

"ECKART 2020" SHOWS NEW WAYS FOR A NEW ERA

Press release 10.9.2020

On September 6 and 7, 2020, the futuristic NOI Techpark was the venue for ECKART 2020. Six of the coveted awards and an exciting symposium set the tone for the future. In a welcome address by Governor Dr. Arno Kompatscher and the chef of the century Eckart Witzigmann, the eponym of the award emphasized how much he had missed personal encounters in recent months. Despite the strict Corona rules, he managed to produce what Eckart Witzigmann, in addition to his culinary art and excellent products, always considers most important: human closeness. Before the prizes were awarded in the large, airy crane hall, political journalist Jan Fleischhauer provided an entertaining and trenchant "Apéritif". In his witty introduction he impaled contradictions and oddities of current eating habits, which often take on an ideological character.

The awards ceremony was moderated by the new editor-in-chief of Gault&Millau Restaurant-Guide Deutschland, Dr. Christoph Wirtz, accompanied by Munich's top chef Jan Hartwig and the ECKART prizewinner for Life Culture of 2016, Sommelière Melanie Wagner (Schwarzer Adler, Oberbergen). This year's award for GREAT CULINARY ART went to Parisian chef icon Pierre Gagnaire and his young Austrian partner Johannes Nuding (The Lecture Room & Library at sketch), who won the 3rd Michelin star in London in 2020. Unfortunately Gagnaire was unable to attend, but Johannes Nuding thanked him with a strong speech and at the symposium the next day he gave a deep insight into his culinary art in an exciting exchange of blows with the future Executive Chef of Tantris, Matthias Hahn.

The South Tyrolean celebrity chef Norbert Niederkofler, who received the ECKART 2020 FOR INNOVATION, was visibly pleased about the award, which is highly regarded among chefs. The ECKART FOR CULTURE OF LIFE was awarded to the young Trentino organic farmer Myrtha Zierock for her innovative concept of cultivating vegetables and herbs between the vines in South Tyrol in order to make good use of the scarce space and increase diversity. The excellent quality of her products has made her a sought-after address for numerous chefs.

ECKART broke new ground with the awards for CREATIVE RESPONSIBILITY and the PRIX D'EXCEPTION. The former was awarded the "#kochenfürhelden" campaign, which was initiated by Berlin-based Ilona Scholl and Max Strohe (tulus lotrek). The winner of the PRIX D'EXCEPTION brought the hall to a boil with his brilliant performance: Tim Mälzer pleaded for an active support of the gastronomy by politics.

The most moving performance of the evening was given by Carlo Petrini, who was awarded the ALUMNI Prize. He made his plea for tasteful, fair food briefly in the evening and passionately presented it in the symposium the next day, taking a close look at the economic conditions.

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A strong evening with the best that South Tyrol has to offer in culinary terms, interpreted by some of the most outstanding representatives of the local restaurant and wine scene with Anna Matscher, Herbert Hinter, Hansi Baumgartner, Manuel Ebner, Manuel Astuto as well as a sweet greeting from Munich by Matthias Hahn together with the wineries Giran, Terlan, St. Michael-Eppan, Alois Lageder and Ansitz Waldgries.

The evening had a clear message: responsible, creative, authentic - this is what ECKART, one of the very few independent awards in the industry, stands for.

The symposium the next day explained in detail what this message exactly means. In the top-class symposium, for example, Norbert Niederkofler, Eckart Witzigmann, Marc Haeblerlin and Jan Hartwig discussed their experiences. On this occasion Tim Mälzer amazed the audience with highly intellectual arguments and showed that he masters this profession as well as passionate TV appearances. Together with Ilona Scholl and Max Strohe he discussed new concepts after the pandemic. This was already alluded to in the discussion with Hans Fink (Your Taste Guide & Gault&Millau), which was then discussed and deepened in detail with regard to new forms of communication and the growing role of digitization.

For ECKART, Bolzano is proving to be an important setting of the course. Two things distinguish this event: Firstly, ECKART is going its own way and is deliberately not following the trend of recent years towards community building. Such movements run the risk of remaining within their own bubble. Here, ECKART deliberately focuses on openness and diversity. This was clearly evident in the selection of prizes, the award ceremony and the symposium program. The second signal: the young chefs and producers were more present than ever - on the podium as well as in the audience. Despite the restrictions imposed by the Corona rules, the discussions were intense. The ideas that the name Eckart Witzigmann stands for were taken up and accepted and interpreted for a new era. A double departure that gives hope.

The Award

The International Eckart Witzigmann Award is based on the goal of promoting healthy nutrition, sustainable cuisine and the responsible use of resources. Previous award winners include Daniel Boulud, HRH Charles Prince of Wales, Elena Arzak, Anne-Sophie Pic, Harald Wohlfahrt, Dieter Kosslick, Ferran Adrià, Marc Haeblerlin, Joël Robuchon, Alex Atala, Jon Rose, Mick Hucknall, Massimo Bottura, Dominique Crenn, Andreas Caminada, Reitbauer Family, Tiffany Persons, María Marte, Alain Ducasse, and many others.

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The Culinary Symposium

Eckart Witzigmann describes the idea behind the culinary symposium as follows: "Sustainability, quality and responsibility in our nutrition have always been important to me. But what does that mean individually, especially in those days? Once again this year we want to establish a platform and gain more attention and widespread impact. To help leverage good, sustainably produced food is our goal." The symposium with its title „New concepts for a new era“ will discuss the following questions: How do we deal with the current situation? What do we learn from the past? What concepts will be essential for this new reality? What issues may not be excluded in our thoughts? The second event of this kind will test theoretical and practical answers during discussions and guided tastings with top-notch contribution from science, high-end gastronomy and craftsmanship.

<https://www.eckart-witzigmann-preis.de/>

<https://eckart-foodlab.com/>

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