

more than just *a belly feeling*

PHOTO GIORGIO PANZERA

'Food and drink play a key role in promoting a tourist destination,' Dany Stauffacher says. It was with this in mind that he combined these two crucial elements in the first edition of his S.Pellegrino Saponi Ticino event back in 2007. He then went a step further and invited top chefs from abroad to take part. The gourmet events have now become an absolute highlight of the year as a meeting point for both the international restaurant scene and lovers of gourmet food. Since then, he has visited more than 3,000 restaurants all over the globe.

**'BY RAISING
THE CHEFS' PROFILE
OUTSIDE THEIR
OWN KITCHENS, WE
TURN THEM INTO
AMBASSADORS FOR
THEIR REGION.'**

The fact that the chef's personality is one of the most important ingredients in a restaurant's success is something Stauffacher is aware of. 'The dishes always reflect a state of mind and a feeling,' he says, 'and continue to exist as a memory.' Wine plays a key role in this as it underlines a dish's taste, strengthening it and providing harmony.

Local produce is increasingly becoming the focus of attention as an unmistakable

characteristic of gourmet cuisine. It also helps to meet the demand for authentic flavours and sustainability, Stauffacher says. However, relying on local produce isn't always an option for large kitchens, he explains, as their capacity is limited, for example when it comes to salt-water and freshwater fish.

'Today, guests make a very conscious choice as they are much better informed.' The topic of food receives more media coverage in general, which means that very few guests enter a restaurant completely unprepared. Information about origin, sustainability and processing is also critical here. Stauffacher is convinced that the achievements of top chefs will be of great importance for the future of the restaurant industry. Good training at a very high level is crucial in this regard, he says – and not just for the future stars of haute cuisine. The role of schools and governments is therefore to ensure a basic understanding of food production and support food consumption both as a way of staying healthy and a form of enjoyment. 'Switzerland has more Michelin stars per head of population than any other country in the world,' Stauffacher says. 'Is there any better prerequisite for becoming an international reference point in the restaurant industry?'

Dany Stauffacher was born in Zurich in the 1950s and spent his time first playing professional basketball and then selling sportswear. It was only later that he discovered his great passion for good food and went on to launch the S.Pellegrino Saponi Ticino event series.

