



STORY



## "SHARING EXPERIENCE": CHEF SILVIO GERMANN'S MAGIC AT S.PELLEGRINO SAPORI TICINO

Meet chef Germann from Igniv restaurant: "Caminada has been more than a mentor. My idea of cuisine is focused on local ingredients and cozy hospitality".

BY ROBERTA SCHIRA ON MAY 28, 2019

Any fan of chef **Andreas Caminada** knows that, for some time now, his most promising disciple, **Silvio Germann**, has been basking in the limelight. Guests attending the ***S.Pellegrino Sapori Ticino*** dinner at *Seven Lugano The Restaurant* were afforded an opportunity to meet him.

After working for some years with his mentor at the *Schauenstein Schloss Restaurant Hotel*, in 2015 the young chef from Lucerne took over the *Igniv* restaurant of the *Grand Resort Bad Ragaz* belonging to the *Swiss Deluxe Hotels* group. Not yet turned thirty, **Germann had already been awarded a Michelin star and 17 Gault Millau points** and now spearheads the Swiss culinary scene. Another star in the dining room is **Francesco Benvenuto**, indicated as Sommelier of the Year in 2018 by *Gault Millau*.

In what little free time he still has, Silvio loves golf and football. **The distinctive mark of Igniv consists in a "sharing experience" and the Lugano evening aimed at creating the same mood.** So here we are, seated at the table, intent on cutting fair shares of Germann's ***turnip ceviche, duck liver terrine veined with chocolate, spectacular chicken nuggets*** spilling out from under the cloche, ***egg with wood sorrel, jalapeño cucumber, little braised meat ravioli*** and all the other courses, suitably paired with **Valentina Tamborini's** wines.



COURTESY OF S.PELLEGRINO SAPORI TICINO

### **What is the most important thing you have learned from Caminada?**

I have been fortunate enough to learn a lot and am still doing so, by working closely with him. He is my mentor and his culinary DNA has inspired me a great deal. When I started out with him, I was an inexperienced youth of 21 but he spotted my passion for this work. He enabled me to grow – trained and inspired – also by his example. Not just as a chef. And when he opened *Igniv*, he placed a lot of trust in me. I have to thank him for his teachings, his friendship and his constant support”.

### **How did the “sharing dinner” concept come about?**

It has a lot to do with the word *Igniv*, which in Romansch means "nest". It is a cosy room with a fireplace where everyone feels at home. As if a person you are fond of were to cook a meal just for you. Sharing seemed such a natural thing to do. The first two *Igniv* restaurants at *Bad Ragaz* and *St. Moritz* are places dedicated to the senses and for sharing the culinary art in. The focus is on relaxation and time spent with family and friends. The sharing concept is based on the experience of a gourmet adventure with the people who accompany us through the various dishes in a contemporary ambiance and a welcoming atmosphere. The renowned Spanish designer **Patricia Urquiola** has interpreted this balance to perfection. Andreas himself has explained the idea behind *Igniv*. Our aim is to create a refined social experience: we wish to unite people around a table, to get them to eat together, to converse and exchange ideas, recollections and special moments while enjoying the subtle flavours of our dishes.



COURTESY OF S.PELLEGRINO SAPORI TICINO



**Most of the courses are apparently simple, combining just a few ingredients. How do you come up with such pairings as asparagus, prawns and citron, or lettuce and parmesan cheese?**

As soon as I create a new dish, I immediately arrange for the first tasting and finalizing sessions with Andreas. Sometimes, these are new pairings or we may go back to recover those of the past, while interpreting them in a different context or in another combination. In some cases, the end result stems from numerous trials and errors. Down through the years, we have tried them out to make sure that they work and that they can be used as shared courses at *Igniv*.

**One of the most popular dishes is kohlrabi ceviche and other vegetable dishes, what is your attitude to the “less meat-better meat” movement?**

It is customary for us to focus on excellent vegetables, fruit and herbs, most of which come from our Canton. We even have our own greenhouse for home-grown herbs and small quantities of vegetables. If these are not sufficient for our needs, we purchase from various organic farmers who grow produce especially for us. The little meat we use comes from Swiss breeders and farmers, all of whom have been carefully selected to guarantee the highest standards of organic feed and animal wellbeing.

**What about fish?**

We care about safeguarding the oceans and prefer freshwater fish. More than 90% of the fish we serve is local, such as char, whitefish and pike. Our suppliers fish in the clear waters of the Swiss lakes surrounding the Grison Alps. This is the best quality fish you can eat: it is spanking fresh and locally caught, with minimum transport involved.



**What is your personal vision of contemporary cuisine?**

I like a welcoming and informal atmosphere from the moment you set foot in the restaurant. Contemporary cuisine focuses on the guest, but in a relaxing manner. The service should be neither too formal nor too informal. It is a very subtle line. I love food which is centred on the product, executed by a team of people who safeguard our resources and environment. Finally, haute cuisine should put the accent on the guests.

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