

Media Information
September 2016

ECKART 2015 award winner Claus Meyer uses prize money for social project

Witzigmann Academy visits Brownsville, New York City

New York City. Claus Meyer, co-founder of the New Nordic Cuisine and the world-famous Noma restaurant, won the ECKART 2015 for “Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment”, partly in recognition of his social commitment in Bolivia. Meyer has since shifted the focus of his activities to New York. The cash award of 10,000 euros endowed by the BMW Group for the ECKART 2015 is now benefiting Meyer’s new project in the disadvantaged neighbourhood of Brownsville in New York City. A delegation from the Witzigmann Academy visited the location to learn more about the social project.

Meyer has initiated a food project for the local population of Brownsville in the borough of Brooklyn, one of the poorest neighbourhoods in the global metropolis of New York. The project currently employs a staff of ten, although this number is set to increase to between 70 and 80 over the coming months. Meyer is following two objectives: First, to earn greater recognition for the local cuisine and give it a stronger identity. Second, to give young people from this disadvantaged community the chance to gain a foothold in the restaurant industry through top-class training and help improve their prospects.

“I hope we will be able to train 40 to 50 students here every year,” says Meyer, “helping them embark on a wonderful career that can lead their families out of poverty. I also hope that the people of Brownsville will accept this project – even grow to love it – and embrace it as their own.”

Brownsville, with a high percentage of immigrants from the Caribbean, used to have its own food culture defined by people’s roots. This “soul food” originally referred to the cuisine of the southern United States. What started out as “poor folks’ food” gained recognition in the 1960s through the civil rights movement, with many foods, such as spareribs and chicken wings, since becoming staples of American cuisine.

IN COOPERATION WITH WITZIGMANN ACADEMY AND BMW GROUP.

Working with his students, Meyer is building on this dying Brownsville tradition to leverage potential for changing today's predominantly fast-food culture. Meyer's cross-generational approach is particularly exciting, as he explained when the Witzigmann Academy visited in early September: "We are involving older generations in our project by asking them about Brownsville's culinary roots."

A film of the Witzigmann Academy visit will be released in October. Excerpts will be shown at the ECKART 2016 award ceremony in Munich, where Claus Meyer will report on his project.

ECKART, Witzigmann Academy and the BMW Group

The International Eckart Witzigmann Award 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 awarded the ECKART for unique culinary achievements and special commitment under the broad spectrum of lifestyle since 2004. In partnership with the BMW Group, the Witzigmann Academy presents awards annually in three categories: "Art of Cookery", "Innovation" and "Art of Living". The Academy presented its first ECKART for "Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment" in 2013, with a cash award of 10,000 euros endowed by the BMW Group.

Previous ECKART winners 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 Haeberlin (Illhaeusern); Joël Robuchon (Paris); Alex Atala (Sao Paulo); Jon Rose (Los Angeles); Mick Hucknall (Manchester) and many more.

A symposium on a specific gastronomic topic is also held annually.

Sustainability has been an integral part of the BMW Group's corporate strategy for many years, with sustainable development firmly established as a corporate target at Group level: from the development of alternative, fuel-saving vehicle concepts through environmentally-compatible production processes to eco-friendly recycling methods. At the BMW Group, sustainable thinking and action influences not only the product, but the entire value chain. In all areas of the company, the focus is on meaningful and responsible use of energy and raw materials.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Further information on the Eckart Witzigmann Award can be found at:

www.eckart-witzigmann-preis.de

The BMW Group

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In 2015, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.247 million cars and nearly 137,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2015 was approximately € 9.22 billion on revenues amounting to € 92.18 billion. As of 31 December 2015, the BMW Group had a workforce of 122,244 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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