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How do Strategic and Technological Innovations Affect the Success and Distinctiveness of
Haute Cuisine Establishments?
Comparing Innovation in Haute Cuisine in Baden-Wuerttemberg
and Lisbon Metropolitan Area

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the ways in which strategic and technological innovation influence operational success and distinctiveness at haute cuisine establishments with fine dining concepts in Lisbon and Baden-Württemberg. It draws attention to the interaction between geographical factors, customer dynamics, and managerial choices by examining qualitative data. Findings highlight how companies adjust technology and strategies to stay competitive while maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity. In addition to recommending directions for further research into financial observations and market dynamics, the study provides managers with ideas on how to match innovation with organizational objectives.

Keywords: Technological Innovation, Strategic Innovation, Innovation Management, Differentiation

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1 Introduction

Innovation greatly influences organizational success, especially in highly competitive fields like fine dining. Managers of fine dining establishments that follow the teachings of haute cuisine must adjust their strategies and technological innovations to maintain relevance since they operate at the heart of innovation, consumer expectations, and operational complexity. (Raynor and Christensen 2013) highlight that recognizing both disruptive and incremental innovations is essential for businesses to succeed in competitive industries. This viewpoint is essential for analyzing how strategy and technology interact in haute cuisine. In an article published in the Long Range Planning Journal (Teece 2010) states that for companies operating in dynamic sectors like fine dining, business models must be in line with innovation and strategic objectives.

Although previous studies frequently concentrated on technological or strategic innovations alone, few of them look at how these components interact in the context of haute cuisine, especially across various cultural and economic locations. This study aims and tries to examine patterns and behaviors of strategic and technological innovation in haute cuisine establishments with fine dining concepts in Baden-Württemberg and the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Despite the worldwide prominence and widespread popularity of haute cuisine restaurants, there is a gap in comparative research that examines how various geographic areas innovate in this space of the culinary industry. Both regions offer aspects that are unique to them and stand exemplary to characterize, on the one hand, the provincial countryside with long distances between cities in Baden-Wuerttemberg, and secondly, the urbanized world metropolis with high tourism turnover in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. In order to understand how geographic characteristics affect innovation in haute cuisine, (Grant 1996) claims that organizational and regional knowledge is crucial to designing innovative strategies.

The study discovers how technological and strategic innovation is applied in haute cuisine establishments to attain distinction, improve operational effectiveness, and handle market uncertainties. (Bouty and Gomez 2013) highlight that creativity and strategic knowledge are essential for overcoming operational complexities in fine dining. To examine these topics, Interviews with managers and chefs from restaurants with fine dining concepts accredited by the Guide Michelin were chosen and processed using the Eisenhardt method to show the study findings (Eisenhardt 1989). This methodology, paired with the Gioia method of interview coding, offers a sophisticated understanding of how organizational and geographical factors impact the adoption of strategic and technological innovations (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). The results provide useful advice for managers on how to deal with innovation management, not just in the culinary industry but in general.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Defining Haute Cuisine

Haute cuisine (English: High kitchen) is the art of cooking with high-quality ingredients and complex preparation techniques to have lasting memories of outstanding dishes and excellent service in gourmet restaurants (Schwark, Tiberius, and Fabro 2020). The origins of this dining category emerged in France in the late 18th century. This new culinary evolution was shaped by three main pillars that were stated by Vargas-Sánchez & Lopez-Guzman in 2015. The first factor that led to the emergence of haute cuisine was the democratization of France, which led to an unemployment wave of cooks and culinary staff once employed by the aristocracy and who now started to cook and serve customers from the Bourgeoisie which were the French middle class characterized by private wealth and no aristocratic bloodline (Wallerstein 1988).

The second factor of the emergence of haute cuisine described by Vargas-Sánchez & Lopez-Guzman is the culinary innovation of opening privately owned restaurants that allowed for gastronomic experimentation, differentiation, and points of social gathering. The most important figure of that time was Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de La Reynière, who became history's first influential gastronomic critic and culinary journalist. The public consumption of the first French gastronomic writings fueled the movement toward dining in restaurants and experiencing chefs' culinary interpretations (Fine 2022).

Lastly, the authors Vargas-Sánchez & Lopez-Guzman characterize the codification of French gastronomy as one of the three pillars of haute cuisine. The most influential person here is the French cook Georges Auguste Escoffier, who updated traditional French cooking practices and set up standards for French cuisine to meet quality and production standards on a large scale (Barr 2018). With the work of his partner César Ritz, Escoffier established restaurants, hotels, and kitchens like The Ritz, The Savoy, and The Carlton that conserve and teach the ideas and standards of Escoffier and haute cuisine up to this day (James 2006).

Today haute cuisine shares its definition and meaning with the term fine dining, with the exception that haute cuisine highlights the French origin and French techniques that can still be found in world kitchens (Trubek 2000). The preparation style of many menu items and teachings like the knife skills of haute cuisine, can be found in culinary schools in Europe and the United States of America (Trubek 2000).

This industry branch of culinary has its distinct laws and rules for example the importance of gastronomy guides and food critiques. The French Guide Michelin is the most prominent and arguably most important culinary guide. It is a restaurant and hotel guide that is published every year and contains recommendations, tested by trained anonymous food critics, in the five categories: quality of ingredients, mastery of flavor and cooking techniques, personality of the chef in his cuisine, value for money, and the consistency over time (Meryl

Koh 2017). Selected restaurants are then awarded one to three stars in the Guide Michelin and since 2020 additional green stars are awarded for sustainability efforts and practices in kitchens and restaurants (Guide Michelin 2022). The Guide also publishes recommendations for restaurants and bistros that offer good quality food for moderate prices, called the Bib Michelin (Meryl Koh 2017). The 2024 Guide Michelin Germany awarded 280 restaurants one star, 50 restaurants two stars, and 10 restaurants with a three-star recommendation (Guide Michelin 2024b). In Portugal 31 restaurants were awarded a one-star rating and 8 restaurants hold two stars to their name (Guide Michelin 2024a). The second highly influential gourmet guide is the French Gault Millau which was first published in 1969 and rates restaurants on a scale of 0-20 points with 20 being the highest rating receivable. The guide's most prominent innovation was the publication of the ten pillars of Nouvelle Cuisine (English: new kitchen), which contained characteristics like faster cooking times, fresh market quality, and lighter sauces in French cooking (Reinle, 2009). The importance of these two restaurant guides and their informative values can be seen in a 2013 study published by the Journal of Foodservice Business Research. In this study, 230 fans of fine dining located in North Rhine-Westphalia were asked about the recommendation power of gastronomic guides like the Gault Millau and the Guide Michelin. The study showed that people of higher ages and higher dining frequency use the Guide Michelin as a primary information source when selecting restaurants (Robert J. Harrington et al. 2013). Additionally, it can be deduced that customer behavior in fine dining is influenced by the collaborative effects of a restaurant's branding and the customer's perception. Customers are more likely to revisit a fine dining restaurant when the business image aligns with the self-perception of the customers, indicating the importance of the restaurant's marketing strategies to attract and retain customers (Kwun and Oh 2007). In the marketing efforts of fine dining restaurants, online presentation has become highly substantial to spread awareness and to build up trust and attitudes. Yoo and Ha researched the relationship between the online presence of

fine dining and casual dining establishments and the effect it had on potential customers who saw their online reviews. The 2022 study found that fine dining restaurants, more than casual dining, benefit from online reviews, given the fact that these reviews help build trust and attitudes of potential customers toward restaurants (Yoo and Ha 2022).

In 2005, Bernard Surlemont and his team researched business models amongst haute cuisine restaurants to determine possible patterns in the industry on how money is generated in those businesses. The team interviewed 20 restaurants out of a sample of 36 restaurants that either have one or two-star ratings awarded by the Guide Michelin located in Western Europe. Through the interviews, three predominant business cases within haute cuisine were concluded. The first business strategy, “Watch your sales basket,” (Surlemont et al. 2005) focuses on the artistic capabilities of the chefs. In this category, the product and dining experience have the highest focus, and quality control is critical. Surlemont et al. state that this revenue model leads to higher star ratings but results in lower profitability than the other two practices. The second revenue model, “Have as many baskets as you can,” (Surlemont et al. 2005) is characterized by full diversification in the core business of the chefs in areas like hotel operations, merchandising, and consulting. This split attention into more diverse operations gains higher profitability levels but comes with the possibility of having lower star ratings due to the chef’s divided attention between product creation and strategic planning.

Tim Raue is a popular example of this business model. The German chef is involved in 13 restaurants in Germany that all serve different concepts and are all acknowledged by the Guide Michelin or the Galut Millot (Falstaff.com 2024). Tim Raue is additionally a media personality who appears in television formats like “Chefs Table” (Fuller 2017) and advises businesses as a consultant with his company, Raue Consulting GmbH (Bundesanzeiger.de 2022).

The third business model Surlemont et al. characterized is called: “Have the baskets you can handle,” which states that chefs enter limited diversification into only one side specification like either merchandising or hotel operations, but not both at the same time. This approach aims to yield moderate risk and constant profitability. What is evident from these three strategies is that restaurant management and chefs have to weigh their intentions between artistic freedom and profitability (Surlemont et al. 2005).

2.2 Defining Innovation

“Innovation is about survival and growth” (Tidd and Bessant 2014). It is a vital part of our evolutionary spirit and living. Innovation can be felt in every industry and situation of life. From the competitive smartphone landscape (Cecere, Corrocher, and Battaglia 2015) to shipping and supply chain industries, innovation holds an important position in organizations to gain competitive advantage and prosperity (Jenssen and Randøy 2002).

In the Book “Creativity and Strategic Innovation Management,” published in 2012, Malcolm Goodman defines innovation as a multi-phase process that converts intangible ideas into tangible outcomes to drive growth and competitive advantage (Goodman 2012). The four phases he defines for the innovation process are the: “Initial Spark,” “Invention Idea Evaluation,” the “Invention” phase, and the “External and Internal Launch”. The first phase is all about gathering ideas and concepts for existing or new occurring challenges. The second phase is about the evaluation of the ideas and concepts generated in phase one to assess potential and practicality. After assessing potential and impact, the third phase, “Invention” consists of implementing the chosen idea or concept into practicality. The fourth and last phase of the innovation process is the launching of a new idea or process in its designated business field. Internal launches are optimizations for processes within the companies, like Deloitte’s improvement efforts in having a more effective ticketing system in the IT department (Vincze et al. 2018), or external launches that are directly attainable for customers or clients, like

software updates or innovations to existing products like the iPhone 16 which features a new camera control slide bar (Apple 2024).

The importance of innovation in organizations becomes evident in the survey conducted by the consultancy Innovaro, which monitored the performance of companies prioritizing innovation in their business operations compared to the performance of the Nasdaq and the Dow Jones. These labeled “Innovation Leaders” outperformed the American indices over the observation course of 10 years from 2003 to 2013. The “Innovation Leader’s” share price grew by 130%, which was 60% higher than the highest average growth in share price in the market (Tidd and Bessant 2014).

In the restaurant industry, and especially in fine dining, innovation is essential to create new dishes and have creative dining experiences and processes to optimize product use and cooking procedures (Prepilková et al. 2023). Fine dining restaurants are usually characterized as small gastronomic firms because of smaller staff size, smaller scale of operations, and smaller market penetration than chain franchises (Morrison and Thomas 1999). Hence, leadership and teamwork must function without flaws to stay competitive. In the context of small gastronomic firms, leadership, internal processes, and the outcomes achieved are identified as the primary drivers of innovation (Vasconcelos, Vieira, and Silveira 2018). Innovation is often driven by a firm’s internal capabilities rather than external technological advancements (Vasconcelos and Oliveira 2018). This is why restaurants have to maintain a good working climate to have a healthy organizational relationship with one another and to keep a space that allows and encourages innovative ideas and practices (Alabduljader 2019).

