the kitchen, opines David Bouley

As the chef uses elegant stainless-steel tongs to place the briefly sautéed mushrooms on a plate to create a deliciously aromatic masterpiece, he makes it look easy: enoki, maitake, oyster and trumpet mushrooms, shiitake, and, as the crowning glory, a gold-stemmed chanterelle. Meanwhile, his colleague places the stick blender briefly in the coconut and garlic broth, finishing the starter off with the whisked mixture and sliding it a few seconds later over the counter to the waiting guests.

At Bouley at Home, David Bouley's new restaurant, cooking is regarded as an invitation to engage in dialog about its owner's favorite subjects: Food must taste delicious, be healthy, and be enjoyed together at big tables. This latter idea is reflected in the restaurant's furniture. Three counters, with generously proportioned cooking stations and eight bar stools each, have been custom-made for the restaurant according to Bouley's specifications. From these seats, twenty-four visitors can closely follow the secrets of the ultimate *mise en place*, and immediately ask which seasonings are used for the mushroom dish, which also features tuna-fish belly caramelized before their very eyes: ginger, cardamom, cloves, juniper berries, and cilantro.

"To my mind, it is essential to communicate the diversity of ingredients and the cooking process in as interactive a way as possible," says David Bouley who, since the mid-1980s, has provided New York with an array of Michelin stars thanks to restaurants such as "Bouley". And he has kept his target audience happy, too, a cross-section of well-heeled people who frequent top restaurants because they are interested in the combination of

entertainment and visually diverse ingredients. The man to whom critics have given the epithet "Half chef, half doctor, half magician" due to his 150 percent approach to everything, has always been in his element in the Big Apple.

Interactive means that, in his latest venture, he has largely done away with a certain type of assistance. Waitstaff? There aren't any. Two chefs at each station are the last people to touch the dishes that are prepared in the kitchens in the cellar of the building. Chiller and spice drawers, steam ovens, and wine and equipment cabinets are lined up along the walls behind the stations. The sommelier and his assistants provide the drinks. Each guest takes their own cutlery from a small drawer located in front of each seat and integrated discreetly into the kitchen islands.

In addition to huge screens streaming videos of cooking techniques and interviews with the producers of the ingredients, Bouley's interpretation of interactivity now also includes direct communication between the guests and his chefs. And not just when one of them is walking around checking that everything is okay with the customers' meals. He wants to teach foodies that they hold their food fates in their own hands. "It's up to them. If they eat what's good for them, it's a win-win. And they need to be able to see that they can actually create a lot more in their own kitchens than they ever thought they were capable of."

Thirsty for knowledge and brimming with curiosity, the 65-year-old Bouley has put nutrition at the very top of his agenda, but without sacrificing anything in terms of

Left page:
Even the jacket is unusual:
David Bouley in front of his
latest dining laboratory,
Bouley at Home in Man-
hattan's Flatiron district.



Left page:
Chef Leo Alvarez grates Parmesan over a dish to add the final touch. — Bamboo shoots are boiled in dashi broth with kombu seaweed and served with lamb from Colorado. — The ingredients for the Forager's Treasure of Wild Mushrooms sit in special chiller drawers for mushrooms. — David Bouley has been collecting copper pots made by E. Dehillerin from Paris since the 1970s; he still uses all of them.

Next double page:
Daniel Chavez-Bello, from Spain, is the Director of Research and Development for all of Bouley's companies. He shows off his latest dishes on Instagram: @Dani_chavezbello.



the sensual appeal of his creations. This is by no means a sudden fad, he is keen to point out. Instead, it is a process that has been highly organic and almost bio-dynamic in its evolution – a logical continuation of his career, which started in the university town of Storrs in Connecticut as one of nine children of French parents. "It's not as if I woke up one day and said: From now on, I want to cook healthy."

Unlike so many young Americans, Bouley was spoiled by the freshness of the ingredients his mother would use, and when he and his brother finally tasted junk food on the bus home from school one day, the master chef recounts, they felt so sick that they have never tried it again since. The farm run in Rhode Island by his grandparents, immigrants from France, also made a lasting impression on him. After a brief period of study at the Sorbonne, he learned his craft under renowned chefs such as Roger Vergé, Paul Bocuse, Joël Robuchon, and Fredy Girardet. He opened his first restaurant, "Bouley", in 1987. It turned out to be a magnet for supermodels. "They knew they were safe with me

when it came to calories," he says today. And he also reveals that, with the exception of creamed potatoes, he never cooks with butter or cream – even to this day.

The fact that Bouley at Home also serves delicious, baked-on-the-premises bread with an incomparable crust and butter from Brittany is, to Bouley, customer service. Over the last decade, customers have increasingly voiced concerns over allergies and autoimmune diseases. Additional requests, such as no this, no that, and certainly no gluten, would overwhelm the waiters as they were taking the orders. "It became a real challenge."

But not for someone who had spent his whole life setting culinary trends. Bouley is the restaurateur who is accredited with bringing pampered New Yorkers, among other things, the tasting menu, a small, wonderfully tasty potato known as a fingerling, and the scallop. He also made the once run-down TriBeCa district a culinary travel destination. "I started getting interested in the chemical processes that certain foods trigger in the body early on. For 30 years, I've been experimenting with them. Now we use them with deliberate intent."

The ideas that had been floating around in his head for years, however, only became reality after he visited a bulthaup showroom, as he recounted to the New York Times: "They make everything to order; it's all individual and anatomically correct, adapted to the customer's height and the span of their arms. There's nothing in there that you could classify as standard."

He closed his flagship restaurant, "Bouley", last year after several relocations. But the concept is by no means dead. At the end of 2019, again in TriBeCa, it will resurface with just 30 seats in one of the finest, smallest venues the district has ever seen. Bouley is keen to put the time he has before that to good use. He has enrolled with the Department of Nutritional Sciences at New York University and plans to graduate from an intensive master's program at the Harvard Business School. He has just spent three weeks in Japan, where the TV station NHK has been making a documentary film about him, and visited traditional production facilities for koji (fermented rice), sake, miso, soy sauce, and kudzu, a root that Bouley





Left page:
Alongside organic chicken stock and oregano oil, jamon Ibérico is one of the ingredients of the clear broth known as the Immune Booster.

Right:
Leo Alvarez with the porcini flan, which is served with crab meat or smoked wild sturgeon and dashi made from black truffles.



uses to thicken sauces and which, in its dried form as chips, is used as a base for an amuse-bouche. Bouley is contacting scientists interested in the fermentation of various ingredients and their influence on the gut microbiome, and reaching out to experts such as Paul Stamets, a mycologist of global renown who has a company named "Fungi Perfecti" based in Washington State on America's west coast. "Mushrooms", says David Bouley, "are amongst the healthiest foods we can eat."

Inflammatory processes in the body, he has now realized, can be influenced greatly by eating the right foods. Gut bacteria and haute cuisine – a dog's dinner? Not for Bouley, who even employs a Director of Research and Development at Bouley at Home. Daniel Chavez-Bello has also cooked in the legendary "el Bulli" restaurant on the Costa Brava. "Molecular cuisine relies too much on chemical reactions," he says. "We do the same thing with natural ingredients. We use seaweed, agar agar, chia, and kudzu. We take a similar approach with enzymes and amino acids, but we have much more fun with them. The secret to Bouley's cuisine also lies

in the different consistencies that he experiments with."

The high quality of the ingredients, however, also ensures that the tasting menus constantly come up with something new and surprising. For New Yorkers, that's worth good money: In an evening, the ten-course tasting menu costs \$ 225, with the matching wine pairing costing an additional \$125.

