



Press release

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Berlin Partner selects the best of Berlin gastronomy 2023

These are the Berlin Master Chefs 2023

They are the figureheads of gastronomic diversity and of culinary Berlin - and this year they are more female than ever before: the Berlin Master Chefs. The winners have now been honoured in the categories "Berlin Master Chef", "Rising Star of the Year", "Berlin Host", "Berlin Hip Restaurant", "Berlin District Champion", "Berlin Bar Culture" and "Gastronomic Innovator".

Women power in the "Space to Taste": This year, more women than at any other time in the history of the Berlin Master Chefs were honoured at the gala ceremony in the former Kantgaragen. What else is new this year is the fact that teams were able to convince the jury in two categories.

Franziska Giffey, Senator for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises: "If Berlin were a chef, she would be inventive, demanding, international, courageous and always a little eccentric. From star cuisine to fast food, it never gets boring here: Berlin's cuisine is both regional and international. It always invites you to try something new and attracts Berliners and visitors to our city. That is also thanks to the Berlin Master Chefs and Berlin Partner, who have been honouring Berlin's gastronomy for 26 years. I would like to congratulate all the prizewinners on this success. They are excellent ambassadors for our capital."



Dr. Stefan Franzke, Managing director of Partner für Berlin: "Whether it's a colourful neighbourhood or the capital region, top gastronomy or a trendy bar: with its culinary range and diversity, Berlin is one of the most exciting gastronomic locations in Europe which is why it always attracts gourmets and foodies from all over the world. The capital has developed into an outstanding food metropolis, and Berlin's master chefs have played a large part in this. They are culinary trendsetters and also important ambassadors for the city."

The award winners:

The **"Berlin Master Chef 2023"** award goes to the team from the restaurant "Coda", Julia A. Leitner and René Frank.

The jury stated in its decision: If cooking is an art that requires intuition, knowledge, craftsmanship and creativity, then pâtisserie is all of these, plus the added bonus that you should love the exact science. However, the 15 creations on the "Coda" menu, which guests eat as a concerted sequence of dishes, only have so much in common with traditional pâtisserie as they are made using pâtisserie techniques. In other words, with exact science.

René Frank, who created the unique "Coda - Dessert Dining" concept in 2016 and has been running it with his chef Julia Leitner ever since, prefers to talk about "reverse cooking": in pâtisserie, heating is the first step - what is served in the evening is chilled. Everywhere else it works the other way round. In the course of the process, you can stretch, dilute, flavour, in short: tinker. Not so in pâtisserie, where it has to be perfect right from the start - which is all the more difficult if, as in "Coda", you don't use refined sugar as a stabiliser. And artificial flavours, colours and additives are also avoided here. Instead, the product takes centre stage in its purest form: The natural sweetness from vegetables and fruit, the tart notes of herbs and olives, the saltiness of cheese and anchovies, the acidity of citrus fruits, homemade vinegar or tamarind and the natural umami of protein-rich pulses, tomatoes, mushrooms or fermented rice. Tofu, aubergine, beef marrow and even garlic are used in the kitchen in the Neukölln neighbourhood of Reuterkiez. Is that even still dessert? Definitely! René Frank deliberately does not want to move away from the term, even if he pursues a holistic approach to dining with the "Coda" - whose name is borrowed from music and means that the last course becomes the main protagonist. Accordingly, the creations of the dual leadership are accompanied by precisely coordinated drinks that not only accompany but are also a complementary part of the menu.



The degree of perfection at "Coda", where the courses resemble simple sculptures, can be measured in two Michelin stars and now in the title of "Berlin Master Chef 2023". Both of them more than deserve it.

The title of "**Rising Star of the Year 2023**" will also be awarded to a team: Rosa Beutelspacher and Sarah Hallmann from the restaurant "Hallmann & Klee".

The jury stated in its decision: Cooking is art? Cooking is above all a craft. And, no less, a social science. On that note, the Hallmann & Klee restaurant was one of the culinary places in Berlin that took the most consistent and early stand against the myth of the brilliant culinary artist. Instead, here at the Böhmischer Platz in Rixdorf, everything revolves around teamwork, equality and flat hierarchies. The latter applies just as much to the plate - radishes are of just as much importance as the Brandenburg free-range beef - as is the atmosphere in the dining room and especially the cooperation of the team in the dining room and kitchen. So really, Hallmann & Klee does not even have to or want to decide whether it is fine dining, a contemporary pub or a laboratory for contemporary food discourse. No, this question doesn't arise because as a guest, dining at Hallmann & Klee always feels just right. Because there, people are welcomed to a warm and attentive atmosphere, cared for, and given the space to celebrate their own personal Hallmann & Klee experience. The two chefs Rosa Beutelspacher and Sarah Hallmann, who have won awards together, succeed in this with a cuisine that is many things, but above all does not claim any of it too loudly. It is radically artisanal, convincingly product-ethical, consistently regional, intuitively delicious, clever but never preachy, fun but never pandering and contemporary without ever being zeitgeisty. A wonderfully feisty, friendly and, above all, incredibly delicious place.