2.2.1 Innovation Management

Innovation Management (IM) is about how innovation is being implemented and continuously becomes part of a company's characteristics. It embodies the organization,

coordination, and directing of resources to convert input into beneficial change (R. Adams, Phelps, and Bessant 2006). The creative nature of innovative ideas necessitates a certain state of organization and process to guarantee measurement and management. Unlike “Management Innovation,” where the core focus lies on having innovative management ideas (Volberda et al., 2013), IM focuses on channeling and improving the innovation process itself (Ortt and Van Der Duin 2008).

Adams et al. define IM in a framework consisting of seven categories. Input management deals with the resourcing and scouting for materials, funding, and talent needed for innovation. Knowledge management handles the flow of information and knowledge within the organization. Innovation strategy is about developing projects that consist of new ideas. The organizational culture has to be respected and embodied in IM. Portfolio management is a vital part of IM in dealing with the different ideas and innovation strategies and has to evaluate each idea from a risk and reward perspective. Project management is involved in the execution and monitoring of chosen ideas and whether they are being worked with and, in some cases, completed effectively and efficiently. Commercialization is the last part of IM, which monitors the execution of bringing the innovation to the market successfully (Ottenbacher and Harrington 2007).

In haute cuisine, IM is mostly conducted by top management and the lead chefs. The low rate of involvement of the rest of the workforce comes from the fact that the creative narrative and characteristics within the kitchen are fully formulated and invented by the chef (R. J. Harrington and Ottenbacher 2013). The other positions in the kitchen, like the cooks and the station leaders, are there to execute the innovative ideas and IM measures from the chef. This is because most haute cuisine kitchens still use the hierarchically organized brigade kitchen system of responsibilities where the head chef is the main program leader and is responsible for culinary directives and execution (Lian 2024). IM does not just only involve the process of

guiding the artistic creativity of chefs to innovate new recipes and cooking techniques but also the development of new business models that enrich the dining experience as a whole (Vargas-Sánchez and Lopez-Guzman 2015).

2.2.2 Technological Innovation

Technological innovation is one of the key factors that shape modern society by responding to complex needs, solving emerging problems, and enabling socio-economic change (Coccia 2021). It can be described as the process through which new ideas, inventions, or techniques are transformed into attainable applications, goods, or procedures that create added value for organizations and society (Coccia 2019). Technological innovations are often categorized as either incremental or radical (Norman and Verganti 2014). Ettlie, Bridges, and O'Keefe (1984) defined radical innovation as a significant and risky move away from existing practices towards new ones that use new technology and usually include overthrowing old internal structures and learning for the workforce.

A recent radical technological innovation in haute cuisine, and gastronomy in general, is online table reservation solutions, which allow restaurants to streamline the reservation system and have an improved overview for planning how much groceries and service staff are needed (Egigogo et al. 2024). In contrast to radical technological innovation, incremental is the innovation type that improves and refines already existing products and processes.

Ettlie, Bridges, and O'Keefe (1984) describe incremental innovation as a conservative approach, where changes are typically less invasive and are based on previous technologies. These innovations aim to maximize efficiency, reduce costs, or improve performance by not requiring significant changes to organizational structures or processes. Induction cooking is an example of incremental technological innovation in haute cuisine. It improves heat control at

the stove, shortens heating and cooking times, and reduces energy consumption at the same time (El-Mashad and Pan 2017).

In 2000, Abetti classified technological innovation on a spectrum, distinguishing them into four levels based on their market impact and technological advancements. Level one is highly radical technological innovations that redefine markets by disrupting the landscape (Abetti 2000). The middle of the spectrum is a level three innovation that presents new products that feature a blend of patented technology and standard components, and the lowest level of innovation is a level five technological innovation that shows minor incremental changes to standardized technologies with marginal enhancements in performance (Abetti 2000). In a 2017 study, Azar and Ciabushi researched the impacts of technological innovation on export performance. For that, they collected data from 218 Swedish export ventures and asked senior management questions about the degree of extensiveness and radicalness of technological innovations implemented in their company in the last three years. The results of the research showed that technological innovation serves as a mediating factor, increasing the influence of organizational innovation on export performance. Their findings revealed that, although radical innovation does not significantly affect export performance, extensiveness, which is the adoption of multiple smaller innovations, yields a beneficial impact. This shows that firms benefit more from a varied set of innovations rather than focusing their attention solely on disruptive, radical changes (Azar and Ciabuschi 2017).

In haute cuisine, radical technological innovations happen less frequently than incremental technological innovations, but both innovation styles have their importance. A highly radical technological innovation was the sous-vide movement and the complementary molecular kitchen or techno-infused kitchen that set new standards for haute cuisine and fine dining establishments around the world.

Sous vide and low-temperature cooking is the art of vacuum-sealing, sealing protein sources like beef and fish, and putting the sealed bags into a temperature-controlled water bath with a steady temperature. This allows chefs to have better planning in the cooking process through the temperature accuracy gained by sous vide and ensures higher yields in servable outcomes (Rodgers 2008). Premium-cut animal products and heat-sensitive vegetables can now be prepared with less attention and no fear of having a high number of unusable byproducts. Technological innovation in fine dining also plays a significant role in enhancing nutritional quality and food safety. Methods such as steaming and convection-heating help retain essential vitamins and nutrients within the food item, which would have been dyed off from too hot cooking or baking, hence bringing health benefits together with improved flavor retention of the end products (Rodgers, 2008).

In techno-infused molecular gastronomy, food innovation is merged with scientific techniques to create dishes with new textures and different taste palettes. Fine dining chefs that differentiate their style with accents from the molecular kitchen use thermoregulators, ultrasonic mixers, liquid nitrogen freeze dryers, and rotary evaporators to extract tastes and smells and create powders and foams that are used in designing innovative dishes on their menus (Caporaso and Formisano 2016). Technological innovations within molecular gastronomy also promote multidisciplinary collaboration in driving technological implementation and experimentation within the gastronomy sector. A 2024 study conducted by Galarraga & Martinez de Albeniz, the authors researched the fusion of culinary and technological advancements in the Basque region of Spain. The result of the study found that the collaborative effects of scientists, chefs, and technological engineers positively affected the state of technological innovation within the region. Such technological developments also bear significant economic and cultural effects. The study concludes that the inclusion of advanced technologies in the culinary process has indeed added to the global competitiveness of the

region's gastronomic products (Galarraga and Martinez de Albeniz 2024). This is because technological innovation not only preserves local culinary traditions but also advances them through a modern approach.

2.2.3 Strategic Innovation

In the current corporate environment, strategic innovation has become a crucial idea that gives organizations a method to reevaluate their competitive strategies and adjust to quickly changing markets. In an article published in 2006 in the journal *Handbook of Business Strategy*, the author Anders Drejer identifies three pillars of strategic innovation. The first pillar addresses the need that managers need to act upon current challenges while at the same time having a future outlook in mind. This dual-focus concentration allows for operational effectiveness and differentiation within the organization (Hamel and Prahalad 1994).

The second pillar of strategic innovation is based on the notion that different organizational configurations are necessary for innovation and operational effectiveness. This stems from the idea of differentiating between mechanistic and organic structures (Burns and Stalker 1994). Because of the creative nature of innovation, more flexible and dynamic environments are needed to encourage creative thinking (Rösch, Tiberius, and Kraus 2023). The third and final pillar is the shift of innovation drivers, which is not anymore primarily dominated by technology and product markets but rather by business models that change the competitive landscape (Hamel 1999).

The practice of dealing with strategic innovation regularly can be defined as strategic innovation management (SIM). The core elements of SIM are innovation strategy, organizational structure, technological capability, customer and supplier relationships, and innovation culture. Dodgson et al. argue that innovation strategy and culture are crucial in determining how well an organization innovates, while its technological expertise and external relationships, like those between suppliers and customers, also play a significant but smaller

role (Dodgson, Gann, and Salter 2008). Similarly, in a study published by the Oxford Handbook of Innovation Management, the authors state that a strong innovation culture paired with a clear strategy is essential to the success of an organization (Phillips 2014). Additionally, recent studies about SIM prove that companies that focus on innovations within their strategy and business model rather than solely on technological innovations are better prepared for uncertainties in the future, like radical shifts within the competitive landscape (Markides 2013). This aligns with the statements made by Hamel about the importance of technology losing its position as being the most important driver for innovation (Hamel 1999). A well-aligned SIM paired with an adaptive organizational culture tends to outperform competition that does not share the same capabilities (Terziovski 2010).

Because of the creative and artistic element in haute cuisine, SIM also acknowledges the protection of intellectual property. A 2017 study by Presenza et al. observed how the cooks in Italian Michelin-awarded restaurants were protecting their culinary innovations without being able to use intellectual property protections like patents and copyrights. The findings of the study identified several key strategies that chefs use to protect their innovations. These “barriers against imitation” (Presenza et al. 2017) were subdivided into listening to clients’ needs, chefs’ personal creativity, systematic approach to creativity and experimentation, experience-driven innovation, and accumulated professional skills. The study used a regression analysis, and two of the “barriers against imitation” were the most important to strategically protect culinary innovations. The first is the systematic approach to creativity that includes the continuous application of targeted experimentation. The second is skill learning and implementing newly trained culinary skills to create distinctive dishes that are hard to replicate (Presenza et al. 2017).

2.2.4 Differentiation Factors in Haute Cuisine

The authors Sharp & Dawes (2001) define differentiation as the various features or services that a company or brand offers that are superior to the competing offerings and make its customers insensitive to factors like price or additional features. Differentiation features help develop a competitive edge for a company, enabling it to take more value in the market while it may simultaneously reducing the expenses connected with competition on several dimensions by saving money in areas like pricing strategies, savings offerings, and high marketing expenses (Sharp and Dawes 2001).

Differentiation factors within complex organizations are the reason that subsystems within the organization, such as sales, production, and research, are allowed to adapt to their specific external environments. Each subsystem develops special distinct characteristics shaped by the demands of the environment in which it operates (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967).

The first differentiation factor for subgroups stated in the article by Lawrence & Lorsch is structural variation, which states that not every subgroup has to have the same structure. Subgroups located in more uncertain environments mostly have a less formal structure within the group than more established subsystems. The second differentiation factor affecting the organization is the interpersonal orientation, which can also vary in the degree of collaboration or task orientation. The third point is the time orientation, which varies from long-term orientation to short-term orientation. Lastly, there is the differentiation aspect of goal orientation, varying from short-term to long-term (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967). This constellation of differentiation factors guarantees that each organization differentiates itself in different orientations, focusing on different factors than the competition. Differentiation also helps companies attain a special position in the marketplace where they are less vulnerable to price competition. For instance, customers would be more likely to overlook certain deficiencies of a firm, such as its limited choice of products or high prices, if the company offers

unique or distinctive styles, strong brand personality, or great customer service (Sharp and Dawes 2001).

Differentiation, in the words of Porter's competitive strategies, is the process of making a firm's offerings unique in ways that are valuable to buyers (Porter 1997). In the context of the restaurant industry, strategies focused on differentiation generally involve unique brand positioning, high-quality service, and improvements in customer experience. In a 2020 study by Kankam-Kwarteng et al., the authors researched differentiation strategies in 160 restaurants in Ghana. The authors used the Strategic Balance Theory, which suggests that a balance between differentiation (reducing competition) and conformity (enhancing legitimacy) is crucial for organizational success. The results of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relation between differentiation strategies and the performance of restaurants, especially for large-scale restaurants (Kankam-Kwarteng, Osman, and Acheampong 2020). Notably, the research states that competitive intensity did not moderate the relationship between differentiation strategies and performance. This means that differentiation has the ability to protect restaurants from high competitive pressures. In a study by Dupin and Wezel in 2023, the authors researched the strategic location choice of artisanal bakeries within France to differentiate themselves based on their identity. The study showed that traditional bakeries that value craftsmanship were more likely to choose a strategic location near a modernist bakery, that pursued a more standardized business approach, to present their focus on traditional baking practices as a unique distinctiveness. Modernists, on the other hand, were not interested in choosing locations close to traditional bakeries (Dupin and Wezel 2023). This interaction of group identities highlights how brand identity and geography become essential differentiating factors.

