

# FABRICE SALVADOR AND THE RESPONSIBLE KITCHEN

Suddenly, everything has changed. Like so many other restaurateurs Fabrice Salvador (43) is also suffering from the coronavirus pandemic that has not only caused massive economic damage, but also caused people to question what the future of the industry will look like. “Nobody really knows,” says Fabrice Salvador. “But you have to use your energy for good things and be optimistic. I cannot keep talking to clients about COVID-19.”

Since November 2013, the Southern Frenchman presides over three restaurants in the exquisite hotel “Le Place d’Armes”, which, by now, belong to the fixed culinary inventory of the city centre square. You have the “Café de Paris” with an expertly stocked bar, tarte flambé and rustic ham and cheese platters. Then there’s “Le Pléss”, a Rôtisserie renovated in 2017, offering everything from Côte de boeuf to prawns to crispy chicken with morel sauce. Fabrice Salvador never did like to use the term “bistronomie”. “That’s as if you want a “steak bleu” but well done.”

Of course, there is also “La Cristallerie”, the culinary poster child of the hotel with around twenty seats. In 2015, it climbed the ranks of Michelin-starred restaurants under Fabrice Salvador’s guidance. In Gault&Millau it is awarded 16.5 out of 20 points. Previously, Fabrice Salvador managed to gain a star in his own “Influence des Saveurs” in Esch-sur-Alzette. In “La Cristallerie”, the setting is noble, the kitchen exquisite. “More than a few guests like to visit all three places,” says Fabrice Salvador. “Each one has its own atmosphere and its individual price. Each complements the other.”

Is it possible that in the times after the coronavirus pandemic the habits of the guests will be different? For example, that people don’t want to stay in one room with many others for too long? That is a trend that is developing independently of the pandemic, thinks Fabrice Salvador. “Long menus are becoming less and less interesting.” The most popular choice in “La Cristallerie” is the combination of starter, main and dessert. “Everybody likes choosing what they want. People want to have fun and experience something. But it should not take longer than two hours.”

The chef, whose love of Asia can occasionally be seen in his menus, favours buying locally and regionally; exceptions are made for those ingredients you just can’t get hold of here. He is convinced that top restaurants will still offer caviar, truffles and lobster in the future. “But priorities can also develop in good directions,” he says. Step by step, gently and with the long view in mind, he tries to find simpler products. “Of course, we will see where things go.” For example, at the moment he is working with a deep-sea fish called Beryx. “The fish is somewhat complicated to prepare,” but it tastes amazing. It is also not caught that often so you have to handle it with care. “I’m certain that gastronomic restaurants will orientate themselves more strongly towards the availability of products.”

“The crisis has really confirmed our approach,” says Fabrice Salvador. Confirmed his path, began before the coronavirus epidemic, to an ambitious and responsible kitchen. “That’s not something you achieve in a couple of months.” He places value on being uncompromising when shopping for ingredients: “We have to make sure to buy from the right producers. Without good products there is no good food.” He does not necessarily

want tomatoes in January or strawberries from Argentina, if you can get strawberries from the Provence at the right time. Having respect for the seasons means “more of a connection to nature”.

“I believe things are moving forward,” Fabrice Salvador says. He can well imagine a green bean salad in a top kitchen. “All these things that are normal today.” Caviar, truffles or lobster are not really necessary. “Basic products as the basis for gastronomic dishes – that is certainly possible. It is our job to think what one can do. Our organisation is questioned daily.” He has one goal in this matter: “People should see that the quality is not only the same, it can also be that little bit better.”

## LA CRISTALLERIE

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