In the category "**Berlin Host 2023**", the jury chose Falco Mühlichen, restaurant manager and host from the restaurant "Rutz".

The jury stated in its decision: As a rule you expect a good waiter to serve you impeccably and bring food and drinks to your table. But a very good waiter can do much more. He is a bon vivant, controls his moods and welcomes guests in a friendly manner. That is how you experience Falco Mühlichen as the restaurant manager at the "Rutz". It appears well-groomed, with a simple elegance, contemporary, without trying to outdo the guest. He welcomes you with a few nice words, is obliging and takes your coat. You feel comfortable and almost at home. Mühlichen accompanies the guests to the table and brings the menu. When questions arise, it becomes clear that he really knows the menu. He knows everything about every dish, every ingredient. The guest is reassured and looks forward to what awaits them in terms of culinary delights. Although Mühlichen is assisted by a sommelier, he himself is familiar with the wines. He understands his profession and is knowledgeable in every respect. He pays attention to good processes in service, good coordination with



the kitchen and leads his colleagues with care. Things in the restaurant move along calmly and without stress. The guest feels pleasantly cared for and never has to wait too long. Guests are greeted as quickly as possible and are brought the individual courses at a pleasant pace. Mühlichen leaves the guests to themselves when he realises that they want to be alone. He doesn't intrude during the meal with unnecessary questions, but rather sees if they want something else. He likes to have a short conversation if he feels that it is wanted. He knows how to respond to the guest on an individual basis, to chat a little, with a twinkle in his eye, not without humour. You feel well entertained and at ease. Falco Mühlichen is not only a very good waiter and restaurant manager, but also a true host and proprietor.

This year's **“Berlin Hip Restaurant 2023”** goes to the restaurant **“Sathutu”**.

The jury stated in its decision: Sathutu combines Sri Lankan cuisine, which is rarely found in Germany, with the urbanity of Berlin. In this restaurant in Prenzlauer Berg, Lisa Baladurage and her team serve contemporary, modern Sri Lankan cuisine in minimalist rooms and a beautiful terrace overlooking Rykestraße. The dishes are product-focused and seasoned with great skill: aromatic, complex, special. In Berlin, you only eat like this at Sathutu! Oysters with chili granita, roti with lentil dal, trout with fermented chili and self-produced coconut milk or fish curry with mustard seeds are accompanied by low intervention wines and selected cocktails, such as the excellent Spicy Margarita. Even if you don't drink alcohol, you don't have to miss out on anything when it comes to choosing drinks. The service is professional, at friendly and charming. A place where all of Berlin and foodies from Europe always like to meet. The passion for hospitality is served casually and deliciously at Sathutu.

The **“Berlin District Champion 2023”** goes to the **“Damaskus Konditorei”** in Neukölln.

The jury stated in its decision: Have you ever tried Kunafa Nabluseya? It is melted sheep's cheese with crispy angel hair. Or Halawa: small rolls made of semolina, filled with cream cheese, with rose water and ground pistachios. Syrian sweets are full of surprises. The pastries have been artfully presented up in the window of the shop at Sonnenallee 93 since 2016. That is when the Al-Sakka family opened the confectioner Konditorei Damaskus. When civil war broke out in their homeland, they had to give up their company with 25 branches and flee. The family came to Berlin via Lebanon, Egypt and Wittstock an der Dosse. Today, they operate three branches and a bakery. In the beginning, it was mainly Syrians who bought from them, wanting to drown their homesickness in rose syrup. More than half of the customers now have German roots. And they have long been sending baklava all over Europe via their webshop.

The award for **“Berlin Bar Culture 2023”** goes to the **“Victoria Bar”**.



The jury stated in its decision: In the Roaring Twenties, Berlin became the world capital of cocktail art - Prohibition in the USA which resulted in the alcohol ban there, brought barmen, connoisseurs and jazz here and to the Spree. With what followed, everything was destroyed and buried. In 1995 and after reunification, Kerstin Ehmer, Beate Hindermann and Stefan Weber opened the "Green Door", Berlin's first new classic cocktail bar, together with the true Berlin one of a kind, Fassbinder actor and screenwriter Fritz Müller-Scherz. Six years later they moved on and founded "die Vicki" on the Potse, Berlin's Victoria Bar on Potsdamer Strasse. "The Green Door was where we earned our stripes, but the Victoria Bar our masterpiece," says Beate Hindermann. There are around 120 cocktails on the menu, including all the usual classics and always new, excellent own creations. The audience is a cool mix, colourful, international, between 20 and 80 and typically Berlin. Just under a year ago, the bar was completely gutted by fire. The sad end of the icon? But no: With a huge effort, the Victoria Bar has now been rebuilt - exactly as it always was! "Nothing happened" is written in colourful letters on a garland above the counter. The gastronomic comeback of the year is worth celebrating: Berlin thanks you, dear Vicki team!