3 Methodology

This Chapter dives into the research procedures used in this study. It explains how qualitative data is collected for the thesis to address the underlying research questions and to connect the theoretical aspects and the topic being investigated. Further, the research design, data analysis, and applied research approach will be covered.

3.1 Research Approach

For a successful and sound research procedure, the research approach has to be in alignment with the other two entities' research paradigms and the research question (Teherani et al. 2015). Overall, there is a limited amount of scientific publications about innovation within fine dining, with prior research often focusing on technological and strategic innovation within single regions without efforts of comparative analyses of distinctive regions. This thesis wants to address this gap by comparing two regions that are hosting big haute cuisine clusters with different location advantages and factors that influence local gastronomy.

In order to gain deeper insights into this interesting yet challenging field of subject, the Eisenhardt method is being used for data gathering. In 1989, Kathleen Eisenhardt published an article explaining what the Eisenhardt method is and how it works. The idea behind this method is that a research topic with limited theoretical frameworks can be investigated with the help of real-life cases within that topic. Other than in different research approaches that use random sampling to ensure validity, Eisenhardt calls for specific cases to be selected based on their relevance to the research scope and the informative value (Eisenhardt 1989). These cases are expected to form the emerging theory within the study in either supporting or challenging relationships and aspects within the theory. This method of building case studies for selected restaurants and kitchens allows for rich data collection, which can highlight nuanced details in technological and structural innovations that otherwise would not have prevailed (Eisenhardt 1989).

In 1967, Glaser and Strauss developed the grounded theory concept, which aimed at explaining how theory can emerge from data rather than being forced by pre-existing ideas and already-established frameworks (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This theory stems from the idea of symbolic interactionism, which has its nature in sociology. Symbolic interactionism focuses on how humans create and interpret meaning through social interactions (Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke 2004). Over time, Glaser remained loyal to the original approach of grounded theory, while Strauss, in collaboration with Corbin, developed a more formal methodology that emphasized clear coding techniques (Heath and Cowley 2004). The updated way of grounded theory incorporated a more deductive way of reasoning. While the initial idea of grounded theory would require pure induction with no preferred categories and hypotheses at the start of the study, Strauss and Corbin demanded a more deductive approach, which allowed hypothesizing relationships between different categories which are based on the collected data. Therefore, the updated approach requests ways of coding in order to have structured categories and sub-categories that can then be analyzed and related to other categories.

To avoid falling into the state of relying too much on the theoretical framework and in order to be open to emerging aspects along the way of the research, the study adopts an interactive approach that allows the framework to guide the initial analysis with the flexibility to incorporate new themes and topics which may arise from the gathered data and occur during the process (Collins and Stockton 2018). In order to strengthen the validity and reliability of this inductive research, methods for ensuring qualitative preciseness will be applied that balance the need for creative discoveries while at the same time keeping systematic structures in the research process. For that, the structured yet adaptable strategy by Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013 is being used to guarantee that the results were both reasonable and consistent with the experiences of the participants.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative Research is the approach that systematically investigates social phenomena in their given natural environment. These phenomena include how people perceive different aspects of their lives, how humans act alone and in teams, how organizations operate, and how interactions between people influence and shape relationships (Teherani et al. 2015). The researchers who are pursuing qualitative research methods are interested in investigating how people make sense of their world and how different people interpret and experience various events (Wilson and Sharples 2015). This leads to a descriptive and interpretative outcome to discuss the questions of this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main data collection instrument (Teherani et al. 2015). In this study, the researcher conducted nine in-depth semi-structured interviews with managers and chefs of ten haute cuisine or fine dining restaurants and hotel kitchens within the regions Baden-Wuerttemberg in Germany and the Lisbon Metropolitan Region in Portugal. Four of these restaurants are located in Germany, and the other six are located in Portugal.

In contrast to fully structured interviews, semi-structured interview questions are not set in stone, but there is room for the conversation to turn in different directions. This flexibility also allows the interviewer to dig deeper into subjects, especially when following up with probing questions like “Why?” or “How?”. This freedom characteristic provides the interviewer with the opportunity to adjust according to responses and unanticipated areas of discussion, which is particularly crucial since innovation in haute cuisine is a complex subject (W. C. Adams 2015).

3.3 Research Sample and Data Collection

In order to ensure that potential interviewees would provide valuable insights on the area of interest, specific criteria were used to choose them. The necessary conditions were (1) people who are employed in restaurants or hotels mentioned in the Guide Michelin, (2) people

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who are employed in restaurants or hotels mentioned in the Gault Millau, (4) people who are in a leading culinary role in the kitchen, (5) people who are in a leading role in restaurant management, (6) people who are working in Baden-Wuerttemberg Germany, (7) people who are working in Lisbon Metropolitan Area. To gain heterogeneity within the sample, interview partners working in different positions in different kitchens with different culinary directions are selected. The nine interview partners come from a sample of 61 restaurants and hotel kitchens with which the researcher interacted.

The geographical distance between both regions of interest challenged the aspect of having all interviews in person. Nonetheless, the researcher conducted as many interviews in person as he tangibly could. The interviews the researcher was geographically not able to do in person were conducted via Zoom and Teams. Each interview had a length of between 30 minutes and 60 minutes. All interviews were recorded for transcribing reasons, and all interview participants were assured that their data was being anonymized. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees, and at the time of the master defense, all study participants would receive the results. The collected interview outcomes built the database for the following analysis.

Location	Gender	Accreditation	Position	Style	Appendix Transcriptions
Germany	Male	Mentioned in the Guide Michelin	Executive Assistant Manager (EAM)	Grand Hotel	Appendix B
Portugal	Male	Two Michelin Stars in the Guide Michelin in Flagship Restaurant; Restaurant Group with Michelin Star Accreditation	Entrepreneur; Head Chef	Creative National	Appendix C
Germany	Male	Mentioned in the Guide Michelin	Demi Chef de Partie	Steak Fusion	Appendix D
Portugal	Female, Male	Mentioned in the Guide Michelin	Entrepreneur; Head Chef	Market Kitchen Modern	Appendix E

Germany	Male	Restaurant Group with Michelin Star Accreditations; Michelin Top Young Chef Award 2014 (3 rd Place)	Head Chef	Traditional Modern Fusion	Appendix F
Portugal	Female	Mentioned in the Guide Michelin	Manager/ Sommelier	Market Kitchen Modern	Appendix G
Portugal	Male	Mentioned by two participants in the Sample	Entrepreneur; Head Chef	Contem- porary	Appendix H
Germany	Male	Bib Gourmand Award in the Guide Michelin	Entrepreneur; Head Chef	Traditional Modern Fusion	Appendix I
Portugal	Female	Mentioned in the Guide Michelin	Executive Assistant Manager (EAM)	Modern	Appendix J
Portugal	Female	Bib Gourmand Award in the Guide Michelin	Executive Assistant Manager (EAM)	Current	Appendix J

Table 1: Characteristics of Interview Partners

3.4 Interview Design

In order to gain homogeneity in the interview design and to have comparable interview procedures with all interview partners, an interview guide was created (Appendix A). This interview guide has its origin from themes analyzed in the literature mentioned in the literature review above. The main topics of the interview guide are covered by four main areas: Questions about differentiation factors, questions about how technological innovation is used and valued, questions about how strategic innovation is used and valued, questions about self-perceived differentiation methods, and questions about innovation management. Leading questions were avoided in order to ensure that the participant's answers were not influenced by the interviewer.

3.5 Data Analysis

ATLAS.ti is a program that enables qualitative analysis. It was used for the coding and evaluation part of the thesis. First, the audio tapes of the interviews were transcribed with the transcribing function of Teams, and the audio tapes that were recorded in person were

transcribed with Transcriptor.de. However, all transcripts were checked and corrected by the researcher to ensure correctness. After that, all transcripts were uploaded to ATLAS.ti and sorted into the document groups Location, Gender, Position, Style, and Accreditation to have better oversight of the data gathered of the person and the restaurant style. Stage one coding was conducted, and 455 codes were created that closely describe the intended meaning of the interview answers. These stage one codes were then reordered into 25 coding groups of stage two codes to follow the Gioia method (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). These groups were reassessed and reordered when new concepts and ideas arose due to freshly collected data within the interview process. Lastly, three aggregate dimensions were created that contained the stage two coded groups and, with that, also the first-order initial codes.

The results of the interview coding stage are presented in the coding tree (*Figure 1*) in the following section to show how the aggregate dimensions are derived from the interview data gathered. This allows to present credibility and demonstrate qualitative rigor within the process of gathering and analyzing data (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). The use of qualitative coding within ATLAS.ti allows a more comprehensive way of comparing answers of gastronomic staff within the fine dining industry and developing explanations on how innovation impacts haute cuisine and how regional factors impact restaurants within both regions.

4 Findings

This section will use the analysis of the interview data to present the findings of the nine interviews conducted about the ten restaurants in the sample. Within the interviews, three main themes emerged that influenced all restaurants of the study.