These prices, which are relatively high even for the financial district of Manhattan, are no coincidence. Bouley, who lives in the city with his wife Nicole and grows vegetables on his own farm in the north west of Connecticut, is constantly on the look-out for the most intense flavors. He travels many miles to taste things at their source – on his Harley Davidson or one of his Ducatis, depending on the time available and the weather conditions.

He often brings new ideas of his own to suppliers, and there are many hundred, if not well over a thousand, of them. And the tuna fish for the mushroom starter? Unlike other restaurants, Bouley at Home doesn't buy it from the New York fish market. Instead, it is

purchased fresh from the dock at Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Whenever an especially impressive specimen is landed, the restaurant is notified and buys the whole fish. They are gutted and placed in a special refrigerated cabinet from Japan (low temperatures ensure that no ice crystals form) packaged in biodegradable plastic.

Bouley at Home has been designed with elements from bulthaup. It is not a commercial kitchen, but rather one that you could also install at home, with optimized, short working pathways and counter heights that are made to measure. Together with the adjacent "Bouley TK" (test kitchen), which can also host events for up to 120 people and which has an interior similar to a homey living room, the premises pay full homage to the "at home" concept in the name of the restaurant.

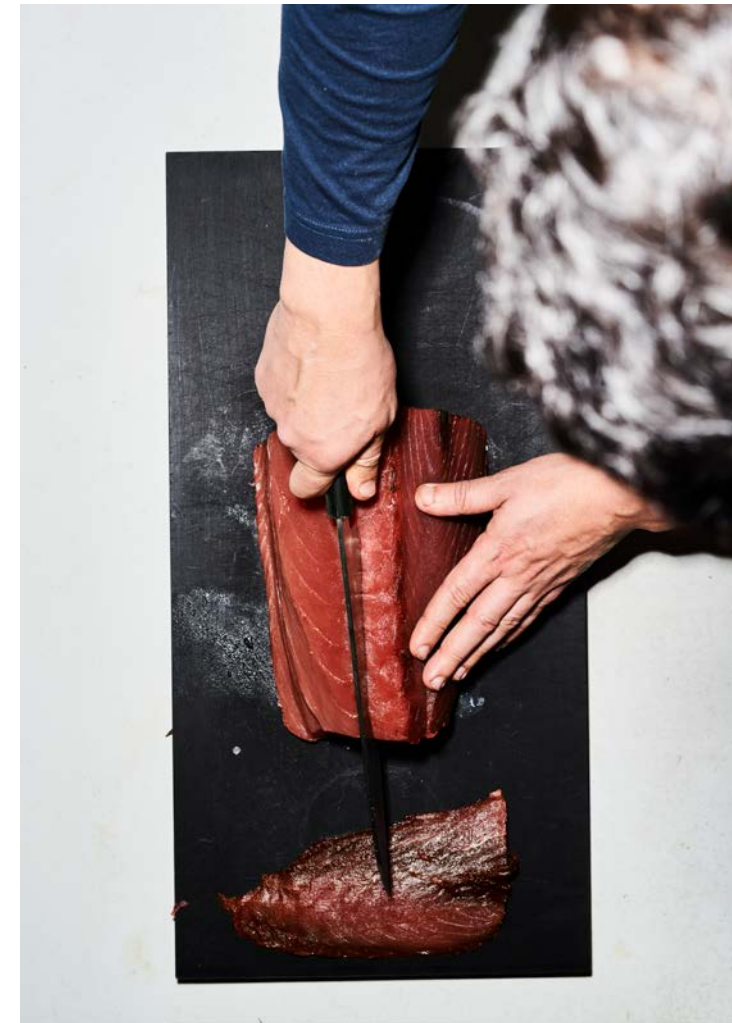
Yet Bouley, the son of an entrepreneur, has never been happy with just one restaurant. He also still owns "Brushstroke", serving kaiseki cuisine with weekly changing, seasonal Japanese delicacies, and "Bouley Botanical", which he calls his "Urban Farm Event Space" and in which he organizes, among



Left:
Places at the three counters in Bouley at Home are highly coveted by New Yorkers.

Right page:
David Bouley obtains his tuna-fish belly directly from the dock at Cape Cod. — Daniel Chavez-Bello sautées the mushrooms for the Forager's Treasure with pain d'épices, a home-made blend of seasoning and spices. — The chef also takes personal responsibility for the details. — The oysters come from Brittany.

Next double page:
Oysters are combined with kiwis and bergamot. — Leo Alvarez serves his mushroom dish. — The chefs in the dessert kitchen look out over 21st Street West. — The guests at the counters can watch how the mushrooms are sautéed in the pan. And smell them. — In the pot is the coconut and garlic broth, ready for the mushroom dish.



other things, the series of lectures entitled "The Chef and the Doctor". "Many of these doctors have had health problems themselves. They use their diet to improve their health. They want, as far as possible, to limit the side effects of medication."

It also gives him great pleasure, however, to track down the culinary origins of unusual pairings himself and optimize their taste. In Bouley at Home, "Maine Belon oysters with kiwi and bergamot" appear on the menu. It was something he read in a science book that prompted this particular combination. "Oysters and kiwis contain the same 18 minerals. Together, they develop more flavor than I had ever imagined." He was afraid, however, that his customers might think him a little crazy. But they didn't. "Oysters contain salt, fat, and protein, while kiwis contain acidity and sugar. This corresponds to the five basic principles of cooking the perfect dish."

If David Bouley ever snacks, then he eats home-made popcorn seasoned with curry or miso. Or dark chocolate – with the lowest possible sugar content of course. Raw cocoa

contains an abundance of vitamins, trace elements, and antioxidants, he enthuses. His niece Sarah Bouley, a trained master chocolatier and one of the few women ("Coincidence!") to do so, also offers cookery lessons at the counters of Bouley at Home, like the other chefs. For dessert, there are three chocolate creations and petits fours to choose from, with due care being taken to satisfy the demand for a low glycemic index.

Matching wines are poured for each of the classes – not just in an evening, but also at lunchtime. "Wine in moderation is good for you," says the master. And also, "We're not running a clinic here. I celebrate life." Thus speaks the Frenchman inside the man from Connecticut.

