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21 October 2015

Enjoyment and sustainability at ECKART 2015 **Award ceremony with star-rated gala dinner at BMW** **Museum**

Munich. BMW Museum hosted a grand gala event for the presentation of the Eckart Witzigmann Award 2015 on Tuesday. “Chef of the century” Eckart Witzigmann paid tribute to fellow chef Massimo Bottura, the Troigros family of restaurateurs and the father of Nordic cuisine, Claus Meyer. Awards were also presented for contemporary German gastronomy, represented by three of its outstanding exponents: Ulrike Thieltges, Klaus Erfort and Melanie Wagner.

Over the past ten years, the International Eckart Witzigmann Award, ECKART for short, has established itself as one of the highest accolades for outstanding achievements in the art of cookery and fine dining.

Dr. Friedrich Eichiner, member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, responsible for Finance, and patron of the event, underlined the importance of the award in his welcoming remarks, as well as the significance of the cooperation between the BMW Group and Eckart Witzigmann. “When the BMW Group first became involved with the ECKART four years ago, the Oscars of the movie industry were our shining example. Since then, the award has become more international. It provides a public platform for food culture and all-important awareness of healthy nutrition. But these days, the ECKART is also concerned with responsible and sustainable handling of food products. Eckart Witzigmann has also left his mark on the BMW Group. We have very different standards for our corporate catering today. Enjoyment and healthy nutrition are a priority for us,” according to Dr. Eichiner.

Eckart Witzigmann praised the award winners as outstanding representatives of their professions: “All the award winners are committed to extraordinary quality. All of them fight for their ideas and see them through. I am delighted that such gastronomic paragons exist.”

Michel and Marie-Pierre Troigros, who accepted the ECKART 2015 for the “Art of Cookery” on behalf of the Troigros family of restaurateurs, referred to the importance of keeping tradition alive in their acceptance speech. The family’s restaurant at the “Hotel Moderne” in Roanne, France, has retained its top three-star Michelin rating since 1968. “A success that not only reflects their culinary art and

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creativity, but also tremendous discipline and the ability to maintain a business over decades,” emphasised Eckart Witzigmann in his laudation.

Massimo Bottura, who won the ECKART 2015 for Innovation, talked about his first meeting with Eckart Witzigmann in Munich, and the impression it made, permanently defining his understanding of the culinary art. The Italian’s creative and modern compositions both inspire and polarise opinion. His “Osteria Francesca” in Modena, Italy won its third Michelin star in 2011. “He succeeded in extracting totally new flavour experiences from parmesan cheese, by serving it in five different textures and grades of maturity,” underlined Eckart Witzigmann in the jury’s decision.

Claus Meyer, founder of the “noma” in Copenhagen and pioneer of Nordic Cuisine, was honoured by Eckart Witzigmann and the jury with the ECKART 2015 for Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment. In an inspiring thank-you speech, he talked about a culinary career that took him to Germany, then France, and ultimately back to Denmark, where he manages several restaurants and delicatessens as a successful entrepreneur. The jury paid special tribute to the social commitment of his “Melting Pot” foundation, which helps people in Bolivia open their own businesses in the field of gastronomy – combatting poverty through enjoyment. Claus Meyer plans to use the 10,000 euro prize money endowed by the BMW Group to launch a similar project in New York. More details will emerge over the coming year. Jon Rose, the 2014 award winner, also talked about his aid project in the Philippines one year on: The former world-class surfer and his Waves 4 Water organisation used last year’s prize money to help provide typhoon victims with handy water filters.

The ECKART 2015 for Art of Living was presented to German gastronomy. Three of its finest representatives took home the coveted golden spoon: Ulrike Thieltges, from the three-star restaurant “Sonnora” in the Eifel region, was recognised for the highest level of hospitality; Klaus Erfort for his refined cuisine at “Gästehaus Erfort” in Saarbrücken and winegrower and sommelier Melanie Wagner for her “mind-broadening” interpretation of wine culture. “This award is a tremendous honour, not just for us,” said Wagner, as she accepted the award, “because the only way to promote the art of living is with a lot of supporters.”

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The award ceremony's 200 guests were served a six-course gala dinner prepared by an illustrious kitchen team managed by chefs Kevin Fehling (Hamburg), Fredrik Berselius (New York), Martin Fauster (Munich), Björn Weissgerber (London), Hans Neuner (Algarve), and Michel Roth and Eric Léautey (Paris), which was greeted with generous applause. Munich bar-keeping legend Charles Schumann served drinks specially created for the award winners to round off an enjoyable evening.

ECKART

The International Eckart Witzigmann Award is one of the most prestigious honours recognising outstanding achievements in the art of cooking and fine dining. "Chef of the century" Eckart Witzigmann has awarded the ECKART for unique culinary achievements and special commitment under the broad spectrum of lifestyle since 2004. In partnership with the BMW Group, the Witzigmann Academy presents awards annually in three categories: "Art of Cookery", "Innovation" and "Art of Living". The ECKART for "Creative Responsibility and Enjoyment" is endowed with a cash award of 10,000 euros by the BMW Group.

Previous ECKART winners include Daniel Boulud (New York City); HRH Charles, Prince of Wales (Highgrove); Elena Arzak (San Sebastian); Anne-Sophie Pic (Valence); Harald Wohlfahrt (Tonbach); Dieter Kosslick (Berlin); Ferran Adrià (Barcelona); Marc Haeberlin (Illhaeusern); Joël Robuchon (Paris); Mick Hucknall (London) and many more.

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More information on the Eckart Witzigmann Award can be found at:

www.eckart-witzigmann-preis.de

The BMW Group

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2014, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.118 million cars and 123,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2014 was approximately € 8.71 billion on revenues amounting to € 80.40 billion. As of 31 December 2014, the BMW Group had a workforce of 116,324 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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