Innovation in Haute Cuisine in Baden-Wuerttemberg and Lisbon

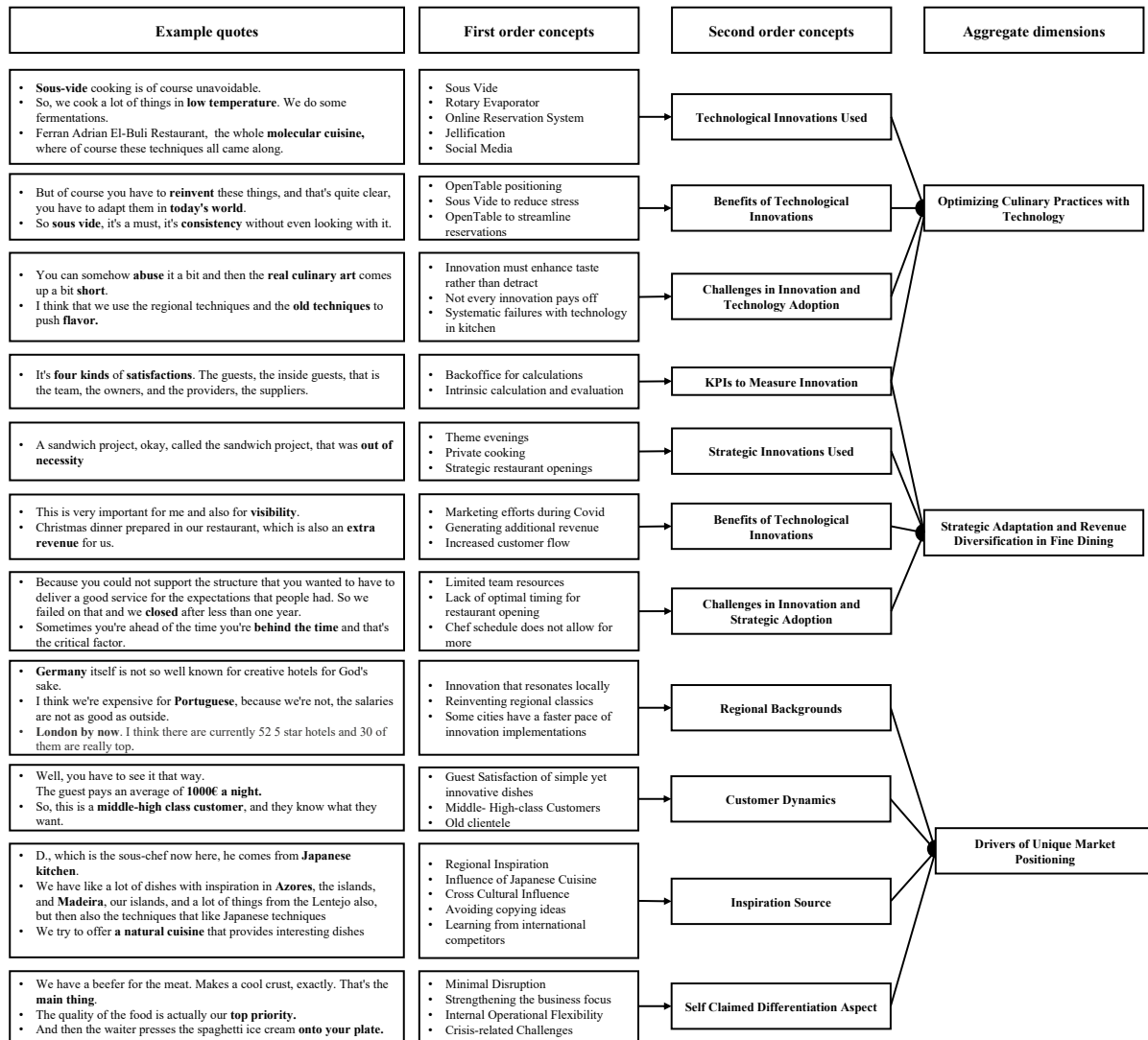


Figure 1: Data Coding Tree

4.1 Optimizing Culinary Practices with Technology

Technological Innovation plays a pivotal role in gastronomy all over the world. Especially in fine-dining restaurant concepts, technology is perceived to have a multifaceted impact not just on food preparation techniques but also on improving operational efficiency, reducing wasteful practices, and enhancing customer experiences. This section presents how the interviewed kitchens and restaurants used technological innovation and what their assessment of the impact of technological innovation is within fine dining.

4.1.1 Technological Innovations Used

Technologies have become indispensable in the modern days of fine dining and the haute cuisine industry. The first main technological innovations like electric stoves and ovens, fridges, and freezers were fundamental appliances that allowed cooks to concentrate on the creation rather than the process of food cooking and preservation because “it gives you time to create, gives you time to think about cuisine” (Appendix C 2024) without needing to worry about making fire and maintaining a flame for the kitchen. These staple pieces form the base technological innovation that is still used in modern-day fine dining. More recent equipment, such as the “Paco Jet” and “Thermomix” (Appendix D 2024), has made it possible to produce precise and reliable results, facilitating the efficient creation of complex food combinations and textures. While instruments like siphons are used to produce foams and innovative textures, stabilizers and gelatines are commonly used by chefs to improve regular dishes and turn, for example, a regular German pea soup into a “pea cappuccino” (Appendix F 2024).

The two most used technological innovations within the sample were sous vide low-temperature cooking and online reservation tools. Despite having a small workforce, sous vide guarantees flavor retention and exact timing. Vacuum sealing and low-temperature cooking also enhance the kitchen’s ability to preserve and deliver high-quality results. Products like octopus and other protein sources can be produced in advance in high quantities, and kitchens then “are able to have octopus for one week” (Appendix H 2024). This allows the kitchen staff to have better preparation times and to distribute the stress more evenly over the entire workday and not just during service time: “Regarding sous-vide cooking, for example, [...] I do a lot of preparatory work” (Appendix C 2024).

The other heavily noted technological innovation of the interview participants implemented in recent times is reservation platforms such as OpenTable and TheFork. They facilitate customer relationship management and improve operational efficiency. Restaurants

can offer bundles and “experience” (Appendix B 2024) packages via the platforms and then track customer behavior online. These services allow for presenting real-time booking updates, which allows a forecast of the service demand for the day and, when needed, “make a reservation stop” (Appendix D 2024) directly via these booking outlets. Creating “a customer file” (Appendix I 2024) for each guest allows for improved marketing plans, making data-driven insights possible by monitoring visitor frequency and expenditure trends directly. This allows the service staff and kitchen management to have more precise planning of the service interaction and dining experience beforehand.

4.1.2. Benefits of Technological Innovations within Haute Cuisine Restaurants

The benefits of technological innovation within haute cuisine/fine dining concepts vary from the perception and actual weight of how much technologies improve operations within the restaurant industry. The most noticeable positive reaction to technological innovation in the sample was the savior of additional staff, which can be partly or fully substituted by the sous vide application. “Your sous vide cooker does not replace an employee, but it does give you one or two [...] free [hands]” (Appendix F 2024). Given the fact that labour is one of the biggest expense positions within restaurants, the aspect of saving extra labour hours with one appliance makes sous vide a valuable tool to improve productivity within the restaurant while at the same time keeping labour costs at a minimum (Joo, Billington, and Stoeberl 2012). Other appliances like the paco jet or the rotary evaporator allow for consistent results due to regular use with the same ingredients, improving the production state in the preparation section of a workday in the kitchen. “Hold-o-mats, three of which we use every day” (Appendix D 2024). This allows to hold finished produce at a constant temperature to also help with the preparation and to allow for a more efficient service. All the kitchen appliances that have become an essential part of haute cuisine support efficiency efforts to improve quality, reduce waste, and have the ability

to partly save staffing expenses. “you have to say that very clearly, that's [...] where you can't and shouldn't close yourself off from” (Appendix B 2024). Technological innovations within fine dining also find application fields outside of the haute cuisine bubble. The help of jellification with powders like “agar-agar” (Appendix F 2024) or xanthan-gum allows chefs to shape and stabilize processed food into shapes consisting entirely of mousse, which allows disabled people, “babies, or [...]old people that don't have teeth to eat” (Appendix C 2024) dishes with an aesthetic appeal and to enhance the dining experience for these groups. The other significant innovation that got the second most positive response in the sample and which is also used by all ten restaurants is the use of online reservation systems. This technology is especially beneficial for streamlining operations within the service room. The staff does not need to take phone calls for reservations, allowing them to spend more time focusing on service and the guest. This is especially important when considering that the majority of the restaurants surveyed are small businesses, with the smallest being “two chefs basically doing everything” (Appendix E 2024). The online reservation system directly staggers reservations, keeps a record of how often the guest is visiting, and what their preferences are, and what other consumer behaviors they have. The implementation of artificial intelligence within the online reservation system has gained higher importance in recent times. Respondent C uses AI in his worldwide organization consisting of fifteen restaurants “to filter some of these reservations and to know a little bit more about the guests for [their] marketing and CRM marketing system” (Appendix C 2024).

4.1.3. Critical Aspects of Technological Innovations within Haute Cuisine Restaurants

The main criticism of technological innovations within fine dining restaurants is the high rate of investment in these technologies, which partly surpasses the advantages for small businesses with limited resources. For them, reservation systems and inventory management

tools may be unfeasible due to the need for specialized personnel and close supervision. Respondent F disclosed that they tried to use an inventory system that tracked every product entering and leaving the kitchen. This led to the dilemma of having one person extra in the kitchen, listing and controlling the in- and outgoing products (Appendix F 2024). Furthermore, certain technologies fall short of expectations, as demonstrated by substitute reservation systems that attract fewer clients. Respondent J shared an experience where both of the restaurants under her management tried to test out an alternative reservation system to TheFork since the restaurant has to pay a fee of “three euros per person reserved on the table” (Appendix J 2024) when the reservation is conducted via TheFork. However, the restaurants directly experienced a decrease in online reservations after they made the switch to the less expensive online reservation system. This led to a higher revenue loss and highlights that not every technological innovation can be substituted by cheaper alternatives, leading to a dependency on certain service- and technology providers (Appendix J 2024).

4.1.4. KPIs to Measure Innovation

The key performance indicators to measure innovation of technological and also strategic innovations within the haute cuisine fine dining concepts vary strongly depending on the size of the operation. Given that the sample of this study mainly consisted of small-sized companies, many respondents evaluated innovations based on their intrinsic feelings about technologies and processes. Respondent J highlighted that they don't have constant indicators tracking innovation phases with vague goal settings but rather depend on trial-and-error practices with having many dish innovations overthrown after the testing phase. Respondent G disclosed that since their company mainly focuses on daily business, they don't feel the need to measure innovation in their operations directly but based on profit-driving factors, meaning they: “change things in order to achieve a better profitability of the restaurant”. On the other

hand, four restaurants out of this presented sample noted clear KPI measurement practices to keep track of innovation processes of all natures. Respondent D explained that the head chef works closely with the back office, which also manages and oversees the operations of not only the restaurant but also the hotel. Respondent C explained that the way how he tracks innovations within his cooperation is based on the feeling and satisfaction of an innovation like a new strategic restaurant opening: “It's four kinds of satisfactions. The guests, the inside guests, that is the team, the owners, and the providers, the suppliers” (Appendix C). However, the most stated indicators to measure innovation are the food cost and customer KPIs mainly delivered by online reservation systems like OpenTable or TheFork: “I also analyze [...] the number of guests per month, per capita turnover.” (Appendix I 2024). Strategic innovation is measured more precisely given the nature of evaluating strategic adaptations in advance. Respondent I, for example, plans on having a small extension of his operations into the hotel sector to host overnight guests. For that, the respondent used business knowledge acquired in an earlier education before the entrance into the restaurant industry to make a sufficient business plan that respected surrounding competition and potential occurring costs: “Especially for the holiday apartments, I did a market analysis myself. What are the average prices before staying? What are the average occupancy figures in Baden-Württemberg” (Appendix I 2024).

4.2 Strategic Adaptation and Revenue Diversification in Fine Dining

One of the key traits of profitable fine dining establishments is their capacity for strategic innovation and adaptation. The overall aim of all haute cuisine restaurants is to offer exceptional service to customers. Hence, having “flexibility with the menu to be able to change easily and to do different things” (Appendix H 2024) is one of the core strategic abilities characterized in fine dining concepts. Strategic initiatives like hosting a kitchen party or

offering a cooking lesson to enhance and fuel guest engagement are tools often seen in the sample.

4.2.1. Strategic Innovations Used

In haute cuisine restaurants, strategic innovations often circle around extending brand recognition, diversifying the business field, or strategic partnerships. Adaptations of new dining and service experiences take the lead in common strategic innovations, simultaneously giving restaurants a uniqueness and differentiating themselves from direct competition. Respondents from Interview D stated that their concept of having a chef's table as the only possibility of occupancy is unique to them: "I think there's one more restaurant in the 5,000 that exists in Lisbon that has the same concept that we do, which is the one shared table, and I think that kind of differentiates it straight away from any other restaurant" (Appendix E 2024). Caterings as strategic practice also were stated frequently as part of the "core business" (Appendix B 2024) within the sample. Another strategic innovation mentioned by restaurants within the sample is the aspect of using the capabilities of an equipped kitchen in the restaurant for preparation and then bringing the dining experience to the customer's home. This was mentioned in two different ways. Firstly, being requested to make resident visits as "a chef at home" (Appendix H 2024) and secondly, preparing food fully in the restaurant and then delivering a partly or fully finished product to the customer. Respondents D elaborated on their innovation during the times of covid-lockdown when they prepared boxes of food with menus functioning as "kind of a set menu, three dishes" (Appendix E 2024), which were sent out with instructions to the customer on how to finish preparing the menu at home in the private kitchen.

Strategic openings of new restaurants with similar and different concepts within the cooperation were only stated by two respondents (Interview B and C). Respondent B used the opening of a new restaurant concept to strategically rejuvenate the clientele of the Grand Hotels'

restaurant. For that, they even “sacrificed [their] 2-star restaurant to really bring a new spirit into it” (Appendix B 2024). Respondent C justified strategic restaurant openings as a way of offering similar services all around the world with minimal local adaptations. This worldwide franchising of his fine dining concept showcases his contribution to how he sees his national Portuguese cuisine. For the other restaurant openings, he aimed to service customers with different willingness to pay. For that, he diversified parts of his concept into lower-price segments within his group to “have guests from different levels of prices, from different parts of the world, [...]to survive the different prices and to be economically stronger” (Appendix C 2024).

