

The Chef Thinks in Colors

By Ruth Sirkis. Food Photography by Rafael Sirkis

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“This is the best restaurant in Nürnberg”, we were told by everybody. And the Michelin Guide agrees. In the beginning of 2008 the guide gave Essigbrätlein restaurant their second star, and Gault Millau gave the chef Andree Köthe 18 out of 20 points. When we visited Nürnberg, Germany, we made a point to visit.



The restaurant is located in the old part of the city. It is rather small, with about a dozen tables, but it is always full.



The young chef sends to the tables dishes that are full of creativity and imagination. He loves spices, and pays special attention to the natural colors of the vegetables, fruits, meats and fish.

After eating in the traditional German Food restaurants in town – one can appreciate the big leap taken by the chef.

The traditional German food is heavy and satisfying, not to say fattening. People who grew on this food love it: Juicy meatballs, with fried onions and breadcrumbs, dumplings of various sizes, sausages and hotdogs. Potato dishes in the oven, potato salads and potato soups are all very filling. They remind everybody of their mother's or grandmother's cooking in the warm kitchen wonderful food for the children coming home from school, in a cold day.

The traditional food is still excellent, but there are also innovators. And an important one is Andree Köthe.

Master of Herbs & Spices

Chef Andree is a master of herbs and spices. He talks about them with admiration and love. He likes them fresh and dried, whole or crushed, sharp or delicate. He talks about the great differences in the tastes, colors and textures between raw, dried and cooked ingredients. He believes that in each dehydration or cooking stage the food becomes very different.

Chef Andree's curiosity leads him to prepare dishes that emphasize these differences, and are completely new.

The restaurant is located near the market, and the chef is going there, early in the morning to buy fresh ingredients, for the daily selection of dishes.

Talking In Colors

The colors of foods give him inspiration. He has interesting theories about the matching of colors and tastes.

The menu is built according to the colors of the ingredients. He also wrote an interesting cookbook that focuses on the colors of foods.



The Green Colors are light, and fresh. They go well with whites or bright colors. For example: Green Asparagus with light vinaigrette, or butter with mashed green beans.



He does not use goose liver – because he objects to the forced feeding done in this industry. He does not use imported sea food, because it is not local.

The Orange Colors go well with delicate spices, and with fruity aromas. They even have some built-in sweetness. For example: Yellow Cuscus Salad with Sesame seeds, pine nuts and grapes. Or tartar of calf with oranges and saffron.

To orange colored dishes from peaches he likes to add vanilla and rum flavors. To bright colored fish he adds lemon and mint flavors.

The Red Colors are the colors of fire, the colors of chilly peppers and the colors of paprika.

The foods offered in this category includes: Red beets salad with fried goat's cheese, in thyme and lemon; Eggplants and pomegranates in oranges and mint; Or young lamb with fresh figs and mustard seasoning .



The Brown Colors are worm colors. The colors of fall, the colors of earth. For example: Dates covered with smoked beef, seasoned by honey and balsamic vinegar; Or Game meat with pumpkin, spiced by fresh ginger, cherries vinegar, cinnamon, cloves and anise
Coco powder and chocolate also belong to this group, and some meat dishes are decorated with them

The Tasting Menu

The Tasting Menu demonstrates some of the Chef's theories:

Orange

The first dish comprised of 2 thin dough 'cigars' stuffed with pumpkin, and covered with 5 spices mix.. They came in a special black and metal holding tray. (Picture 1)

Green and White

The home-made bread included green vegetables pieces. In a small bawl a greenish looking butter was served. It was butter mixed with finely chopped fresh green beans (Picture 2).

The first course included slices of cooked potatoes, coated with white horseradish sauce, topped with fresh greenish apple-sauce, and decorated with small coins of green peas. The whole structure was surrounded by dark green cabbage sauce (Picture 3).

Another first course was a piece of white fish, cooked very briefly, and decorated with snow-peas. Again the combination of white and green (Picture 4)

Then came a vegetarian dish: three cylinders of slightly cooked white parsnip, decorated with 'hairs' of green fresh herbs. Around the cylinders there was a light ginger sauce, and dots of lemon chutney (Picture 5).

Brown and Red

A small cube of brown juicy meat was served topped with coco powder. The combination of the soft meat, which almost melted in the mouth with the bitter coco was surprising, but also very logical.

The meat cube was placed on top of very thin slices of roasted potatoes, that created a flowery design on the plate. (Picture 6).

But the most special dish was the main dish. It was breast of pigeon. The two parts of the breast were meaty, in a brown-red color, almost like beef. The meat was marinated in spiced oil for 24 hours. It was grilled very briefly, and placed on dried figs salad, grated celery, and chopped macadamia nuts. The seasoning was also with brown ingredients: cinnamon and cilantro seeds (Picture 7).

Chocolate Desserts

In a restaurant like this the desserts are always in plural. A variety of sweets arrived to the table. The most interesting one was a collection of chocolate 'boards' filled with fresh fruits such as raspberries, pomegranate seeds, caramelized nuts and more. All arranged like books in the library (Picture 8).



1. Dough 'Cigars' Stuffed with Pumpkin



2. Bread with Green Vegi Pieces & Green Butter



3. Potatoes topped with Green Apple Sauce



4. White Fish Decorated with Snow Peas



5. Parsnip Cylinders with Green Herbs Hair



6. Meat Cube Topped with Coco Powder



7. Roasted Breast of Pigeon



8. Filled Chocolate 'Boards'



9. One More Dessert

Essigbrätlein

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Opening times closed 24 December-7 January, 2 weeks in August
And Sunday-Monday

Meal prices 49€(lunch)/96€- Menu: 58€62€ 

Cuisine Inventive

Remarks Dating back to 1550, this old townhouse is home to a very pleasant rustic restaurant in which innovative cuisine is served. The manager will recommend dishes to you personally.

Specialties Kartoffeln mit Grapefruit. Reh mit Essigkirschen und Liebstöckel. Warmer Zitronenkuchen und Rucolasaft.

Things to know booking advisable

Credit cards   