

Press release
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Food is the new Facebook **Symposium in Munich hosted by the Witzigmann Academy in partnership with the BMW Group**

Munich. The Witzigmann Academy symposium “Good, healthy, responsible cuisine of tomorrow – realistic goal or illusion?” was held at BMW Welt in July. Eckart Witzigmann and Dr Friedrich Eichiner, Member of the BMW AG Board of Management, Finance, and patron of the partnership with Witzigmann, had invited chefs, researchers and entrepreneurs from the field of gastronomy to discuss the future of food.

Top chef Alex Atala of Brazil, winner of the ECKART 2013 award for Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment, had flown to Munich specially for the symposium. In the first panel discussion entitled “Quality and Responsibility – Ideal or Conflict of Aims?” he explained his holistic approach. Using as an example his support of small-scale farmers in the Amazon region – whose products are deeply rooted in Brazilian culture and extensively used in Atala’s starred Sao Paulo restaurant – he elucidated how crucial sustainability is for the entire production chain. “There’s no conflict between quality and responsibility. Food is the interface between nature and culture,” he said, “and it’s the most effective social medium of all – far more important than Facebook.”

In his words of welcome Eckart Witzigmann, the driving force behind the symposium, emphasised to participants: “The crucial question should not be: What does healthy cuisine cost? The question must be: How much value do we place on good, healthy cuisine?” The “ESSENS.ZEIT” app, jointly developed by the Witzigmann Academy and the BMW Group, compellingly shows that good, healthy eating begins with the right awareness and that social media can do a great deal to foster this. The app went online in 2013 with 12 recipes for novice cooks – notching up several thousand downloads within a few months. Now the successful app, which is pursuing the path towards mindful, pleasurable nutrition, is being augmented by a further 20 recipes, all tried out by BMW apprentices.

In the subsequent round table discussion, Witzigmann was joined by Martin Straubinger, head of BMW Group catering, Sven Sommer of Sodexo, the world’s leading community catering provider, Rudolf Bühler of the Bäuerliche Erzeugergemeinschaft Schwäbisch Hall, and Professor Nicole Graf, Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg / Food Management, to debate the theme of “Creativity and Production – a Contradiction in Terms?” Bühler explained how direct routes from food producers (e.g. producer associations) to processors could reduce costs for clients and consumers of corporate catering. Sven Sommer illustrated how cutting out intermediaries and using creative approaches can

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improve quality in large catering operations without raising costs. Martin Straubinger showed that a major move towards quality assurance in BMW catering is already under way: the elimination of ready mixed spices and additives from the company kitchens. The tenor of this discussion was that imaginative, wholesome cooking and large-scale catering don't have to be opposite poles, though it takes time and competent planning to achieve as much convergence as possible.

The theme of the third part of the symposium, held at the Ederer restaurant, was "Enjoyment and Health – Wishful Thinking?" It was debated by Professor Markus Ollert (Dermatological Clinic Biederstein, Munich Technical University), Professor Volkmar Nüssler (Tumour Centre Munich) and food pioneer Jürgen Mann. "Enjoyment and health go together," declared Professor Nüssler. "I can state from my own experience that mindful enjoyment promotes not only a sense of wellbeing in the moment, but a healthy life overall. That applies both to people with serious illnesses and to those with a clean bill of health."

Karl Ederer's "Heimat Food" approach persuasively demonstrates that creative and healthy starred cuisine which uses regional producers and efficient supply chains need not represent a conflict of aims between passion and profit.

ECKART

The International Eckart Witzigmann Prize is one of the most prestigious honours recognising outstanding achievements in the art of cooking and fine dining. Chef of the Century Eckart Witzigmann has been awarding the ECKART since 2004 for unique culinary achievements and a special commitment to the multifaceted subject of the Culture of Living. In partnership with the BMW Group, the Witzigmann Academy presents the prizes annually in the three categories Art of Cookery, Innovation and Art of Living.

The Academy first presented the ECKART in 2013 for Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment, with a purse of 10,000 euros endowed by the BMW Group.

The prize-winners to date include Daniel Boulud (New York City), HRH Charles, Prince of Wales (Highgrove), Elena Arzak (San Sebastian), Anne-Sophie Pic (Valence), Harald Wohlfahrt (Tonbach), Dieter Kosslick (Berlin), Ferran Adrià (Barcelona), Marc Haerberlin (Illhausern), Joël Robuchon (Paris) and many more.

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