4.2.2. Strategic Partnerships and Relationship Management

Strategic innovation in fine dining requires strong alliances and efficient relationship management. Common synergies between partners are the main factor for restaurants with fine dining concepts to co-create and support each other within the industry. The highest importance in the ranking of partnerships, stated by the majority of the interview partners, is the partnership with food suppliers like the “Italian truffle dealer” (Appendix B 2024), the animal product suppliers, and the “butcher's shop” (Appendix F 2024). The underlying reason for a good bond between food suppliers and haute cuisine kitchens is the ability to rely on the quality delivered to the kitchens. Since product quality is of high importance, the restaurants are willing to pay higher prices and even pay a premium for scarce products because of time-saving factors: “I call him at 12 o'clock at night, or one o'clock at night, the next day in the morning he has the fish here” (Appendix E 2024). Furthermore, it was regularly mentioned that partnering with a hotel in the neighborhood or even being part of a hotel created high synergies considering potential customers. Respondent G stated that “Partnering with hotels” is the most important partnership for them “as they bring [...] new customers in exchange for money” (Appendix G

2024). Partnerships additionally play a pivotal role in marketing efforts. With partners like “Porsche” (Appendix F), restaurants create a shared brand association that allows them to promote themselves and their partners jointly.

4.2.3. Benefits of Strategic Innovations within Haute Cuisine Restaurants

The advantages of strategic innovation in the fine dining industry reach from operational effectiveness to consumer engagement and financial stability. Hosting theme evenings with partners to build a “financial cushion” (Appendix E 2024) or having “more marketing” (Appendix I 2024) efforts for future operations ensure strength in a sensitive market and uncertain times. The biggest benefits of the majority of strategic initiatives are revenue diversification and result in being less independent on only the daily service operations. Respondent I justifies his efforts to venture into the hotel industry because of the current situation on how financially stable the fine dining industry currently is: “You have to say that pure food gastronomy is becoming more and more difficult to be profitable” (Appendix I 2024). Lastly, environmental and operational benefits emerge from the implementation of innovative strategic practices. Respondent J stressed the fact that local traditional Portuguese restaurants serve plates with a lot of food to their customers, which is unnecessary, so they aim to have smaller portions so that “there's not so much waste” (Appendix J 2024). Additionally, both of the restaurants under her management optimized their product offerings for the guests to have a reduction in unsold products and goods that went to waste “because people didn't buy them” (Appendix J 2024).

4.2.4. Critical Aspects of Strategic Innovations within Haute Cuisine Restaurants

Innovative ideas are frequently limited by resource limitations, as demonstrated by the statement made in Interview G by the respondent: “We would love to have more time for more

things, but right now, we don't have that” (Appendix H 2024). Limited team size affects the ability of kitchen teams to expand or take on additional tasks due to tightly calculated budgetary constraints. Some ideas also fall short of what customers expect, like in the case when Respondent C disclosed that one of his strategic innovations was opening a restaurant under his name that tried to offer low-cost food for the Portuguese community with the cost of main dishes being “12, 14, 15 euros average price” (Appendix C 2024). However, the market did not appreciate the concept, and the restaurant had to close within the first year of running because of unmet expectations. People were expecting the fine dining recipes and quality of this chef also in this price segment, which then led to a failed model fit and wrong positioning of the restaurant. Another recurring problem is the fact that chefs oftentimes can’t find space in their schedules to have another strategic innovation next to the regular daily service. Striking a balance between cost and quality Respondent J also mentioned that the chef in charge of both of her restaurants is a known character in the Portuguese fine dining industry for being a TV host. This leads to the fact that the “Chef is very busy because people want to be with her” (Appendix J 2024) and to the restaurants’ inability to organically develop an innovative strategic alternative to regular daily service. In the end, strategic innovation success requires carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages and freeing up time in the schedule.

4.3 Drivers of Unique Market Positioning

In order to build distinctive market positions, fine dining concepts combine regional influences, customer dynamics, inspiration sources, and self-proclaimed differentiation techniques.

4.3.1. Regional Backgrounds

Regional identity builds the backbone for many haute cuisine kitchens and concepts influenced by the regional sourcing of ingredients and sometimes recipes. Both regions, Baden-Wuerttemberg and Lisbon, contain a rich culinary culture shaped by regional influences and recipes. In the four German restaurants interviewed in the sample, the regional background was always stated as a base on which market positioning emerges: “We first want to pick up the local culinary and also pick up the international guest” (Appendix F 2024). This strong relationship to the local culinary techniques and influences partly also emerges from the fact that the surveyed restaurants are mainly located in less densely populated regions and somewhat located “in the hinterland” (Appendix I 2024). Since “Germany itself is not so well known for creative hotels” (Appendix B 2024) and creative cuisine, the Baden-Wuerttemberg cuisine uses many influences from the classical French haute cuisine. This is made possible due to the proximity close to Alsace, France: “We have [...] Alsace over there [in] 12 kilometers from [here where] our cheese comes [from] et cetera” (Appendix B 2024). Fine dining establishments located in Lisbon also leverage the regional cuisine to adapt their culinary direction: Respondent C states that in his Lisbon-based two-star restaurants, “at least 80% of the menus are always influenced by traditional Portuguese cuisine” (Appendix C 2024). Regarding the combination of regional influences, many chefs also stated that they combine traditional regional influences to deliver a distinctive taste: “We use the regional techniques and the old techniques to push flavor” (Appendix H 2024). The Portuguese fine dining industry additionally faces challenges with attaining regional guests because of the local purchasing power, which is lower than the purchasing power tourists and foreigners like digital nomads bring to the metropolitan area: “I think we’re expensive for Portuguese, because [...] the salaries are not as good as outside” (Appendix J 2024).

4.3.2. Customer Dynamics

Regarding customer dynamics, there is a clear distinction to be made within both regions. The provincial landscape of Baden-Wuerttemberg is proportionally attracting fewer tourists to haute cuisine restaurants than in the Lisbon area, leading to a predominantly local customer base in the German restaurants surveyed. Respondent I highlights that the time when an increased number of tourists visit his restaurant is during summertime apart from that, it predominantly local customers: “I say that 85 percent of them are regular customers. And in the summer [...]more inquiries [...]from people who have never been there before” (Appendix I 2024). Respondent B especially stressed the fact that it is of high importance to “have a brutal rejuvenation” (Appendix B 2024) within the local customer base in restaurants located in more rural areas in the countryside of southern Germany. The majority of customers regularly visiting fine dining restaurants in Baden-Wuerttemberg are “often a bit older, of course” (Appendix B, 2024). The aim to have a generational shift in the customer base is managed by blending traditional accents and modern strategies to “inspire the next generations of your hotel and restaurant guests” (Appendix B 2024). Lisbon fine dining restaurants also see a dominant stake in their customer base coming from the “middle-high class” (Appendix J 2024) with a clear expectation: “and they know what they want, so they're demanding” (Appendix J 2024). The dynamic that customers expect a certain degree of quality, innovation, ingenuity, and experiencing luxury can be seen in both regions. Guests oftentimes “demand added value and also generate a desire for more” (Appendix F 2024). Due to the characteristic of guest-centric dining within haute cuisine, personalized service is crucial, and restaurants tailor the experience to individual preferences to stand out from the competition and ideally foster loyalty and organic word of mouth by the customer.

4.3.3. Inspiration Sources

Innovation in fine dining frequently combines local traditional accents with international trends, drawing inspiration from a broad spectrum of sources. The culinary approach of many chefs is characterized as “a mixture” (Appendix J 2024) of regional and international influences. Within the sample, there was no clear pattern to be observed as to which region takes on which inspiration narrative. The spectrum from “go[ing] international” (Appendix E 2024) up to very regional inspirations like the “Azores” (Appendix J 2024) can be seen in both regions. The inspiration sources stated within the interviews were online portals like the “Rolling Pin” (Appendix D 2024), magazines and cookbooks, and social media to constantly stay up to date about current international culinary trends and “to have new ideas” (Appendix H 2024). Chefs additionally use the cross-cultural mix and historical fusion as inspiration and differentiation base. The most stated cross-cultural inspiration is the integration of Asian cuisine into the local kitchen with the help of “spices” (Appendix I 2024) and, for example, a sous chef who was trained in a “Japanese kitchen” (Appendix J 2024).

4.3.4. Self-Claimed Differentiation Aspects

Restaurants set themselves apart with distinctive products and unique branding. For instance, the trend of preparing dishes directly at the table is used by several in Germany interviewed establishments. As an example, some restaurants make a “Tatar” (Appendix D 2024) or a dessert in the form of “spaghetti ice at the table” (Appendix D 2024). This process of bringing the preparation stage of the cooking process directly to the dining table is regarded as highly effective in creating a highlight during the visit “because this is simply an experience” (Appendix B 2024). Other unique selling points mentioned in the sample were technologies like a “Beefier” (Appendix D 2024) or a “Robata Grill” (Appendix J 2024) and dishes like fusion style “Ovos Rotos” (Appendix H 2024) that were perfectionated and hence hard to replicate

from other restaurants. On the Portuguese side of the sample, the factor reputation of the chefs also presented a differentiation aspect, with 50% of the restaurants interviewed in Portugal being run by chefs who were popular TV personalities. Other self-stated differentiation aspects disclosed by the respondents can be consolidated under the topics of interior design, ambient, and feeling. Respondent H, for example, personally selects the music that will be played during the evening service because he wants “to sell them a feeling” (Respondent H, 2024). This aim of creating holistic experiences for the guests can also be seen in how different fine dining restaurants decorate the dining area. Respondent G disclosed that since her restaurant is known for enthusiasm for wine, the decoration of the dining room resembles the “terroir” (Appendix F, 2024) where wine is grown. These differentiation accents also function as a way to promote the establishment through organic word of mouth. A common element of differentiation is the philosophy underlying food conceptualization. A “natural cuisine” (Appendix I 2024) philosophy or product-centric differentiation, with “respect for the product” (Appendix G 2024), emphasizes sustainability and quality. By combining this strategy with storytelling through cuisine and storytelling through ingredients, the eating experience is elevated beyond the plate, and an emotional bond is formed with the customers.

4.3.5. Future Evaluation of the Fine Dining Industry

Future developments in sustainability, innovation, and consumer tastes are influencing how restaurants set themselves apart in a more competitive market as fine dining develops. The current “Eurasian” (Appendix B 2024) trend that implements many practices from the Asian continent into European cuisine is starting to reduce in impact, and new trends on the horizon of haute cuisine arise. Current movements within the German fine dining community are more oriented toward more traditional dishes that reinvent themselves and open-fire cooking in the upcoming time: “Especially when it comes to fine dining and gourmet cuisine, people are very

happy to return to the classic track. So the topic of grilling on an open fire is a huge topic at the moment” (Appendix F 2024). Within the Portuguese interviews, the topic of reducing waste and being more thoughtful with nutritional products has been seen as the most important future trend that these restaurants already adapt to. Respondent H sees the current “old style fine dining, [as] very beautiful to see, but it has a lot of food waste” (Appendix H 2024). Cost optimization is then the organic result when handling food products more thoughtfully. This movement is also, from a moral standpoint, important because “there are a lot of people, especially now in Lisbon, we see so many homeless, and I think it shouldn’t be, we should be caring more about that and recycling” (Appendix J 2024). Future differentiation techniques are also being shaped by customer preferences. Respondent C sees the time constraint as the most impactful customer-driven aspect, and this will then be a driving factor for the industry to reinvent itself: “People have less and less time because they have a lot of things to do. So we need to understand that if they want to come to a gastronomic restaurant to eat very fast [...] maybe you need to maintain serving a la carte and serving tasting menus, not going only for tasting menus that you can only serve for three hours” (Respondent C, 2024). These future customer preferences also affect the future economy and are forcing haute cuisine restaurants to reconsider their business methods. Many anticipate that downsizing will be the way to go to maintain high product standards and survive potential price competition: “I think the future is going to be smaller and smaller. I think restaurants in [Portugal] and in the world are starting to realize that smaller is a little bit better” (Appendix E 2024).