And in the "**Gastronomic Innovator 2023**" category this year, the jury chose an initiative that campaigns for waiters and waitresses: #proudtokellner.

The jury stated in its decision: "We ask ourselves why everyone thinks our job is banal when the opposite is the case," says the #proudtokellner initiative. The registered association consists of more than 50 waiters from all over Germany who have come together to make waiting tables attractive again. To create a previously non-existent network for employees in the catering service professions, to raise awareness and to be a point of contact for interested parties. To improve training, image and remuneration and thereby secure the future of a profession that is crucial for the future of gastronomy.

Because the service is at least as important to the experience in the restaurant as the food and drinks. This contrasts with earnings that are usually only enough to pay the rent in a big city thanks to tips. Added to this are often family-unfriendly working hours, underpayment, a harsh tone, sexism, violence, addiction, outdated training and a lack of career development prospects. While chefs can now at least make a name for themselves as kitchen artists, waiters lead a shadowy existence. As plate passers and invisible helpers who ensure a good atmosphere in the dining room, but whose sensitivity and psychological skills are hardly appreciated. But waitressing is much more than just a job before entering the real world of work. It is a responsible teaching profession that requires experience, skill and great commitment. Ultimately, it is the service that determines whether a guest has a nice evening and decides to come back. Waiters are the glue that bonds every restaurant. They



are the ones who hold everything together, who speak for the kitchen, the guests, the winegrowers and the producers. They are important, and there are many of them.

#proudtokellner is committed to social recognition of this important professional group. For a profession that is crucial for the future of gastronomy. An industry that makes a major contribution to economic performance, tourism, culture and the social coexistence of people in Germany. And which, not just since the Corona pandemic, has been struggling with a staff shortage and ultimately for survival. Such commitment cannot be valued highly enough. With that in mind, #proudtokellner more than deserves the award as “Gastronomic Innovator 2023”.

The award ceremony in an extraordinary location, the former Kantgaragen, promised an enjoyable ride. The multi-story garage building, which is now a listed building, was built between 1929 and 1930 in the New Objectivity style. At the "Space to Taste" gala dinner, the award winners and the 280 invited guests were cooked for by the award-winning restaurants from the previous year.

The expert jury consists of the following jurors:

- Dr. Stefan Elfenbein, Chair of the jury, author for the magazines “Der Feinschmecker” and “Foodie”
- Tina Hüttl, Chair of the jury, Berliner Zeitung
- Felix Denk, Editor of the Tagesspiegel
- Prof. Dr. Dieter Grossklaus, “Chaîne des Rôtisseurs” (Honorary president)
- Lorraine Haist, freelance journalist and author for various newspapers and magazines
- Stefanie Hofeditz, freelance journalist, B.Z
- Alexandra Laubrinus, Managing director of Berlin Food Week
- Clemens Niedenthal, Editor of Tip & Ressortleitung Food
- Nikolas Rechenberg, Gourmetwelten
- Annika Schönstädt, freelance author for Tagesspiegel, Zeit online, Feinschmecker
- Dr. Erwin Seitz, freelance journalist, book author and gastronomy critic
- Jan-Peter Wulf, specialist journalist and founder of nomyblog

The winners up to now of the Berlin Master Chefs since the award ceremony began in 1997 have been communicated in a chronicle. For more information on the Berlin Master Chefs project and the history, please go to: www.berliner-meisterkoeche.de. The Berlin Master Chefs can also be found on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BerlinerMeisterkoeche> and on Instagram [@berlinermeisterkoeche](https://www.instagram.com/berlinermeisterkoeche).



You can find our press kit with background information on all award winners, the history of Berlin's master chefs and current photos [here](#). Please observe the copyright of the photos:

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The Berlin Master Chefs

Berlin Partner has been honouring the capital's best chefs every year since 1997. With the award for Berlin Master Chefs, Berlin Partner distinguishes the capital's sophisticated restaurant culture and gastronomic scene as an import and economic factor and flagship of the city.

More than 140 chefs and restaurateurs have been honoured so far in the various categories of the Berlin Master Chefs. Former award winners include Sonja Frühsammer, Tim Raue, Daniel Achilles and Sebastian Frank.

The jury of the Berlin Master Chefs

The independent jury, made up of Berlin's leading food journalists and connoisseurs, not only evaluates the quality of the culinary art, but also the originality of the creations, the presentation of the dishes, the service and the ambience. By honouring Berlin's Master Chefs, the sophisticated restaurant culture in the capital is positioned as the city's flagship and the diverse gastronomy in Berlin is made visible as an important economic factor for Berlin Partner.