

Media Information
15 June 2018

ECKART 2018 award ceremony in New York

The BMW Group and the ECKART Academy honour pioneers of responsible cuisine and award prizes for visionary projects

New York. The BMW Group and the ECKART Academy yesterday presented the 2018 Eckart Witzigmann Award, named after chef Eckart Witzigmann (ECKART) for sustainable enjoyment and culinary delights. Approximately 200 guests from sectors of internationally renowned gastronomy, culture and business celebrated the merits of Suzanne Cupps and Danny Meyer (Lifestyle), Astrid Gutsche and Gastón Acurio (Innovation), Christopher Kostow (Great Culinary Art) and the Union Square Greenmarkets (Creative Responsibility) in the Spring Studios in Manhattan. As a surprise, Günter Seeger, pioneer of Greenmarkets, also received the award. The 2018 Eckart Alumni Prize went to Alice Waters.

“At the BMW Group, we firmly believe that diversity in all its facets is the key to new ideas and innovative, sustainable concepts. That is why we support ECKART,” said Dr. Nicolas Peter, BMW AG Management Board Member responsible for Finance, and patron of ECKART, in his welcoming speech. “With the ECKART, we assume social responsibility and, not least through the endowment, we want to initiate lasting change.”

“The ECKART is our thanks to all chefs and restaurateurs and all people who go beyond tasteful creations and set a global example with their visions: They take responsibility and combine enjoyment with sustainability at all levels. Thanks to the BMW Group, it is possible to honour this commitment and motivate other creative minds to follow this example,” says century chef Eckart Witzigmann, the patron of ECKART.

The ECKART recognises outstanding achievements in terms of responsible and sustainable cuisine and healthy nutrition. This year it was awarded for the seventh time in cooperation with the BMW Group. The BMW Group will donate €50,000 per category to a social or sustainable project on behalf of the award recipients. The total endowment of €250,000 reflects ECKART’s place among the absolute top culinary prizes and testifies to the award’s reputation and international significance.

ECKART once again showed its international commitment and continued its world tour: This year’s focus was on culinary achievements on the American continents. Maximilian Schöberl, Head of BMW Group Corporate Communications and Politics and Bernhard Kuhnt, President and CEO of BMW North America, welcomed the guests on the roof

Firm
Bayerische
Motoren Werke
Aktiengesellschaft

Postal Address
BMW AG
80788 München

Telephone
+49 89 382 39229

Internet:
www.bmwgroup.com

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terrace of Spring Studios in the heart of Manhattan. The Farmers Market, which was set up there as a tribute to the famous New York markets, spanned a culinary arc between the New World and the Old World, providing a stage for local, original specialities from the USA and Germany. German winegrowers presented their rare creations. Tiffany Persons, winner of the 2017 ECKART Award for Creative Responsibility, moderated the evening.

The top chefs Daniel Boulud, Anna Bolz, Suzanne Cupps and Günter Seeger then invited guests to a first-class dinner. Hardly elsewhere in the world can culinary fans enjoy a menu in which each course was created and cooked by a different top chef. To the surprise of the guests, the cooks gave insights into their craft by completing serving plates on live cooking stations around the audience.

Another surprise came from two unannounced award recipients: The ECKART for Creative Responsibility also went to Günter Seeger – the German top chef, who always finds his haute cuisine in New York worth a visit at Union Square Greenmarket. Seeger is one of the founders of “New American Cuisine” and promotes the highest culinary art with regional and fresh products. He also collaborates with regional farmers for his enjoyable creations and brings the trend of Union Square Greenmarket from the street to star cuisine.

Alice Waters received this year’s Alumni Award for her project “Edible Schoolyard”. Waters, winner of 2009 ECKART for Innovation, opened the first slow food restaurant with local and sustainable products in the USA in 1971 and is Vice President of Slow Food International. The pioneer in her area founded the “Edible Schoolyard” program in 1995 with the aim of improving nutrition education in American schools. Since then, more than 5,000 school gardens have been built, through which Waters introduces students worldwide to the topic of healthy nutrition and the sustainable use of resources.

The recipients of the 2018 ECKART

2018 ECKART for Lifestyle: Suzanne Cupps and Danny Meyer, New York

Danny Meyer is an entrepreneur with a flair for strong concepts and quality. He leads the successful Union Square Hospitality Group, which includes some of New York’s most popular and successful restaurants such as Union Square Cafe, Gramercy Tavern and The Modern at MoMA. In his restaurants he offers more than good food – he

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provides his guests with an extraordinary experience. He succeeds in doing this for all generations, not just for a “target group”. His restaurants are places of enjoyment and encounter. He also finds and opens up spaces and possibilities: He was a leading force in bringing contemporary, attractive cuisine to the museum restaurants and cafes.