For a visual illustration of the distribution of technological innovations, please refer to *Figure 2* in Appendix K. For a visual illustration of the distribution of strategic innovations please, refer to *Figure 3* in Appendix L.

5 Discussion

Although innovation has emerged as a key component of fine dining's competitive edge, this study emphasizes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to its use. Rather, factors like regional elements, resource constraints, and customer dynamics shape the paths that particular businesses pursue toward distinctiveness and operational success.

Technological innovation is highlighted as taking on an indispensable role within haute cuisine. Especially noted were the benefits of the online reservation tools and the sous vide cooking. However, while technological innovation takes on a great role in fine dining, it does not exclusively determine operational success. For example, the interview results showed that many chefs in Lisbon and Baden-Württemberg wanted to reach a fair balance between using traditional cooking techniques and high-tech equipment to maintain authenticity and improve the eating experience. Similarly, Lisbon-based chefs strongly emphasized using technological innovations as helpers and not as the main USP, utilizing local flavors and traditional methods while streamlining processes. This illustrates how technical advancements need to enhance rather than replace the artisanal components that characterize the industry's cooking techniques. This finding is consistent with Goodmans (2012) approach to innovation, which theorizes that internal capabilities, such as maintaining regional identity, support long-term differentiation while external capabilities, like technology, facilitate growth. Additionally, the study's findings showed that technological innovations have the highest effect when various innovations with a stable incremental benefit are used and not just one highly disruptive technology, confirming the findings of Azar & Ciabuschi in 2017. Given that technological innovation investments must align with the organization's financial capabilities. Scalable solutions, like reservation systems with integrated analytics CRM tools, as mentioned by Respondent C, allow businesses to increase productivity while staying in line with tight budgeting. To direct human resources

toward creating higher added value, businesses might also evaluate the advantages of automating monotonous work with technological innovation.

Especially in the aspect of facing market uncertainties, strategic innovation has become a crucial component for building up stability and revenue stream diversification. Due to strong competition and shifting customer demographics, Lisbon restaurants have concentrated on highly innovative strategies for enhancing the dining experience, like chef's tables and carefully planned take-home experiences for private parties like Christmas offerings. These tactics expand brand equity outside of traditional daily service business and improve customer engagement, as proven by Hamel & Prahalad, 1994. In contrast, the fine dining restaurants in Baden-Württemberg are primarily concerned with fostering loyalty among their clientele, who are primarily local, with waves of tourists only being felt during summertime. As a result, traditional cuisine is being modernized conservatively to not lose the regional customer, and carefully chosen regional experiences like local wineries are being introduced. This supports the practical implications stated by (Messeni Petruzzelli and Savino 2014), having innovations in haute cuisine that are rooted within the traditional side of the industry, which then resonates with contemporary customers. These strategic innovations and the diversification of the daily service support the claim made by Markides (2013) that strategic innovation, especially when incorporated into business models, allows a company to present itself as more robust and resilient to outside shocks than purely technological developments. The study's findings of strategic innovations support the theory of the two possible revenue models that diverge from regular daily service stated by (Surlmont et al. 2005). Nonetheless, the variance of outcomes highlighted in the interviews shows how crucial market alignment and strategic timing are. The example of strategically opening lower-cost dining options to lower-income sectors, as mentioned in Appendix C (2024), presents the risks of mismatched positioning. This illustrates

how important it is to conduct in-depth market and customer research in order to minimize strategic failures.

Different dynamics are revealed when both regions are set next to each other. Businesses in Baden-Württemberg show how important it is to use regional identity to foster loyalty by concentrating on local customers. Lisbon restaurants, on the other hand, serve a wide range of foreign customers, so they have to implement tactics that strike a balance between authenticity and appeal to a worldwide clientele. This distinction aspect is partly in accordance with location-based differentiation strategies found by Dupin and Wezel (2023); however, could not be seen within the individual researched areas.

These local aspects that are unique to each region can also be used as part of a strategic innovation to capitalize on local advantages. In highly competitive marketplaces, companies that integrate global trends into their branding while maintaining a local character tend to stand out, demonstrating the differentiation benefits highlighted by Sharp and Dawes (2001). Both local clients, who like familiarity, and tourist customers, who are oftentimes looking for distinctive cultural experiences, can be satisfied with this approach. The study additionally verifies the differentiation aspect of creating dishes like “Ovos Rotos” (Appendix H 2024) that are hard to replicate in order to create “barriers against imitation” (Presenza et al. 2017).

The data also shows how sustainability is increasingly influencing consumer preferences, especially in Lisbon. In addition to addressing environmental issues, practices that optimize resources and reduce waste also increase profitability. This presents two advantages that are becoming more and more important in modern company strategy (Galarraga & Martinez de Albeniz, 2024). Waste reduction and resource optimization initiatives can improve public perception while generating operational savings. These initiatives support internal efficiency while simultaneously addressing the growing preferences of consumers for ethical

behavior. The movement towards a more sustainable fine dining gastronomy allows for the actors to tackle current challenges while having an upcoming agenda in mind, validating the findings of the dual-focus concentration of the article by Hamel & Prahalad (1994), which allows for operational effectiveness and differentiation within the organization.

Although innovation gives businesses a competitive edge, this study highlights the difficulties in striking a balance between creativity and operational effectiveness. According to Harrington & Ottenbacher (2013), the hierarchical structure of haute cuisine kitchens, where innovation is frequently driven by chefs, restricting broader staff engagement, could not be validated by the respondents of the study. Frameworks for innovation management may not reach their full potential because of this hierarchical rigidity. The study showed that since innovation is a creative process, more adaptable and dynamic environments are required to foster creative thinking, validating the findings made by Rösch et al. (2023). The results further emphasize how crucial flexibility is. The strategic shift to home delivery and pre-packaged meals by respondents in Lisbon demonstrates how essential the strategic adaptation of the business was for survival, especially during situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. This supports the claim made by Tidd & Bessant (2014) that innovation is a reaction to changing environmental forces.

6 Managerial Implications

This study shows how technical and strategic innovations can improve operational success and distinctiveness within haute cuisine but also across industries when they are managed well. Strategic innovations give firms the adaptability they need to adjust to changing consumer preferences and dynamic markets. For example, sustainable strategic innovations that help modify outdated business models to incorporate distinctive customer experiences can increase customer loyalty and revenue gains. Similarly, technical innovations like well-established

customer relationship management systems or other automation tools can improve efficiency and streamline processes that otherwise would generate redundant labor. However, the success of these innovations depends on how well they match organizational goals and market characteristics. It is recommended that managers take into account both the possible raw advantages and how well these innovations blend into their current business operations and company culture. In contrast to radical innovations, small but consistent incremental innovations are oftentimes more sustainable and less disruptive when implemented in already existing business models and daily procedures. Cultivating an environment that promotes innovation and cooperation at all levels of the company is key to a successful innovation management process. Managers must concentrate on creating internal skills, such as staff training and development initiatives, that enable long-term differentiation and resilience in the market.

Moreover, the significance of cultural and geographical factors in forming a business strategy cannot be emphasized enough. Managers should always take advantage of local knowledge and characteristics to improve their offerings and make sure they appeal to both domestic and international audiences. In conclusion, innovation has the potential to help generate operational success, but its thoughtful incorporation into business plans is necessary. In order to make sure that innovation meets both the company's operational goals and market expectations, managers must successfully evaluate its eventual complexities. As a result, businesses will improve their competitive position and make sure they are ready for upcoming challenges.

7 Conclusion

This thesis has looked at how strategic and technological innovation impact fine dining and haute cuisine establishments in the two regions, Baden-Württemberg and Lisbon Metropolitan

Area, to stand out from the competition and succeed operationally. The main goal of this study was to explore how innovation methods are applied to gain a competitive advantage, how these establishments differentiate themselves from the competition, and how the impact of regional characteristics is evaluated. The results show significant dynamics in how companies modify their innovation methods and distribute their innovation efforts to serve different clientele while striking a balance between efficiency and originality. Both areas exhibit distinctive technological innovation adaptations, with Portuguese restaurants focusing on emphasizing worldwide appeal through creative yet authentic offers and German haute cuisine restaurants using regional identity to foster loyalty within their core clientele. The research backs up the claim that innovation has multiple facets. While strategic innovations like incorporating regional flavors improve brand differentiation, technical solutions like sous vide and online reservation systems optimize procedures and streamline daily tasks. In a highly competitive industry with a rapidly changing setting, these components work together to produce operational strength and market relevance. From a management standpoint, this study emphasizes how important it is to promote organizational adaptability in order to accomplish innovative objectives. The results are consistent with well-established frameworks in innovation management, with a focus on the significance of striking a balance between mechanical processes and flexibility driven by creativity. By elaborating on the interaction between strategy and technology in niche markets, these insights offer useful information for managers who want to maintain high-performance standards in dynamic environments and add to the theoretical discussion topic of innovation management.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several restrictions regarding the nature of the study. Because of the limited sample size and geographical focus, the findings' generalizability is limited by their dependence on qualitative interviews. Furthermore, financial limitations and outside market factors were

not as thoroughly examined in the study since the majority of interview partners had no concrete financial numbers related to track innovations. Hence, the study focused mostly on technological and strategic innovations. To completely understand the details that influence innovation in fine dining, these factors call for further in-depth research. These qualitative findings could be supported by future studies that use quantitative methods, giving the analysis a more comprehensive statistical basis. By extending the geographic focus beyond the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and Baden-Württemberg and also implementing other continents like Asia, more varied cultural and economic influences on innovation strategies may become visible. Furthermore, quantitatively researching the financial aspects of introducing innovation may provide insightful information for organizations with limited resources.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Appendix A: Interview Guide

This research aims to evaluate the impact of innovation and differentiation factors within an organization on company success in the regions Baden-Wuerttemberg and the Lisbon Metropolitan Area.

The Person and Organization

1. Please state your name and what is your current function in the organization you are working in.
1. What is the core idea of the restaurant/kitchen you are currently working in?

Differentiation Factors

2. What key elements (*e.g., menu, service style, ambiance*) make your restaurant distinct from competitors?
3. Where do you take inspiration from (*e.g., regionally vs. internationally*)?

Technological Innovation

4. Do you use innovative technologies (*e.g., molecular gastronomy, sous-vide, or digital reservations*)? Are the technological innovations you implement revolutionary or incrementally impacting your kitchen?
5. How do you perceive the role of technological innovation in regard to the quality and costs of your restaurant?
6. How do you balance traditional culinary techniques with the incorporation of new technologies? Has this affected customer satisfaction?

Strategic Innovation

7. How have strategic innovations, like diversifying into consultation, catering, cooking lessons, and theme nights or other ideas, influenced your restaurant's business model? What strategic function do they fulfill?
8. What impact have partnerships or collaborations (*e.g., with suppliers, technology providers, or other restaurants*) had on your restaurant's success?

Innovation Management

9. Are strategic and technological innovations balanced 50/50 or is there a concrete focus on one over the other?
10. Do you use any specific KPIs or performance metrics to track innovation outcomes?

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11. Have there been any cases where technological or strategic innovation didn't succeed as planned? How did you adapt?
12. Where do you see the role of innovation in the future of fine dining and haute cuisine?

8.2 Appendix B – 17.10.2024

P:

So, thank you so much for joining us today. We all start with questions about the person. In general, your current position in the current company you are currently working for.

