

Press release
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BMW GROUP
INTERNATIONALER ECKART WITZIGMANN PREIS
80788 MÜNCHEN
INFO@ECKART-BMW.DE

ECKART 2013: Street food and the inspiration for modern workplace gastronomy Symposium focuses on the subjects of canteen meals and street food New app aims to increase enthusiasm among young people for cooking

Munich. This year's ECKART awards ceremony has seen the BMW Group and "Chef of the Century" Eckart Witzigmann stepping up their cooperation. For example, a symposium was held at BMW headquarters looking at the subject of canteen meals and the inspiration provided by street food. Added to which, an app has been presented – developed jointly by Eckart Witzigmann and the BMW Group – which aims to get young people cooking and spark curiosity for new and well balanced dishes.

"The 'pavilion' concept includes elements from the modern concept of street food."

At the symposium Martin Straubinger, Head of the BMW Group's Restaurant Services, joined students from Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University and other speakers and participants from the world of gastronomy to discuss new developments in canteen meals and the subject of "Street food – a trend in the making?". Straubinger emphasised that the BMW Group had adopted important elements of street food (such as freshness, quality and speed) a number of years ago – in the BMW Research and Innovation Centre (FIZ) canteen, for example. "We call it the 'pavilion concept'. Employees and guests can choose and combine the food they like from 14 different themed 'pavilions'," explains Straubinger.

"A company canteen is particularly important for the health, well-being and productivity of the employees. Balanced nutrition plays a major role in the BMW Group's health initiative," says Straubinger. "We place particular importance on the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients and adapt our dishes to the needs of our various locations around the world. We see the food culture in the company canteen ultimately as part of our corporate culture."

The symposiums have been held regularly since 2012 in partnership with Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University and lend a scientific angle to the activities connected with the ECKART awards. Eckart Witzigmann emphasises the responsibility that goes with being a professional chef in the 21st century. "People are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good food. It matters where products come from and how they are prepared. The quality of

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food is central to its taste, as well as the welfare of people and nature. Chefs have a particularly significant responsibility when it comes to sustainability.”

Focus on a young target group

Eckart Witzigmann has teamed up with BMW Event Catering chef Kurt Raß to launch a new app, co-developed with BMW Group apprentices. Available from the Apple Store and Google Play Store, the app can be downloaded to all the usual smartphones and tablets, and shows young people and novice cooks how to prepare dishes using a series of clearly structured steps. The list of dishes ranges from Italian summer salad and Penne all' Arrabiata to Thai curry and apple pancakes. The recipes shown on the app were selected, prepared and photographed by the BMW Event Catering apprentices.

“We want to use the partnership with the Witzigmann Academy to engage even the youngest employees at the company in the subject of nutrition,” adds Kurt Raß. “Part of this process is asking the question: what do young people eat in the evening? Cold meals, fast food? We want to show that cooking isn't difficult and doesn't even take much time. The recipes show the young BMW Group employees that cooking can be a lot of fun.”

The issue of sustainability plays a central role not only at the BMW Group, but increasingly in many areas of gastronomy as well. Sustainability has been a key feature of the BMW Group's corporate strategy for many years now and sustainability is firmly anchored as a corporate aim at Group level: from the development of fuel-saving and alternative vehicle concepts to environmentally compatible production processes and eco-friendly recycling processes. At the BMW Group sustainable ideas and actions influence not only the product but the entire value chain. In every area of the company, the focus is on using energy and raw materials sensibly and responsibly. For many years now BMW has been ranked as one of the world's most sustainable car companies.

ECKART – more than just a prize for the cooking art

As Eckart Witzigmann is keen to underline, the awards carrying his name are about more than just the world of gourmet cooking: “Good food is not a non-essential luxury. It is the basis for a healthy life and will always remain so.” Witzigmann is keen to see ECKART award winners taking an increasingly prominent role within the Witzigmann Academy in the future, in increasing familiarity with and awareness of the innovative and pioneering expertise surrounding cooking, nutrition and cultural living.

Indeed, up for discussion alongside subjects relating to gourmet cooking are general nutrition-based issues. One example is the ongoing development of sophisticated cuisine, its relevance for everyday life, the links between fine dining and company canteens, and questions such as: what does good, balanced food look like in a canteen? This also shines the spotlight on issues like the quality of the food, sustainability and regional links.

The ECKART is awarded in several categories

The International Eckart Witzigmann Award is one of the most important distinctions recognising leading contributions to the art of cookery and food culture. Launched in 2004, the award honours outstanding achievements in

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cooking and exceptional commitment to the multi-faceted area of cultural living. In partnership with the BMW Group, the Witzigmann Academy awards annual prizes in the Art of Cooking, Innovation and Cultural Living categories. These will be joined in 2013 by a sponsored prize – the ECKART for Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment – which the BMW Group is presenting along with a grant of €10,000. This award will provide support for people and projects demonstrating a particularly impressive commitment to ideas which take a creative route to improving the variety and quality of food.

The highlight of this year's ECKART will take place on 3 December 2013 with the awards presentation ceremony and gala evening at BMW Welt.

Contact:

BMW Group Corporate Communications

Daria Gotto-Nikitina
Business, Finance and Sustainability Communications
Daria.Gotto-Nikitina@bmw.de
Telephone: +49 89 382-60340, Fax: +49 89 382-24418
Internet: www.press.bmwgroup.com
E-mail: presse@bmw.de

Contact Internationale Eckart Witzigmann-Preis Gesellschaft:

Rainer Knubben
Verlag für Kunst und Lebenskultur
Blumenstraße 9, 73630 Remshalden
Telephone: +49 (0)7151/9948530 / rainer.knubben@rainerknubben.com

Witzigmann Award can be found at:

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