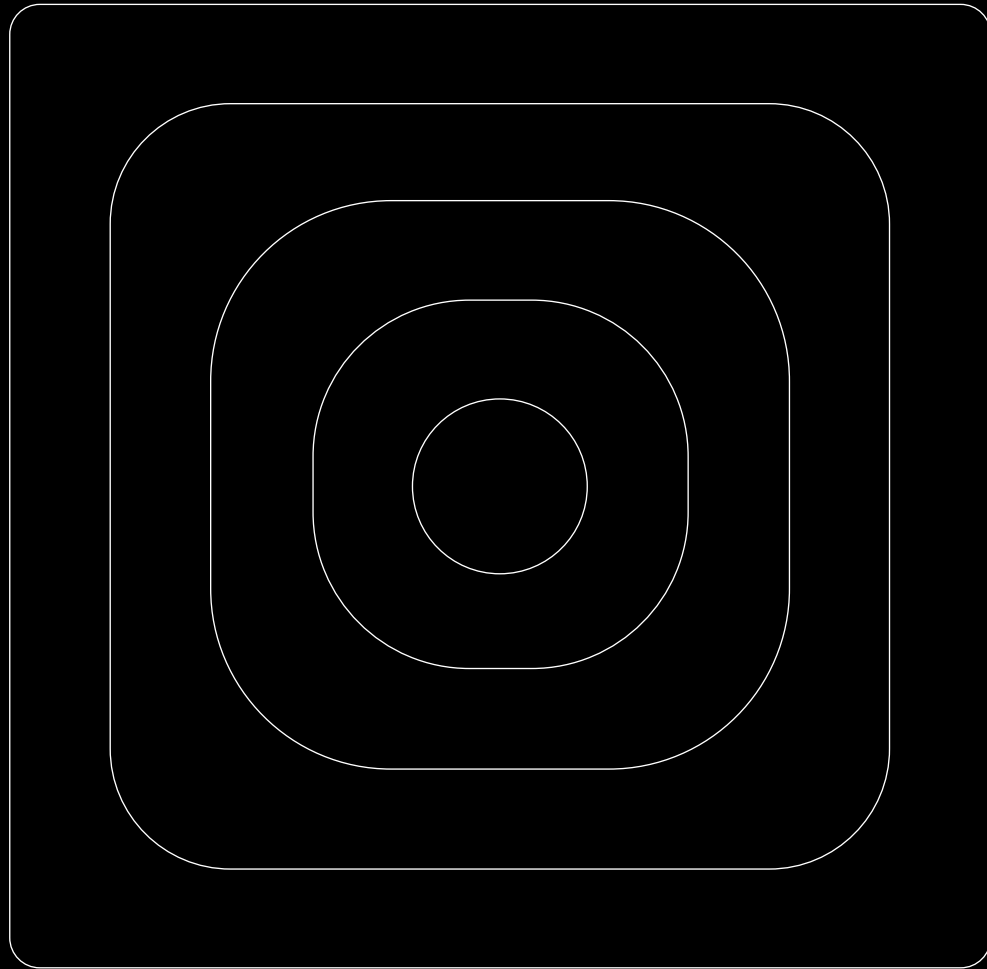
*Text: Doris Chevron
Photos: Peden + Munk*





In Harmony with the World

What we need to open up and at the same time feel secure. An essay by Dominic Veken



In ancient times, the Greeks had a more conciliatory view of the cosmos. For them, everything was connected in a higher harmony and the same eternal laws applied to the tiniest and the biggest objects, to the visible and the invisible. They imagined that, if the countless planets were to make sounds on their contradictory trajectories, it would produce an incredibly beautiful sort of music – a universal “music of the spheres” that would give anyone listening to it a cosmic feeling, a feeling of protection, and of being at one with the world.

The cosmic ideas of the ancients make it clear that the space around us and our relationship with it has an enormous influence on our own relationships with ourselves. Our link to the world and ourselves is a two-way phenomenon. But how does this relationship work? How can a space around us release something inside us and suppress something else? How does our environment manage to make us express a certain side of ourselves and give us the feeling of harmony? One initial answer may be by creating a certain mood. The mood of our surroundings virtually speaks to us, producing a certain *voice* that talks to us, that calls to us, that tells us something, and that sets something free inside us. This is just as much the case with the relaxed mood of a party as it is with the somber mood of a cathedral. The mood has a sound that causes something inside us to vibrate. We feel touched by it, assailed, surrounded, embraced, or left completely alone. In an ideal case, we are somewhere else and yet we feel completely at home there. We feel that we are able to be who we are and who we want to be in this environment. We feel alive and naturally start to interact with other people, other objects, and the world around

us. Actually, there might be nothing there, and yet we are happy in precisely that place at precisely that time – completely coincidentally, without any effort. It happens, and it sweeps us along. It just is. Simplicity. And beautiful.

“If you place two tuning forks close to each other and strike one of them, the other one will start to vibrate with a resonance effect.” This is how the sociologist Hartmut Rosa describes the possible global and intrinsic relationship with harmony. The source of resonance generates a vibration, and the resonating body responds to this in a similar way. Both vibrate in a common harmony. This harmony acts like an acoustic metaphor for our lives, our understanding, our self-assurance, and our happiness. Here, it is about mood, like with a musical instrument. And it’s about resonance, which gives the mood space, allows it to grow, and also incorporates time. Rosa recently submitted an epochal work on the subject of resonance, attempting to decode our relationship with the world and what ails it through the use of the acoustic metaphor. In a time when we try to control everything first, take nothing at face value any more, and simply regard things as useful objects, we have lost our link to the world. We are increasingly lacking resonance; the vibration and the mood are distorted. The reason? We keep the world at arm’s length. We see it as a sort of mute collection of things that we have no association with – a conglomerate of elements that have nothing to say to us – so we are able to use them as resources, depending on how they benefit us. They serve our status and our advancement, as tools, or simply as a means to an end. The more we hunt down these resources, the more secure we feel our position in the world and society. The problem, according to Hartmut Rosa, lies in the fact that, by objectivizing everything and everyone, nothing is able to speak to us anymore. We only see everything for what and how we can make it available to us. As a result of this, we are losing our natural, innocent relationship with the world, our invisible connection, the potential feeling of universal unity. The connection between the source of resonance and the resonant body has been permanently destroyed. We no longer want to hear what complex issues have to say to us, and certainly not what actual environmental objects, such as wallpaper, a cabinet, or a knife, have to say. We simply want to use it and use it for our purposes,

make them subordinate to us, or use them as decorative elements on the periphery of our life paths. Everything is reduced to just things, and stuff. That's all it is. By doing this, we are losing our ability to hear the music of the spheres around us. Our relationship with the world is dysfunctional.