C:

Exactly, I am currently working at the B. in Baden-Baden, a hotel of the Oetker Collection Group. My position is the EAM, Executive Assistant Manager, the deputy hotel manager, so to speak.

P:

Interesting, interesting. And what is it, so you are in this Parkhotel, in the B. Parkhotel, there are several restaurants, you are the manager of several restaurants and kitchens, so to speak. But what is the core idea or the different core ideas of the different restaurants in general?

C:

So, the core idea is, of course, that on the one hand we have the classical, the tradition. We are a grand hotel, on the market for over 150 years, so one of the most historic houses in all of Germany. Accordingly, of course, you also have a clientele that is international, which is often a bit older, of course. We also have a brutal rejuvenation, but that is already a fact. And that's why the beauty of us is the concept, we have two worlds. One is the classic world, that's our restaurant Wintergarten, the Orleander Bar, where you live from Aphen and Tea to really great, classic fine dining cuisine, French foundation of course. And on the other hand, we have something very modern, the F&F. This is a restaurant concept that we launched three years ago. We even sacrificed our two-star restaurant for this in order to really bring a new spirit into it. We have installed Europe's largest charcoal grill in this restaurant, have implemented a huge bar. F&F, the fox and the rabbit, who flee from the Black Forest, from the forest, come to Baden-Baden, go to the restaurant. We also created such a fable, the story behind it. And of course, that helped us to simply fill this restaurant with 60 percent external guests overnight. Really young people, Pforzheim, Calw, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, the whole corner. Live music, DJ, etc. Great cuisine, of course, with a focus on regional products. So everything that is served in the end touches the grill. No matter if you are vegetarian, vegan, meat, fish. So everything, that's the concept. This is not a steakhouse, even if it is the largest grill that is currently installed. But that's this concept of fire, charcoal. And that was very, very well received. And that's one of those games where we have with the classical and the modern. So we also have Robert Engel, who was the designer from London, and we also won umpteen design awards for this restaurant.

We have already done everything right. But of course, that's also how you play in gastronomy in such a traditional grand hotel as we are, of course.

P:

That's super, super interesting. Regarding differentiation factors. What would you say, key factors, for example different menus, different service style, different ambience. So what makes the B. Parkhotel stand out compared to the competition?

C:

Well, you have to look at it this way, the guest pays an average of 1000 euros a night with us. And of course, this is a segment where there are very few hotels, especially in Europe. And that, of course, is the circle of the outer worlds, that's quite clear. But the thing is always very simple at the end of the day. You have many hotels in the world, in Europe. You have beautiful hotels, you have great products, the finest fabrics, the finest mattresses, etc. But in the end, one thing is very important. People who pay so much money to stay overnight want to feel comfortable. And in the end, all this is only possible through the services. And that is the human being. If you arrive at the B. Parkhotel with your car, there are three people at the door who welcome you, who drive your car away, take your luggage, etc. If you are somewhere in the Hilton, where you might pay 500 euros a night, so not against a fire, but no one has been standing in front of the door and welcoming you for years. And it's simply the human factor. And so it goes through, no matter if you go to breakfast, that we know Philipp's preferences. He drinks only still water, he drinks the legs, the family, what's the name of the daughter, that. All these all, whole, very small details, in the end lead to you remembering a stay, a hotel where you felt you were staying. This is the message that you will continue to convey to your friends, business partners, etc. And that's where I think we're very good at, where we put all our power, really that our employees are super trained, but are also individual on a human level, of course. And it runs through from your arrival to your departure, to where you pay your bill. And that's such a very, very, very important point. But here, too, we also create differences in the house. In F&F, the people also wear sneakers and no tie and are simply casual, casual, but always at the high level of the B. Parkhotel, of course. And that, I think, is a key to how a hotel like ours is today, or a hotel for seasons in Hamburg, for example, we are very similar in this respect, really leads into the new era, in order to inspire the generations, the children of course, for such a hotel, because the trend Grand Hotel is already here. I mean, you know it yourself, there are such great design hotels and the like, but at the end of the day, they don't really give you this feeling, this message, that's the way it is, you feel incredibly comfortable in a hotel, where of course everything fits all around.

P:

Very interesting. So in terms of inspiration, when you play a kind of Champions League like the B. Parkhotel, you tend to look around regionally or internationally in things, how do you get inspired, what are the latest trends, no matter which ones?

C:

So of course you can't refuse the international, that's quite clear. Germany itself is not so well known for creative hotels, for God's sake. Of course, we have a few top hotels, such as a Mandarin Oriental in Munich or a Rosewood Group, where four seasons Hamburg, B. Parkhotel has now started. But there are not many, you can actually make these numbers in this price level, i.e. people hotels that also achieve this rate, of course, also make these figures. But internationally, of course, you're much bigger when you look over to London, etc. That's madness, you now have, I think, 52 5-star hotels in London and 30 of them are really top. So of course you always have to find out what the other person is doing. Like clever people, we have always said that the best ideas are often stolen. But of course you always have to keep up with the times, but it's always a mixture of everything. That's why you always need employees, especially managers who have of course also traveled internationally, who have also worked in these top hotels. Because everyone brings a piece of the puzzle with them somewhere, in order to simply create a big, new one. So hotel industry and kitchen work, especially service etc., that's teamwork. You can't do that as a loner.

P:

Very, very interesting. Now let's go a bit more in the direction of just restaurant, only kitchen and take a look at innovation-driven factors and now generally go into the technological innovation debate and ask, the very first question would be, is a lot of technological innovation used in the B. Parkhotel, such as accents from molecular cuisine, sous vide cooking, digital reservation systems? Yes, and did they then trigger rather revolutionary factors in you or foresee incremental improvements in you?

C:

Yes, that's a very good question. Of course, I'll say that the technical, the one side, whether it's reservation systems, whether it's the current ones, the receipt printers that you used to have, where today everything is shot at the screens, etc., these are of course things that are automatic, you can't refuse them, that's quite clear. In terms of kitchen technology, of course, it's always like that, every decade of the kitchen, if you go back, like Escoffier, Paul-Bocuse, etc., all these tall people, they used to have charcoal stoves, then came the gas stove, then came the induction stove and there are just as many trends as well. Today is Eurasian, tomorrow is this, tomorrow

is that, but in the end, of course, not everything sticks, but a lot of good things. And so, of course, the last step, the last big decade, so this innovation was of course clear, Ferran Adrian, El Bulli Restaurant, the whole molecular cuisine, where of course these techniques all came along, from rotary evaporators to sous vide cooking etc. and of course there is not so much left of this wave today, but the cooking techniques have remained natural, a lot of them, because they are simply incredibly good and make sense. They help you in efficiency, they also help you to save employees, they really help you in creating continuity, the food too. So you have to say that very clearly, that's something where you can't and shouldn't close yourself off from it. So that would be the exodus for everyone, because you always have to keep up with the times and that's, as I said, but every trend has its time and it's always the good things, it's like everything in life or in the industry or anywhere, the good things, they always stay. But we actually use everything. We are really very modern, we have every kind of technology and equipment, so we really have everything. And nowadays it is impossible to imagine life without this whole topic. Yes, of course, it's always a question. Sure, you have to be able to afford it, of course you have to have people in the team who can also operate these things, that's also very clear, but in general for us now it would be indispensable.

P:

Okay, then comes the follow-up question directly. Because Baden-Baden is very, very idyllic, formerly a health resort, still today, how do you balance very traditional ways, for example in the kitchen, also traditional French cooking techniques, which existed in a B. Parkhotel for several years or 100 years, with the integration of new technologies and new innovations? How do you say that?

C:

Yes, of course that's a point where we do it, for example, it's very much lived by us, whatever we always do in the house, for example, we do a lot at the table. So in the past you flambéed at the table, you ranged, a sole whole, crepes susette, etc. These are things that you can still find with us, because there are very few hotels and restaurants in the world that still do that, because they don't have the staff at all and employees who can. But of course you have to reinvent these things. And that's quite clear, of course you have to adapt in today's world, but that's with the kitchen style, how it has changed in recent years, the classic French cuisine, which is of course still a huge foundation today, even today. But of course this heaviness, this fatty, buttery, pure basic product, of course they have moved away from it, they have modernized it. But we have a dish on the menu, for example, called Eisauflauf Stefanie. This has been the case at the B. Parkhotel for 152 years. And if you ate it 152 years ago, of course,

you were dead afterwards, because the thing, there you are, you couldn't move anymore, for three days. But back then it was also prosperity, a piece of meat with a lot of fat on it, etc. But of course you have to bring that into today's world, that's where the new techniques are coming back, how do you make light sorbets, light ice creams, how can you present it in a modern way. And of course, a city like Baden-Baden is a Black Forest idyll rich in tradition, where there is also a lot of good gastronomy. But of course we stand out because of that, we have a lot of products here, we have our own cattle, we make our own honey, we have in Alsace over there, are only twelve kilometers from here, does our cheese come over, etc. So I think we've already found a good way to take that with us. But this modernity, as I said, you have to do it, of course, you have to bring it in. But the classics are already in great demand. So you can't believe it, how crazy it really is, because it's also an experience, you know. If you start doing something like that at a table and the rest of the restaurant sees it, then 80 percent of all tables order it because it's just an experience.

P:

Regarding the guests, it is certainly the case that you have guests who come back often, especially in such restaurants and hotels. Do you see certain developments or does the guest like to go along on this new journey, when new ideas, new creations are implemented or how does it generally influence the satisfaction of the guests?

C:

Yes, I think our guests go along with it a lot, even in all age groups. I'll put it this way, if the guest stays with us for an average of five days, he actually goes to eat in the Wintergarten restaurant three times, once in F&F and once out of the house. And that's always the crux of the matter, the difficult thing, you know, when you have as many regulars as we do, which is a blessing, both restaurant and hotel guests, it's really a blessing that you have so many regulars. But that's also an obligation, because it's easier when you have different guests every day. You can run your card for three months, no one asks. But of course, if you come to the restaurant three times a week, you want to experience something as a guest when you pay so much money. And that's also such a positive energy injection for us, to always come up with something new. And of course, we also know what 80 percent of the guests like at the end of the day and how we can inspire them. But I do think that people go along very well.

P:

Okay, very interesting. Now we're leaving the technological part and moving towards strategic innovation a little more and then also focus on your role. Regarding types of diversification, such as external consulting or sometimes a consultation for another restaurant or catering from

a kitchen, certain cooking courses, certain theme evenings. How have they influenced your business model or your business model in recent years?

C:

Yes, so in general of course things like cooking courses etc. That's a nice gimmick that you have for guests who really want it and have fun with it. It's not our core business now, but we like to do it very much. And of course it is also very, very well received. In general, we do a lot of catering in the city and the surrounding area. However, only small, up to 100 people, because that is such a size that we can also transport from B. I can't make you catering for 500 people in Pforzheim. That's not the B. quality. We don't have the logistics etc. at all. But we do a lot there. Small elite birthdays, family celebrations, weddings. So really really, really great events. This is definitely one of our core event businesses. Definite. Things like consultancy, partners in a house like ours, are always difficult. Because of course the moment you get a consultancy or any company, you are dependent somewhere and also lose a bit of your own control. And that is usually only done by hotel groups, who of course want to bring in a big name to be there. Or people who are simply helpless themselves and of course need these people. But if you are now set up like the Oetker Collection with our eleven great hotels in the world and Dr. Oetker as the parent company in the background, then such a consultancy simply makes no sense. Because you give away some of your property in the end, where you no longer have control over it. And that's always a bit difficult. So we think a bit peculiarly and hire the right people so that we can really keep the thing in the water ourselves and have it fully under control. And with regard to such theme evenings, that's not our core business, but of course we're happy to do that if the customer wants it. That means that you see it more as a figurehead. In terms of marketing, you can chalk this up. We also do various theme evenings, of course such as winegrowers' dinners etc. We also have such a star sommelier, with whom we have a wine consultancy in the house, for example. So that's a different constellation. He used to work here, learned, he does it offline, etc. Advises us a bit. So things like that are already accepted, but it's not so much an issue for us. So our core business is really this daily focus, really on the events and on the restaurants.

