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RESEARCH

LUXURY

Falstaff Gabeln celebrating culinary excellence

Austrian culinary masters

The *Falstaff Restaurant Guide* has become the epitome of culinary excellence. *Falstaff* began as a Viennese wine and gourmet magazine cultivating a celebrated reputation in Austria and the German speaking world. The Falstaff Gabel has become a symbol of culinary accomplishment and mastery. Wolfgang M. Rosam, an accomplished Austrian public relations consultant was the crucial figure in transforming *Falstaff* during the last decade and introducing the Falstaff Gabel. The Falstaff Gabel expanded beyond the Austrian frontier to many Western European countries.

Austria has a distinguished pedigree and heritage in cuisine and the culinary arts. The country has produced a large number of extraordinary chefs and acclaimed restaurants. Eckart Witzigmann, Heinz Reitbauer, Heinz Hanner, Simon Taxacher, Lisl Wagner-Bacher, Reinhard Gerer, Johanna Maier, Karl and Rudolf Obauer are a few notable culinary masters. Andreas Mayer, the executive chef from Schloß Prielau, an exquisite four star hotel with a celebrated restaurant located in the luxurious resort of Zell am See in the province of Salzburg stated in a July 2014 World Gourmet Society interview "One thing is certain ... in almost no other country can you find so many restaurants and inns and good kitchens as in Austria."

Falstaff introduced a guide in March 2005 after recognising talented Austrian chefs and extraordinary restaurants deserved acknowledgement. Professor Hans Dibold and Dr Helmut Romé, both economics journalists established *Falstaff* in 1980. Leo Wallner, an Austrian entrepreneur provided venture capital to commence the magazine. During the first twenty-five years of *Falstaff's* life the company established itself as an authority of wine with unrivalled expertise of Austrian, German and Swiss winemakers and the dominant position in the German speaking world for the wine connoisseur and sophisticated traveller. The publishing house used its expertise to create a restaurant guide acknowledging the achievements of Austrian chefs and celebrating their masterful skills and exquisite restaurants.

Wolfgang Rosam's leadership transformed *Falstaff* during the last decade. Rosam was born in 1957 in Spittal an der Drau, a town in the southern province of Carinthia. He studied at Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. He became a marketing

manager at Mautner-Markhof, an Austrian food manufacturer in 1978. He progressed through the corporation and became managing director of Publico, the corporation's public relations agency. In the late 1980s after a management buyout Rosam owned the entire Publico agency. Publico achieved leadership in the Austrian market in 1990 following a period of expansion with new stores in Klagenfurt, Graz, Salzburg, Linz and the Hungarian capital of Budapest.

In 2003, Rosam sold the first part of Publico to ECC-Gruppe, a German public relations consultancy. He was a board member of the Pleon Gruppe until 2005. He sold the remainder of Publico to Pleon Gruppe and employees at Publico. He created Wolfgang Rosam Change Communications GmbH in October 2005. Rosam acquired 25 percent ownership of Falstaff Verlag, the publisher of *Falstaff* in 2004. Rosam and his wife Angelika acquired 100 percent ownership of the magazine in 2010.

Falstaff awards Gabeln (forks) to impeccable Austrian restaurants. Restaurants providing guests with excellent cuisine, wine, service and ambience are eligible for a Gabel (fork). The quality of cuisine constitutes half of the evaluation. Service and the wine list each constitute a fifth of the assessment. Ambience contributes to a tenth of the examination. A restaurant receives a numerical score from a possible total of 100 points. A Gabel is awarded to restaurants achieving a result between 80 and 84. Two Gabeln are awarded to restaurants achieving a result between 85 and 89. Three Gabeln are awarded to restaurants achieving a result between 90 and 94. Restaurants receive four Gabeln for achieving a result of 95 or greater.

The 2014 restaurant guide was published in March 2014. *Falstaff* awarded four Gabeln to 20 restaurants. 78 restaurants received three Gabeln. 400 restaurants received two Gabeln and 698 restaurants received a Gabel. 557 restaurants were awarded a Gabel for the first time. 283 restaurants relinquished their Gabel. Falstaff awarded 1,198 Austrian restaurants with Gabeln in 2014. The guide recognises the victorious restaurants of the nine provinces and an overall victor. Steirereck, a distinguished Viennese restaurant claimed the Viennese and Austrian titles.

Four Gabeln symbolise exceptional culinary achievement. Twenty restaurants received the honour in 2014. The province of Salzburg maintained its position as the Austrian culinary capital. Six restaurants located in Salzburg received four Gabeln. Tyrol, Lower Austria and Vienna achieved equal second position with three restaurants awarded four Gabeln. Two Upper Austrian restaurants received four Gabeln. Griggeler Stuba, the acclaimed restaurant within the Burg Vital luxury hotel in Lech am Arlberg, Vorarlberg, Schlosstern the magnificent restaurant within Schloß Velden a luxury hotel in Velden am Wörthersee, Carinthia and Taubenkobel from Schützen, Burgenland received four Gabeln.

The Falstaff Gourmet Club determines the results of the restaurant guide. The club was established in June 2004 and membership consists of exclusive private and business customers of the corporate patrons. More than 17,000 members of the Gourmet Club assess

the quality of the cuisine, wine, service and ambience during the year. Member votes are examined to determine the restaurant rankings. The methodology contrasts the approach used by rivals. Rival guides utilise secretive inspectors to assess restaurants and the results tend to be opaque. *Falstaff* publishes the overall results and results for the four categories for all restaurants considered for the ranking. The level of transparency is unprecedented.

The *Falstaff Restaurant Guide* expanded beyond Austria in early 2010. Germany was the first foreign market. The online version of the guide provides assessments and rankings for German restaurants and restaurants from more than 25 European countries. In August 2014, *Falstaff* restaurant rankings consisted of more than 2000 Austrian restaurants, more than 1000 German restaurants and more than 700 European restaurants in 29 countries. The online version consists of 3754 European restaurants.

Falstaff established the most distinguished restaurant guide. *Falstaff Gabeln* reflects culinary excellence and accomplishment. *Gabeln* celebrate the extraordinary talent of Austrian chefs, impeccable restaurants and cuisine guests enjoy from Vorarlberg to Burgenland. The *Gabel* has expanded beyond Austria to incorporate exceptional restaurants in many European countries. Wolfgang Rosam's leadership during the last decade contributed to the creation of the *Gabel* and the esteem it reflects.