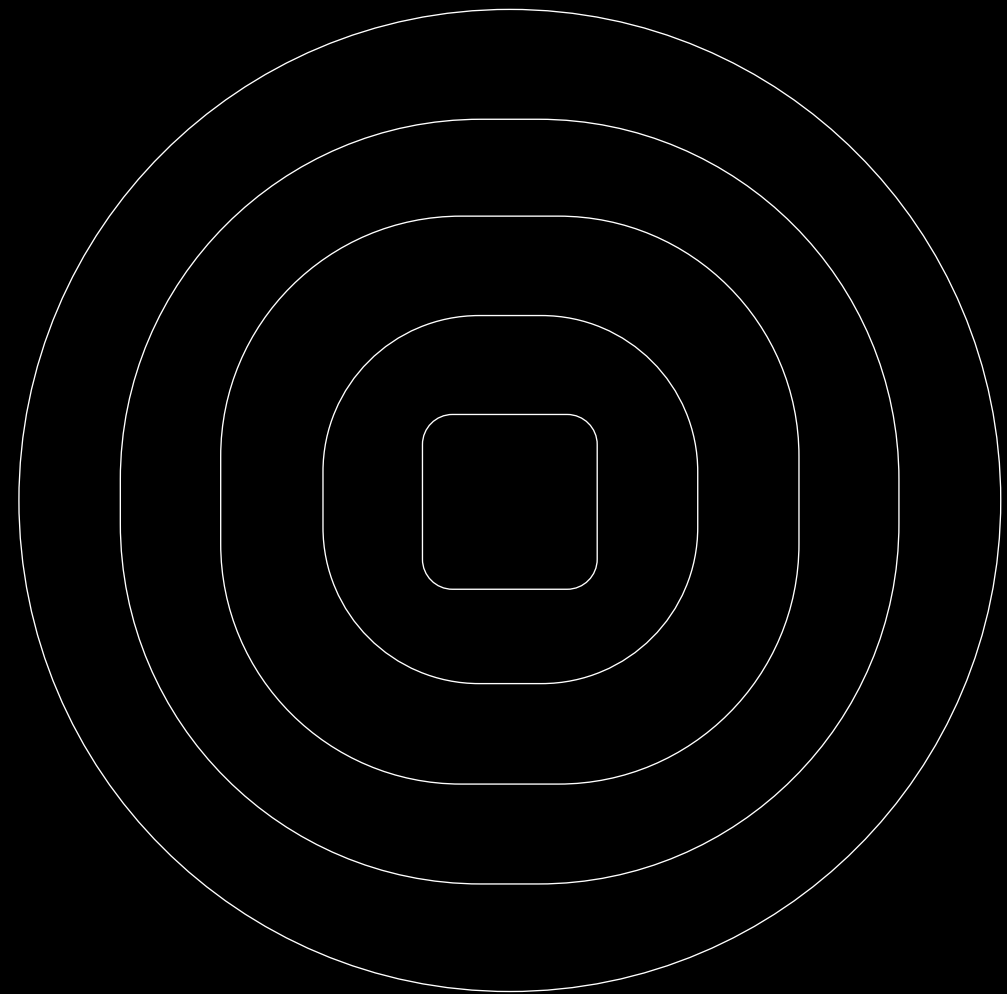
A few years ago, Marina Abramović staged a performance at the MOMA entitled "The Artist Is Present", which focused conversely on a complete relationship with the world, this transient oscillation, and the creation of real resonance. She herself sat on a chair in the middle of the museum and placed an empty chair in front of her, on which visitors would in turn be able to take a seat. She then let everyone come to her. She did nothing but sit there for hours, days, and weeks at a stretch, while the people opposite her did nothing but take a seat and stare at the artist. Nothing else happened, and yet whole new worlds opened up. The total concentration on the other person, staring unabashedly in their face for five minutes, without speaking, completely allowing yourself to be scrutinized and doing the same back, listening excitedly for the movement of air. The "pure presence" between the people involved that occurred, this concentrated presence, produced with great consistency emotional responses such as smiles, laughter, tears, and intensity. Visitors later said to each other that this short period of presence had changed their lives; that they were seeing the world differently.

Anyone who meditates practices "pure presence" in their own right. The hummed or even imaginary lengthy "om" sound is like a tuning process, the striking of a tuning fork, the tuning of the self as the source of resonance – and therefore the repression of the conscious "I" as an instance of control and censure, so as to experience genuine harmony with the environment as the resonant body. Judge nothing, be attached to nothing, float effortlessly in the stream of life, enter freely into a relationship with the world: this is the idea behind zen. You can get an impression of this if you ever look someone else in the eye for five minutes, staring intently into their face without speaking. The pure presence of the person opposite creates a powerful resonance, a bond between me and him, the feeling of being released to swim on a shared wave. And powerful resonance creates the pure presence of your own self: In that moment only, your thoughts and your

attention are nowhere else but right there where you are. This is a very intense experience of the present. Pure presence and powerful resonance influence and amplify each other: "If you place two tuning forks close to each other and strike one of them, the other will vibrate too. This is called the resonance effect."

Spaces can also act like tuning forks for us. They can create a mood. They can open us up. These spaces then ultimately act like resonance spaces. They do not serve as altars of impression that are intended to make us small and passive, but rather act like intimate plays that cast us in the main roles, making us free, open, and active. Such spaces are informal and self-explanatory. They invite us in, but are never overloaded. Their beauty follows from their function without it degenerating into relevance alone. They allow us to be simple, and this is what gives them their appeal. Designing such spaces is a true art. If a space like this exists in an apartment, then it is a real joy. For it is here that carefree attitudes and a degree of convention collide. The spaces are governed neither by lawlessness nor strict regulation. Such spaces are like a clearing, surrounded by the protection of the forest, into which warm, bright rays of sun stream. Here is where we sit, feeling at once open and yet secure. We then get the feeling of being protected, without being constrained. We feel ready. And then, what Hartmut Rosa describes as the "vibrating wire between us and the world" can develop.

Illustrations: Gerwin Schmidt



When the body, soul, and tool become one Tohru Nakamura on the Japanese art of using a knife



Left and next double page: Tohru Nakamura has a very special relationship with his knives. They are like part of him. — The Deba-Bochou fish filleting knife is especially dear to him, as it was a gift from Akiyama-san, whose restaurant in Tokyo he worked in. "Tsukiji Masamoto" is engraved on the blade, the name of the knife store in Tokyo's fish market.

My relationship with my knives, or the relationship between me as a human and inanimate objects, has to be characterized by knowledge, skill, and appreciation. It begins even with their acquisition, a process that must under no circumstances be a casual or emotionless one. I was given one of my most important knives by a master chef in Japan, after spending a while behind the scenes observing the ways of classical Japanese cuisine. The chef is a surgeon at the university hospital in Tokyo, but he also runs a small, dynamic restaurant for a maximum of six guests. It only opens if there are enough reservations. He also works as a chef at the Japanese imperial court on special occasions, when everything has to be just right. At the end of my time there, he handed me a traditional Japanese knife as a gift. It was a very special honor for me.

In the west, we have a very different culture around knives than they do in the east. Ours is shaped by the image of the knight striking his opponent with his heavy sword. He could just as easily have swung a club at him. The culture of the Samurai, with their lightweight, razor-sharp blades, is very different. With one well-placed cut, they can cleanly slice off an arm. Accordingly, for Japanese chefs, knives have a very different meaning. Their bond with their tool reflects their soul as a chef. It is therefore regarded as a great honor if you are given a knife by a Japanese chef to accompany you on your career, to

take with you to Europe in order to carry out the profession of chef in a different way.

Take the filleting of fish, for example. In a German kitchen, you might see eight chefs doing it five different ways, for example. In Japan, you'll see eight chefs using the exact same technique every time. In Europe, the role of a chef is different. It's about speed and working through lists, because we make complex dishes with sauces, jus, various flavors, and textures that are intended to create something extra when combined.

In Japan, the emphasis is on distilling the pure product. A Japanese chef will spend a very long time talking about himself and behaving as a student. Perhaps from his mid-40s, he might consider taking a step further. This slow progression is associated with the very high esteem in which the work, the knives, and the food are held. This modest and highly respectful attitude pervades everything. This can best be seen in the fish section, and in all of the people that are involved with the cycle: From the fisherman and the dealer who delivers the fish to the chefs.

All of the fish are positioned in exactly the same way by every single one of them. The head faces left, the tail faces right and the belly faces the chef or customer – with no exceptions! The background to this is that the fillet lying underneath has more contact with the ice. As a result, the fillet on the top must be used first, because it is minimally less fresh. As soon as I turn the fish over, it is the turn of the side that is closest to the innards and the abdominal cavity. This part is the softest, so I must make the first cut here – without exception! The great art therefore lies in avoiding doing something new every time. It lies in doing what you do with the utmost precision and perfection.

In Japan, there are consequently many restaurants that specialize in one single dish: Only ramen, only cutlets, only yakitori, or only grilled eel. The reason for this is because concentrating on one thing produces better quality. Imagine if there was a restaurant in Bavaria that only served roast pork with dumplings. The height of fashion would be whether there was white cabbage or red cabbage with it. In fact, with roast pork, there is actually only a half-hour window in which it is truly perfect. Any less than this, it is not cooked. Any more, and it starts to dry out. By specializing in just one dish, I would have a higher throughput and I could cycle the



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Left page and top: Tohru Nakamura slicing hamachi, the Japanese yellow-tail mackerel, to prepare sashimi. Every cut influences the flavor and must be executed perfectly. — All Japanese chefs set a fish down in the same way.



perfect timing much more efficiently. However, a restaurant like that would be almost unimaginable here.