One example is the Whitney Museum. Suzanne Cupps has been head of the restaurant “Untitled” there since 2017. As the only female chef in the Union Square Hospitality Group, Cupps brings an invigorating breeze to the museum and kitchen. In a casual and elegant atmosphere, she presents subtly aromatic dishes based on fresh and sustainably grown seasonal products. As an aspiring cook, she initially wanted to become a mathematics teacher after her studies. She has brought her sense of clarity and precision into the kitchen and this characterizes her gentle and respectful handling of the basic products to an inimitable style.

2018 ECKART for Creative Responsibility: Union Square Greenmarket and Günter Seeger, New York

Union Square Greenmarket is part of the GrowNYC initiative, which provides sustainable resources in the city of New York. Various markets – called “greenmarkets” – offer fresh and untreated products from local farmers throughout the city. The Union Square market was the first of its kind and was already taking a step against the American fast food mainstream in 1976. Today, the market can be called a trendsetter: The conscious handling of food has established itself in the modern kitchen. Union Square Greenmarket receives the well-deserved award for its mission of giving regional agriculture, and thus over a hundred small farmers from the local area, the chance to sell their high-quality food directly to customers. The ECKART jury also praised the claim to make healthy nutrition accessible to all New Yorkers.

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2018 ECKART for Innovation: Astrid Gutsche and Gastón Acurio, Lima

Since 1999, after his wife Astrid Gutsche opened his eyes to the local cuisine, Gastón Acurio has been committed to his culture, experimenting with local ingredients: a recipe for success. Since then, both have been looking for interesting new products for the

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original and creative creations that made their way from faraway Peru and brought the taste of their homeland to the world. Gastón and Astrid started a gastronomic revolution that fundamentally changed Peru.

As entrepreneurs, both recognised their social and ecological responsibility early on: in 2007, they opened the first Peruvian cooking school with a heavily subsidised and therefore only symbolic tuition fee in a low-income district of Lima and gave young chefs from their home country the chance of professional success. The use of regional products for their extraordinary creations shows a deep understanding of sustainability, which is not only a sign for Peru, but also for the worldwide use of resources.

2018 ECKART for Great Culinary Art goes to Christopher Kostow, St. Helena

Christopher Kostow is the third youngest chef and the second from the United States to receive three Michelin stars. For Meadowood he cooked an impressive list of prizes, all of which prove one thing: He is a master of his craft, which he developed as an autodidact. But what makes the award-winning chef so special are not the awards, but the reasons for which he received them: Kostow cooks discerningly, treats the products carefully and selects only the best for his extraordinary creations. Traditional combinations meet culinary inventiveness and are combined with regional products from the Valley as well as seasonal ingredients grown in the garden and selected by hand. Kostov's boundless curiosity in particular enriches his work, the constantly changing map and the result of his work, which captures the charm of the Napa Valley.

ECKART 2018 Alumni

Alice Waters opened the first Slow Food restaurant with local and sustainable products in the USA in 1971 and is Vice President of Slow Food International. The pioneer in her area founded the "Edible Schoolyard" program in 1995 with the aim of improving nutrition education in American schools. Since then, 5,625 school gardens have been built, through which Waters has introduced students worldwide to the topic of healthy nutrition and the sustainable use of resources.

The ECKART

The BMW Group and the ECKART Academy have been partners since 2012. The partnership is based on the common goal of providing an international stage for healthy nutrition, sustainable cuisine and the responsible use of resources. Together, the BMW Group and the ECKART Academy present the Eckart Witzigmann Prize for outstanding

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achievements in the categories “Great Culinary Art”, “Innovation”, “Lifestyle” and “Creative Responsibility”. In addition, one project of a former prize winner is awarded each year. The total endowment of €250,000 reflects the reputation and the importance of the award in the absolute top field of international culinary awards. On behalf of the BMW Group, the sum is intended to support social and sustainable projects based on the prize recipients’ proposals. The BMW Group wants to set an example and assume responsibility with the ECKART. Previous award recipients include Daniel Boulud, HRH Charles Prince of Wales, Elena Arzak, Anne-Sophie Pic, Harald Wohlfahrt, Dieter Kosslick, Ferran Adrià, Marc Haeberlin, Joël Robuchon, Alex Atala, Jon Rose, Mick Hucknall, Massimo Bottura, Dominique Crenn, Andreas Caminada, Tiffany Persons, María Marte, Alain Ducasse and many others.

Please contact us if you have any questions:

Corporate Communications BMW Group

Julian Hetzenecker, Business and Financial Communications, julian.hetzeacker@bmw.de
Phone: +49 89 382-39229

Internet: www.press.bmw.de
E-Mail: presse@bmw.de

Press Contact ECKART Academy

Otto Geisel
Lachner-Straße 18
80639 Munich
Phone: +49 89 139 260 26
office@ottogeisel.de

Additional information on the Eckart Witzigmann Awards can be found at:

www.eckart-witzigmann-preis.de

The BMW Group

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In 2017, the BMW Group sold over 2,463,500 passenger vehicles and more than 164,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2017 was € 10.655 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.678 billion. As of 31 December 2017, the BMW Group had a workforce of 129,932 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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