Here in the kitchens of Werneckhof by Geisel, we have a very emotional relationship with our knives. The dissatisfaction is palpable if a knife is not cutting properly. Not just because you have to use more force if the blade is not sharp, but because you cannot achieve a truly clean cut with it. A knife becomes "my knife" once everything is perfect: The grip, the patina, and the character. After it is bought, every knife is sharp. But the question is: How will it behave when being sharpened? Over time, the width of the blade wears away, and the angle changes due to me grinding it in a very specific way. At some point, I can reach blindly for a knife and know instantly whether it is mine or not. The knife becomes an extension of my arm. It fuses with my way of using it.

The influence of taste occurs when the product is being cut. Any compromise, any moment of inattention, is apparent right through to the end. Precision and self-consciousness while cutting are essential; they

determine the appearance, taste, presence, and composition of whatever lies on the plate. Once a cut is made, it cannot be undone. It cannot be undone. Every cut is therefore a combination of zero compromise and respect. You could imagine it like a monk, who meditates before he makes his first cut.

However, the mood in Japanese restaurants, where chefs work with this type of ethos, is usually relaxed and good-humored. There are always moments in which they laugh at themselves. Their uncompromising attitude is never tense. Precision and perfection are not ends in themselves.

Every knife is different. There are different knives for different activities. Every chef has a knife that they keep closest to themselves and which accompanies them throughout the evening. For me, it is the knife given to me by the Japanese chef, for example. All of the other knives are used for preparation. I use one to fillet. I then use the next knife to complete a single task, and it is moved away again. Using the sashimi knife, I cut slices of raw fish, making a single, smooth cut.

The sharper the blade, the less torn up the surface of the product. You can also see this very well under the microscope. With sushi or sashimi, you don't want the fish to soak up the soy sauce like a sponge, losing its own flavor in the process. With a truly smooth surface, the sauce beads off and is able to fulfill its subtle role as a delicate seasoning for the fish. Japanese knives are therefore the non plus ultra, the benchmark.

In our restaurant, all of the chefs set out their basic tools in their work areas before they start – it's almost like laying out surgical implements before an operation. When required, the knives are taken out of their cases or pouches just at the right moment and then placed back in them again immediately after use so that nothing happens to them, such as getting dropped and a tip breaking off. At the end of the day, the knives are cared for. They are dried and rubbed with a little oil.

This ritual has a decelerating effect. It means that work with the knife is experienced as something highly focused, like work on something important. This produces a fusion between the soul and the body – in the here



Top:
 "Kitchen knives" is written in Japanese characters on the box. No matter what a knife is designed for, each one demands zero compromises in its use and care. —The sharpening of knives is a meditative exercise, shaped by respect and concentration. It is a ritual of deceleration.

Right page:
 Informality is also part of the ethos of Japanese chefs. There are always moments in which they laugh at themselves.

and now. I want my knife to remain sharp. I grind this knife. As I do so, it is always an incredibly meditative experience, a moment of deceleration. I set aside half an hour, and in that half hour, there is just me, the knife, the whetstone, and water. Nothing else matters. The focus on the object opposite – in this case, my knife – is the perfect condition for resonance, for a special relationship between me, the things around me, and, beyond them, other people.

Essentially, it is always about pairing discipline with informality. At a good restaurant, it is important that you sense an exciting atmosphere as soon as you walk in, with interesting conversations, laughter, and a positive energy in the air. It is only when both of these things come together – if we are able to create a situation through the visual appearance and through food and drink, in which guests are treated individually and without fuss – that we are able to create a particular mood that has a positive effect on the relationships between staff and guests, guests and guests, and staff themselves.

At a certain point in time, we recede completely and a space opens up. And in this space, emotions and this mood develop. The secret arguably lies in the union of zero compromise and informality. It is crucial, however, that we have an informal lack of compromise rather than an uncompromising informality. The key is never an obligation, not even a need to be informal, but rather the cultivation of relationships. And for me, this begins with the relationship with my knives.

Tohru Nakamura has a Japanese father and a German mother, and therefore has a great understanding of both cultures, especially also when it comes to cooking, and with it the use and care of knives. As a chef at the Werneckhof by Geisel restaurant in Munich, he was crowned "Chef of the Year" in 2015 by Feinschmecker. The restaurant has 18 Gault-Millau points and two Michelin stars.

*Text: Dominic Veken
 Photos: Matthias Ziegler*





Pure Enjoyment Welcome to Inakaya! The restaurant is a room, a ritual, and a portal – to a world in which the kitchen returns to its roots

"Irashimase – welcome, visitor" is the cry to everyone who walks into Inakaya. First from a man whose sole job for the evening is to welcome guests, and then from every corner of this legendary Tokyo restaurant. Eight times, from eight people: The waiter, the assistant, and the chefs: none of them hesitates to greet each guest personally. Irashimase!

Even as they take a seat at the counter, the only seating available, each new guest is toasted by their surrounding visitors. The waiter hovers, awaiting the order. "Sake!", they decide. "Sake!" repeats the waiter, loudly to the room. "Sake!" echoes back from the room eight times. On a wooden paddle, a square cedar wood box with a saucer underneath is dragged through the room, directly into the line of sight of the bemused newcomer. The yakikata, or grill chef, has filled it to the brim with sake and it is now spilling over onto the saucer. "Hai!" shouts the yakikata. "Yes!", and the room shouts back exactly the same words. From the mood to the sake, everything seems to be overflowing here.

Welcome to Inakaya. Room, ritual, and portal – to a world that reflects the origins of kitchen hospitality. A restaurant as crazy and as lively as the famous Tsukiji fish market, and as focused and as resolute as a Buddhist ceremony. It is a place made up entirely of cooking and communication, of space and resonance, in which guests experience and taste – and with each bite, slip further into a world of unbridled sensuality.

The Inakaya celebrates the natural, the genuine, a fall in the eternal spring that our present day has become. Legend has it that when the first people from mainland Asia moved to the island chain, they found a cornucopia of mushrooms, seaweed, and fish, as well as fresh, clear water, roots, seeds, and wild plants. Shinrabanshō – the forest that covers everything and the ten thousand things in it. The first spaces in Japan not to be used as housing or protection against the wind and weather were the Shinto shrines; this is where nature was worshiped. Neither fence nor grille, simply a red door that had to be walked through, marked out such a place. Crossing the threshold takes you there. Everything outside is outside and far away.

And so it is also in Tokyo, a city that is more multi-dimensional than other global cities. It's as though someone had taken a normal capital city and condensed it, folding it into a piece of origami in which the most diverse worlds collide in an unexpected way. The feeling of having stepped over an invisible threshold is one that you can experience anytime here. Things suddenly sit alongside each other that would conceptually be poles apart. Spaces pop up in places where you would least expect them.

And so it is, too, with Inakaya. Translated, it means "house in the country", and it lies hidden away on a side street in Roppongi, the wild party district in the heart of the city, where neon signs flash in the starless night and the freeway winds its way into the

distance over the roofs of the houses. Only a noren, a traditional curtain, separates Inakaya from the rest of the city.

Inakaya is small. It looks like two shoe boxes that have been glued together, slightly askew, along their longer sides. Maybe it is this compact feeling of space that exudes such a quaint, cozy feel: Where people are so tightly packed in, there is scope for communication. The two rooms are just a few square meters in size, with the largest section of each room being given over to a slightly raised area. These are the two stages for the evening's main actors: The raw dishes that are presented as if the owners of Inakaya wanted to reproduce a carbon copy of the richness of Japanese nature. From the mushrooms: Shiitake, enoki, eringi, shimeji, and maitake. From the trees: Ginnan, the nuts of the ginkgo tree, luminous gold and yellow, skewered on a wooden stick. Then: Radish, eggplant, zucchini, small bell peppers, onions, okra, edamame, and the thick soramame beans. Skewers with kobe beef, duck, and shrimp skewers. And two bowls filled with ice, adorned with all kinds of seafood: Fish, large and small, mussels, squid, red seaweed, green seaweed, and curly seaweed.

All this is prepared here, at the heart of the action, by the grill chefs, the yakikatas. Each stage has two of these men, one younger and one an older, more experienced man, dressed in indigo-colored outfits. Raised up slightly, they kneel behind their grills, which act like a room divider between the place of prepara-

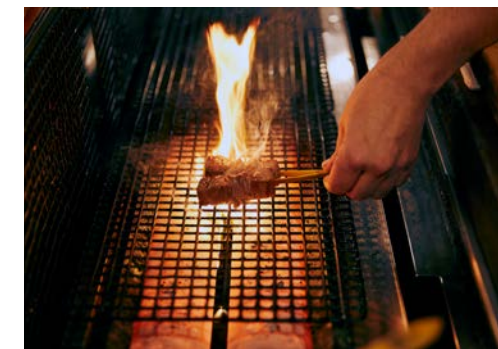
Left page:
In Inakaya in Tokyo, dishes are prepared from the product of the forest, the sea, and the land in such a way that they recount the tales of their origins to the palates of the diners.

Next double page:
Like on a stage, the fresh ingredients lie on show between the guest and the two yakikatas, the grill chefs. They not only prepare the food, but they also choreograph what's happening in the restaurant in a highly concentrated way.



Left page:
The yakikata prepares take-noko. The bamboo shoot is only fresh in the spring. — The dishes are served on a wooden paddle. Plates and glasses are unprepossessing; the emphasis is on the food.

Right:
Sake is poured into cedar wood vessels. — The guests watch as the shrimp are peeled. — Even the ice comes from a master supplier. — In the past, the yakikata would grill over charcoal. Today, more controllable gas makes it easier for them to keep an eye on the restaurant.



tion and the lavish display counter. When a guest orders, the grill chefs reach for the ingredients, having to lean over the hot grills to get them. On a wooden board scored with knife marks, the ingredients are brushed with oil or wrapped in foil, and then placed on the grill. Steam rises from a pot containing sweet potato. From another comes the scent of rice. All this happens without fuss or artifice – simplicity at its best. Lined up next to each other, at a U-shaped counter that winds around the action, the guests enjoy the show and become part of it.

ern Japan. A robata was the name given to the fire pit created in a recess in the ground, around which the life of a home revolved. If people from the north ever wanted to host a guest from the cultivated capital, they could only set themselves up for a fail if they tried to copy the cooked, roasted, steamed, and spiced dishes of Tokyo that were so skillfully arranged and served in dainty portions. Instead, they would set out everything they had to offer: The produce of the forest, the mountains, the sea – everything from their immediate surroundings – and put it all on show.

is simple: Everything is what it is. Simply the essence is teased out of the food. Nothing more, nothing less. This is something that everyone can understand. Iki!

"Is this an old restaurant?" asks one Western visitor. The waiter's response is almost gruff: "Not old; it's traditional". The woman doesn't understand the difference, but it's actually huge: The characters for traditional are made up in Japanese writing from "to pass something on" and "relationship". If something is old, it is no longer relevant to the modern day; it is outdated. Something traditional, however, creates a bridge with the past, being passed on from one living person to the next, and being just as powerful and present today as it was when the chain first began.

The term "iki" most closely encapsulates the spirit of Inakaya. It describes a simple, unfussy, spontaneous, and original character. Iki is when something is straightforward, measured, keen, smart, and natural.

A lot happens in Inakaya on an evening like this. At one corner of the counter, near the front, sit four Japanese businessmen and a corpulent businessman from the West, with thick fingers adorned with even thicker rings. They all raise a toast in turn, and then order beers for themselves and the two yakikatas. The order is passed on loudly. This time, the yakikata skillfully balances five beer bottles on the wooden paddle as he carries it through the room. The honor of being allowed to toast the yakikatas is reserved only for the patrons, however. "Kampai!" comes the cry from one of the corners. The yakikatas return the greeting and empty their beer bottles in one pull. Their focus remains on the grill.

The principle of tradition, of passing something on and keeping it alive, is reflected here in Inakaya in every dish – from the mushrooms to the sea urchins. It is imbued in the supply chains, from the growers to the yakikata. It is the origin of the restaurant itself. It was founded in the 1970s by a family company and belongs to the category of robata-yaki, a concept originating in north-

This is probably why Inakaya is so popular with foreign guests. American presidents and Hollywood film stars love to be brought here. Inakaya embodies the finest cuisine without requiring any sophisticated knowledge on the part of its guests, and without following a litany of do's and don'ts, like those found in the high-class kaiseki restaurants. There, pictures, flower arrangements, tea bowls, scented reeds, and soundscapes all act as aesthetic codes to not only create the mood, but also to communicate the host's very specific messages and ideas. However beautiful and deep that sounds, it is also unfortunately very complicated and requires the utmost dedication – both from the guest and the host. In Inakaya, however, the code

More and more orders come flying in from all sides. The fish has to be wrapped, the shrimp skewers turned, and the zucchini mustn't char. The room becomes louder and more lively. It's a piece of theater in which the guests play the principal roles. You could almost watch them all night.

On the long side of the counter sits a man, dressed like a dandy from the 1960s. In his suit pocket is a red handkerchief, neatly folded. A thin mustache adorns his upper lip and curls up repeatedly in a smile, as though he is waiting for something truly fantastic to happen at any moment. Then his date arrives: A curvaceous Japanese woman with





a nose like an Ukiyo-e painted beauty. They order a few grilled scallops. "Scallops!" comes the echo. They eat, they enjoy, and they disappear again out in the Tokyo night.

Someone orders mushrooms. "Mushrooms!" The yakikata leans his upper body over the grill and reaches for them. He seasons them with salt. The serving dishes are pottery and functional. The face of the guest says it all – an explosion of the senses – when he bites into the mushroom. The yakikatas are now serving around twenty customers at the same time. Their hands are a blur of activity. But things never become frantic. Nothing remains on the grill for a second too long or too little. Now, the four Japanese "salariman" – as office workers and suit wearers are called here – dance together to the toilet, throwing their hands in the air and happily singing "Together, together!"

Folklorist Yanagi Soetsu has spent a lot of time traveling around the north of Japan, the original home of the Inakaya concept. He wrote: "If we want to see something well, we need to use it well." Soetsu created a counter-culture to the stylized classical Japanese culture in which nothing could be explained, only experienced. From this perspective, Inakaya is a festival of good conduct, a celebration of the present, a great pleasure without the high culture.

The only thing that the Inakaya is modest about is its prices. Although the dishes are written on pieces of paper, which adorn the walls like works of calligraphy art, nowhere will you see any prices. However, this lack of

transparency is born of tradition: The oldest geisha of Atami once said that she would never eat in a restaurant that lists prices, since a good chef would go to the market every day and only buy what was truly fresh. As a result, the prices can never be the same every day. Quoting the same price for a dish is regarded as a modern whim.

So Inakaya also remains timeless and spontaneous. It exudes the coziness of a Bavarian taproom without ever becoming raucous, and it reflects the concentration of a zen monastery without being starchy. Inakayas have also sprung up in the meantime in New York and Dubai, and there too, their atmosphere is light, free, and lively. It remains a place that likes to free people from their constraints and catapult them into an almost anarchic mood – a euphoria that grows and grows – and then only begins to subside once the first guests gradually leave the space. And as each guest leaves, a piece of the soul of this cooking experience departs with them. The places quietens down, and at some point falls silent. Once the room is almost empty, the yakikatas eye up the remaining ingredients, looking disappointed about every morsel that was not eaten. Mottainai – don't waste anything. They pack everything up into little boxes and dishes, and even the ice is kept. Then finally, the last guest drifts out of the door into the Tokyo night. Behind them remains a space, an empty shell. And a fire pit that will be ignited once again tomorrow.

Text: *Michaela Vieser*
Photos: *Hiroki Watanabe*

Left:
The guests sit at a long counter that surrounds the food, so they all become part of the action.

Right page:
Every day, the menu changes according to the season and the weather. The names of the dishes adorn the walls, but without any prices. – Only a curtain separates the Inakaya, the "house in the country", from the Tokyo night. The restaurant has been part of the western Roppongi district for 40 years. There is also a dependence in New York and, since May, a second Tokyo branch in eastern Roppongi.





Letting things take their course

The Rubells have turned their passion for dining and hospitality into an almost anarchic form of art

One day, the doorbell rang at the home of the Rubells, who would occasionally hold popular dinners for their friends on the arts scene. But not tonight; they weren't expecting anyone. Jennifer's mother walked over to the intercom and asked who was there. Downstairs stood a guy called Jeff. "Which Jeff?" asked Mera Rubell. The voice belonged to Jeff Koons. He had arrived for one of their famous dinners after receiving an invitation. The only problem was, he was a day too late. "My mother said he should come up anyway and simply stay for dinner," recounts Jennifer Rubell. And so the man to whom the voice on the intercom belonged sat with them at the family table, marking an unconventional and relaxed start to what would become a close friendship between the artist and collectors. Jennifer even gained an internship through this unexpected encounter: At the age of 19, she became Koons' assistant. At the time, she did it to make her parents happy.

"Sometimes, I get the feeling that I've become an artist because I have seen my parents fall in love with artists millions of times," she once said to the *New York Times*.

A very normal meal, as Jennifer Rubell learned from that evening as a young girl, can produce the most beautiful things in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. There is no need for complex arrangements, no strained etiquette. Instead, there simply has to be a little openness and the willingness to let things take their course. It is a special kind of magic that can develop in any place at any time. It does not follow a particular pattern. It is a magic that puts everyone in a great mood and entire-

ly automatically and effortlessly makes them part of a casual artistic tableau. It's a wonderful feeling, one that fascinated Jennifer Rubell early on, since this relaxed gathering of people for dinner was able to open up completely new worlds for her. For Jennifer, it became a mission that would allow her to cross the borders between the worlds of living and art, and become one of New York's most well-known modern artists.

"As a child, I always thought that something that interests me would be enough to let me become a housewife. But there's no way on earth I wanted to ever become a housewife.", says the artist who, for example, created an installation in the Brooklyn Museum in which hair dryers melted cheese, which would then drip down onto a giant pile of crackers. Her works attempt to change and challenge perspectives, as well as question convention. And even she achieves the highest level of contemplation while she is chopping vegetables in the kitchen – that "state of thinking without thinking".

The fact that dining is not the same as eating – and it is always more than just the consumption of nutrients with a lot of people – is something that her parents instilled into her while she was still a child. Don and Mera Rubell laid the foundations for their daughter's later obsession. The doctor and teacher collected art early on, bringing the fascination of the dinner parties to which they were invited home with them. "I wanted to know everything about the rituals of dinner: How the tables looked, what there was to eat, and what people talked about at the parties. I really used to get on my parents' nerves."

The Rubells also sent out their own invitations. A visit to their dinner after the opening of the first "Whitney Biennial" in New York quickly became the height of good taste in the world of art. Keith Haring, Julian Schnabel, Andy Warhol, Jean Michel Basquiat, and Cindy Sherman ate there long before they became famous. They would sit around, relaxed, and without any of the great strategic intentions that they would immediately be subject to today. The lightness of being was the simple secret behind this gathering: "In those days, artist dinners were very different. Everything was an open system. My parents took a very relaxed approach to our invitation policy. They didn't bother with complicated menus. My mother would cook whatever pasta she

Left page:
Jennifer Rubell and her mother Mera Rubell shopping in Miami. In this family, the cooking and eating is done together.

Next double page:
How an art clan looks: Hotelier and art collector Jason Rubell, his sister Jennifer, and their parents Mera and Don Rubell in 2008 at the dinner to mark the "30 Americans" exhibition. The Rubell Family Collection showcased works of art by Afro-American artists from their collection; the exhibition is still touring the USA.



could find in the cupboard. My father would pop a few beetroot in the oven. It was about the gathering, about creating magic. Not about luxury."

When it came to magic, Jennifer learned not only from her parents, but also from her uncle, Steve Rubell, who had turned his passion for hospitality into a career: He was the creator and owner of the modern circus maximus, the most famous disco in the world in New York, a place of effervescent dreams and where happy legends were created, known as "Studio 54". This amount of glamor, extravagance, and enthusiastic decadence had long since been missing from society, and as some people put it, they'd never seen anything like it before. "He knew that exceptional people like to be surrounded by less exceptional people. And he loved people.", says Jennifer. Uncle Steve showed the nine-year-old Jennifer how to effortlessly create a social sculpture every evening that people would flock to. One sweltering summer evening in 1979, Steve took his young niece to a dinner at the house of the designer Halston. Jennifer walked into a living room in which the air conditioning had turned the room virtually into a refrigerator. And because of the cold, Andy Warhol, Liza Minelli, Farrah Fawcett, and Ryan O'Neal were sitting around a cozy fire. Warhol had an urge to draw Jennifer and sent for a black pen, which was brought to him on a silver tray. Jennifer left the dinner with a napkin, on which the words "To J. R., Love Andy" were written.

After this lesson, Jennifer, at the tender age of nine, was ready to make her own debut as a hostess. The first course? "Tomato juice in a wine glass with a slice of lemon. Very seventies," says Rubell today. Her young guests loved the dinner, and the father of one of her friends, a diamond dealer and close acquaintance of her parents, even gave her a heart-shaped diamond ring as a thank-you. The valuable gift does not play any particular role in her memory, but the experience of pulling off a successful dinner party made a lasting impression on her. Whether children or adults, she learned, the social needs are basically the same – and can be met in a similar way: Dinner parties are about human contact. A dining table and a party give structure to this contact, and eating is part of it when people interact." The sharing of food, a ritual that is as normal as it is archaic, is always also an intimate act of need satisfaction. The

shared meal is always also a gathering, and from an evolutionary perspective, even one of our most ancient gatherings. It was around the fire that we evolved into humans.

Jennifer took a while until she wanted to refer to herself as an artist in the first place. After studying at Harvard, she worked for her brother, who ran a few of the family's hotels in Miami. Jennifer would welcome new guests with mojitos and food. She attended a cooking school and worked as an intern for the "Food Network" TV station, where she met star chef Mario Batali, who later employed her as his "vegetable butcher" in his restaurant "Eataly". Rubell soon published her first book, "Real Life Entertaining", featuring simple, realistic dinner and party tips. Her motto was: Avoid perfection, no crisp linen tablecloths, and no perfect four-course menus. Instead, choose wild conversations, unexpected encounters, and, of course, vegetable chopping.

Thanks to her passion for hospitality, she organized her parents' breakfast clubs for the Art Basel Miami event. Right from the get-go, these morning meetings for artists and friends of the family looked nothing like the usual coffee and pastries affair. Jennifer designed "concept breakfasts", nailing donuts to the wall, working with the best chefs, and enjoying her work thoroughly: "It's almost as if you're making a movie together."

When Jennifer organized the opening dinner for the "Performa" arts festival in 2009, she took a big step up. She served grilled pork ribs and apples. This was not only a surprising combination of ingredients, but also a conceptual representation of Adam and Eve. Her desire to create, her originality, her style, now lay bare in front of everyone. Consequently, the New York Times critic Roberta Smith asked whether she actually saw herself as an artist. Up until that point, she had never agreed. That was not just any turning point; it was THE turning point. "Before this dinner, I would not have been able to answer that question. I had to grow without an audience, invisible, alone with myself," says Jennifer. During this period, she freed herself from the lessons of Jeff Koons and the legacy of Steve Rubell. For the "Performa" exhibition, Jennifer cast Koons' glittering metal rabbits in chocolate and placed a hammer next to them. If the dinner guests wanted dessert, they had to smash the Koons chocolate rabbits. It was

Right page:
Jennifer Rubell served up a padded cell made from cotton candy in 2009 at the Red Party for New York's "Performa". The actor Alan Cumming tries it. – With Jennifer Rubell, you don't get perfection. Instead, you get campaigns such as the one in Brooklyn in 2010, where she smashed a giant Andy Warhol piñata.

Following pages:
Art goes through the stomach: At her parents' dinner for the Whitney Biennial in New York in 1991, at the concept breakfast for the Art Basel Miami even in 2007 with Deborah Needleman, Editor-in-Chief of Domino Magazine, and Jennifer Rubell's "Icons" food installation in 2010. – Pars pro toto: Photo artist François Dischinger created a portrait of Jennifer Rubell with a muffin.





a funny, anarchic act that juxtaposed art and dining in a very clever way – the perfect Rubell oeuvre.

It was as though she had now accepted her existence as an artist. In 2011, Rubell organized the wedding party for the art auctioneer Simon de Pury and his wife Michaela. In the Saatchi Gallery, she arranged 69 beds instead of dinner tables, on which pasta, ham, and seafood were served. Jennifer made the guests part of the wedding performance. The bride and groom were visible to everyone in two large glass cubes. While the groom was having his hair and beard trimmed, the bride was having her hair blow-dried. Then the groom smashed the glass door to his wife to lead her to the party. Rubell's idea for this extravagantly glamorous production would have impressed Studio 54 uncle Steve – at the very least.

Hostess, artist – the boundaries are fluid. It's always about the realization, the openness, and the new perspectives on the world. It seems as though Jennifer Rubell, with this

approach, was drawn straight from the dinner table to the galleries, although this sounds like a confining experience that does no justice to her creativity: Whether it's an exhibition space or a dining room, she makes every place her own. And her message is also that everyone can do the same. For her, one is just as important as the other. Sometimes, it is the grandeur of the routine that she draws her strength from: "I cook every day for my children, and I go to the market four times a week. That's the type of person I am.", says Jennifer Rubell.

Who knew? If she then sits with her own family around the dining table, maybe her art will be passed on to the next generation and her children will later create their very own resonance between people, their ideas, the food, and all of the other so wonderfully inspirational things that pervade the room during a tremendously successful evening and turn it into a real work of art.

Text: Anne Philippi

Photos:

p. 56: Chris Terry/William Morrow, from Jennifer Rubell's book "Real Life Entertaining: Easy Recipes and Unconventional Wisdom", William Morrow Cookbooks, 2016; pp. 58/59: Nick Hunt/Patrick McMullan/Getty Images; p. 61: Amber De Vos/Patrick McMullan/Getty Images; Chris Terry/William Morrow, from Jennifer Rubell's book "Real Life Entertaining: Easy Recipes and Unconventional Wisdom", William Morrow Cookbooks, 2016; Eugene Mim/Patrick McMullan/Getty Images; p. 62: Ivan Dalla Tana; John Parra/WireImages/Getty Images; Kevin Tachman (2); p. 63: François Dischinger.



Further information Biographies, Masthead

Biographies

David Bouley

Unlike many New York star chefs in the 1990s, Bouley comes from Connecticut, not from France. He spent his summer on his grandparents' farm. They kept chickens, grew vegetables, and practiced farm to table before it became trendy. He worked in France, Switzerland, and in New York classics before founding Bouley. Today, he is fascinated by the relationship between nutrition and health – without losing any of food's sensual appeal. Bouley at Home is the name of his new restaurant in the Flatiron district.

Riccardo Donadon

Donadon lives near Venice and has often done exactly the right thing at the right time. In his late twenties, he set up Italy's first online store for Benetton, and in his early thirties, he sold his agency and became a multi-millionaire overnight. In his mid-thirties, he founded the H-Farm, the first start-up incubator – before Silicon Valley created special places for young entrepreneurs. The farmyard that Riccardo Donadon converted in 2005 for the purpose is today a campus, an ideas farm for the digital future.

Jennifer Rubell

Rubell started out as Jeff Koons' intern, but then moved to the catering business. When she designed a breakfast for her art-collecting parents at the Art Basel Miami event in 2002, she created her very own kind of "food performance": Dining as part of an exhibition concept. In recent years, she has created her typical mix of dining, painting, performance, and video, and has exhibited in London's Saatchi Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Beyeler Foundation. Rubell lives with her two children in New York.

Michaela Vieser

Vieser studied Japanese language and culture in London and wrote her master's dissertation at the University of Sendai – in Japanese. She stayed in the country for six years and made documentary films. In her book "Tea with Buddha", she recounts stories of people in a monastery; her reports on everyday Japanese culture have become one of Deutschlandfunk Kultur's most popular programs. At the moment, she is working on a docu-series about Japanese love rituals for ARTE. The Inakaya in Tokyo was a real find for Michaela Vieser: Between the neon billboards nestled a "house in the country", where the original, familiar art of grilling is cultivated to the highest level. The little restaurant has sat hidden away in a side street since 1970. Since then, the Inakaya has a dependence in Manhattan's New York Times Building, as well as a new branch in its original Tokyo district of Roppongi.

Dominic Veken

Veken lives and works as a corporate philosopher and strategy consultant in Hamburg and Berlin. He is the author of the books "Der Sinn des Unternehmens" and "Ab jetzt Begeisterung". As the Managing Director of the Kolle Rebbe creative agency, he has advised Angela Merkel and the CDU during the elections, for example. From October 2018, he will be running the Brighthouse unit, which specializes in entrepreneurial spirit, for the Boston Consulting Group.

Tohru Nakamura

Nakamura is a chef at the Werneckhof by Geisel restaurant in Munich, which has two Michelin stars and 18 Gault-Millau points. Before starting there, he spent eight years working in top restaurants in Germany and the Netherlands. As the son of a Japanese father and German mother, Tohru Nakamura combines culinary worlds. It is this individual approach and his further education in Japan that explain his particular relationship and personal resonance with the culture of the knife.

Masthead

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