P:

Okay, okay. And we see that when it comes to strategic handling in the kitchen, partnerships and cooperations, for example, are also a very, very valuable point. What impact would you say such partnerships have, for example with suppliers, technology providers in the kitchen or even with other restaurants in your restaurant group, for the success of your restaurant or in general?

C:

I would say it even has a very high factor, because it is really a very important factor. So starting with the suppliers, if you have certain products of course and you are a special restaurant, whether you are in the high-end gourmet or at a top level, this product is not endlessly available out there. And of course, to be in daily exchange about what is currently in season, what is currently there. We just got the first Alba truffle today, for example, fresh from Italy, our Italian truffle dealer drove over. And these are things like that, that's incredibly important, because above all you are able to tell a story to the guest, you know? You don't just buy a piece of meat, you can also tell the guest from America or wherever he comes from exactly where this animal comes from. And it's the pasture next to it and the producer and the whole. And that's how this whole thing plays. Of course, not every restaurant or hotel has this luxury. Because if you work in a normal hotel somewhere, somewhere in the city like Stuttgart, the chef doesn't do the shopping himself. There he can write a list of what he needs. And there is a buyer sitting somewhere and he looks at the system at seven in the morning, where are the tomatoes cheapest, where is the fish, where is this. And of course you have to work with it. Of course, we are already in a luxury segment. That's why you also have this personal approach and contact with all these people and this networking in this luxury segment, including colleagues in the industry itself. It is already there and very, very important.

P:

Very interesting. Now we even come to the last point. Big point, namely general innovation management. Would you say, does strategic and technological innovation balance out in your company or do we have more of a 70-30 distribution or what is your focus?

C:

You can say that the balance is almost balanced, actually, because it's all already so connected. So one does not work without the other.

P:

Do you use specific metrics, specific KPIs to track certain new innovations? If you say now that we have a dish innovation here, we are now putting a new kind of caviar on the steak. This is accepted by the customer, it is not accepted by the customer. Is it measurable for you?

C:

It's measurable with us, yes, via our own systems in the house, but then of course also via all the online tools you have, such as the reservation platform Open Table, for example, we use for all outlets, where we then create experiences in the end, where you can book your experience for Special Dinner, Romance, Valentine's Day, Caviar, whatever, etc. And of course you always

have a pretty good measurable value, because in the meantime I think 64%, yes, 64% was the last thing, of our total restaurant reservations go through Open Table. And this in a city like Baden-Baden and in the Grand Hotel as well as in the B. Park Hotel. So it's interesting that even the guest who pays 1,000 euros a night often opens the app in advance via Open Table and books his table. And of course you get quite good key figures, but of course also in-house, yes, we track that too, we do our evaluations, because we are of course also dependent on the season on the one hand and happenings in the city. If you have the horse racing week in Iffelsheim for three weeks, you have to adapt offers and create them differently, as you do now somewhere in the Saarbrücken group time in February. In the same way, if you have the Festspielhaus, then you have your appetizer in front of the Festspielhaus, for example, and your intermediate course, then you go to the concert, you come back, make your main course and your dinner. That's already where the majority of our house guests are, of course. Why? What is the Purpose of Stay, you know? Are you here for the spa, festival hall, culture, etc.? Is it just leisure, is it transit? And that's why these KPIs are of course also very important in order to be able to analyze all your markets really well, that you really always have your finger on the pulse, that people really stay here with you.

P:

Yes, guaranteed, guaranteed. The next question, we can also take over your experience reports from previous restaurants. You were at Schloss E., you were allowed to cook for G7 and at the M. O. in Munich, also very far away in Far East Asia. Have there been cases in your life where a strategic or technological innovation didn't work as planned? Or is there some kind of good story you can tell about it? How do you adapt then, how did you adapt?

C:

Actually, it all worked. No, I have to say that. I wouldn't think of anything off the top of my head. But of course they were all good houses and good people around me. And from that point of view, of course, you always have a plan. But failures in that sense, no, I can't confirm. Actually, no. Happy, that's good. No, of course you have systematic failures. You have them every now and then. That's just the problem with all the technology these days. Of course, if you have a restaurant and you are fully booked with 120 guests and at 6:30 p.m. your computer program crashes and the waiter can no longer type into the cash register what people have ordered. And the kitchen doesn't get the bongs. And you can't bill either. Catastrophe. For example, a month ago we had a complete server outage here for two days. So like in the Stone Age, like in the old days. The Rittschratsche, credit card etc. Of course, things like that already exist. But now out of the active thing. No, thank God no dramas.

P:

Alright, alright. And now the last question. If we look into the future and also in general how you think about the future, what do you think innovation will play a role for the B. Parkhotel strategically and of course technologically in the future and also in the general future of fine dining?

C:

Yes, absolute innovation is of course always important and must be there. Because of course, as I said earlier, this is the only way to continue to inspire the next generations and your hotel and restaurant guests. Because that always has to be the goal when you have families, that their children also come, etc. So where your grandfather went to eat, you should actually like to go there too. And that's why you can't close yourself off from innovations. They always have to be dosed and of course they always have to fit where you are. Of course, if you're in Lisbon, it's different, like in Baden-Baden or like in Schloss E. or like in Hong Kong. And that, I think, is the difficult thing, because in our industry, especially in gastronomy, at an elevated level, to really find the right dose. That you are really always exactly to the point. Because you have to, that's what a lot of restaurateurs do wrong and also in the top segment and that's why so many go bankrupt or it doesn't work. Because they simply want to adapt something somewhere and implement something that is their vision. In that sense, you know. But often they just don't see with the blinders that it doesn't actually work in the environment where you are. Or in the city where you are. And then sometimes you're ahead of time, you're behind the times. And that's the critical factor, to analyze it really realistically and not to sleep through anything, but also not, yes, depending on which city you are in. Sure, if you're in London, you can always go one better. That's clear, in Dubai too, but not in Stuttgart. And that's clear, but the innovation is always there, it continues. And this is not only in the kitchen, this is also in the room product, this is in your bathroom, this is on your bed lamp, this is the lighting control and these are all factors where a hotel and a restaurant must always, always go further. Okay, super, super interesting.

P:

Perfect, then I would thank you very much.

C:

With pleasure, thank you, I hope that helped.

8.3 Appendix C – 26.10.2024

P:

So, the first question would be, could you please state your name and the current position and the current company you're working in?

J:

My name is J., I'm a chef. I'm working in a group, J., where the main restaurant is in B..

P:

Very nice. What would you say would be the core idea of your most prominent restaurant, the B.?

J:

We started B. 13 years ago, and I would say that B. is like a stage where you present the modern Portuguese cuisine. And we have been evolving for the last 13 years to show the best we can do of Portuguese cuisine.

P:

All right, very interesting. And regarding, you also have many restaurants all around the world, in Dubai, in Macau. Do you have different concepts for each restaurant, or do you, for example, do you have similar concepts for similar restaurants?

J:

We have 14 restaurants under my brand, under my name. Most of all, they are all like different concepts. We have only four of them, but it's more or less the same concept, but we change a little bit the menu, that it's continued, that we have the same brand in Porto, Cascais, and two places in Lisbon, but all the others are, I would say, completely different concepts.

P:

All right. And if we now focus a bit more on B., regarding differentiation factors, what would you say are differentiation factors within the restaurant? Is it more the service, the style of service? Is it the ambiente? We have already talked about it's a very modern way of showing Portuguese cuisine. What would you say? What makes it very unique to the competition of the other 5,000 restaurants in Lisbon?

J:

When we talk about gastronomic restaurants and outdoor restaurants from a chef, I think the biggest thing that differentiates the restaurant is the soul, the identity of that restaurant. So, I kind of tell the story in each dish, in the menus, my story of the Portuguese cuisine, my perception, my way of seeing the Portuguese cuisine, Portuguese culture, evolution from the times of discovery still now. So, it's not about the interior design, the decor, the service, because that, I would say, that you cannot differentiate, really differentiate from others. It's the identity, the hospitality that we create as a team, especially that.

P:

Oh, interesting. And regarding inspiration, you are a very international company with the restaurants all over the world. Would you say you take more regional aspects or more international aspects into your general inspiration? What influences you?

J:

For sure, more regional inspirations. I would say even the restaurants abroad, at least 80% of the menus are always influenced by traditional Portuguese cuisine. But, of course, that's when you start traveling and when you start to get to know different cultures and different kinds of food, you get influenced, but especially you understand that some of the things that you thought that they were completely Portuguese and only Portuguese, you share that with other places in the world. So, you go to Middle East, you go to Iran, and you see that you have a lot of, in south of Portugal, you have a lot of influence from Arab cuisine, or you go to South America, to Brazil, to Africa, or to Asia, and you see a lot of influence of Portuguese cuisine and the other way around, too. So, I think Portugal was the first responsible for the globalization and what we call the cuisine, the fusion cuisine, because with the discoveries in the 15th century, we brought a lot of influences from all around the world, and we were the first to bring a lot of different ingredients to Portugal and to Europe doing that. So, sometimes that inspiration that you think that you are being inspired by Portuguese traditional cuisine, actually it's something that's now, it's Portuguese traditional cuisine, but started as Arabic cuisine, started as Chinese cuisine, so that's, I think, is the most interesting thing about it.

P:

Okay, very interesting aspect. Now, we will dive into the first question about technological innovation: You have also interned at the very famous El Bulli restaurant. Are you still using aspects from the molecular gastronomy, like for example sous-vide? And also another question would be, do you use online reserving systems for your restaurants?

J:

Yes, we use online reserving system for the restaurants. We use AI to filter some of these reservations and to know a little bit more about the guests for our marketing and CRM marketing system. I would recommend you, if you wish to do that, to abandon a little bit the concept of molecular cuisine, because it's something that actually was never really approved by the chefs that were making it. They chose another name that it's techno-emotional cuisine, because if you understand a little bit more about cuisine, you would know that everything is molecular. So because everything has molecules, so everything that you're cooking is about molecules. But we use a lot of sous-vide, we use a lot of spherical, or some spherifications, some gelatins, hot gelatins, all the technology. But when we talk about technology, it's really important to go a little bit in the past and to understand that many years ago, but actually it was not so many years ago, like less than a hundred years ago, the chefs need to wake up and go to pick up some woods, to put the fire on, to go to the market, or to fish, or to hunt, to start cooking. And they didn't have any time to create. So people would do traditional Portuguese, or traditional French, or traditional cuisine from their area, and would not create. So technology made that the first, that the chefs start creating for the first time. Because when you have an electric oven, when you have a gas oven, when you have ways to cook that you don't need to have woods or to be there waiting for it, it gives you time to create, gives you time to think about cuisine. And that, I think, is a more relevant thing about technology. And even the fridge, the refrigerator, was developed close to the Second World War, and starts to be in people's house around that 1950, 1940-something, 1950. It was developed before the First World War. And for example, a lot of Portuguese recipes, typical recipes, are made as a way to preserve. A lot of sugar, like sweets made with eggs, to preserve that sweet. Vinegar in the recipes that we call escabeche, to preserve. Because we didn't have the fridge to preserve food, or the freezer. So technology changed a lot. Food, but not especially this last technology from the last 20 or 30 years. But other technology that appeared more years ago.

P:

All right, so that means you would say that these technologies, they have increased or improved quality in Portuguese cuisine, when you now have the ability to cool dishes, for example, or to, as you said, you don't need to worry about the fire, because it's an electric oven.

J:

Yeah, and you can reduce the sugar that you put in the sweet, and can be much better with less sugar. And it's better for your health, and it's better in flavor, because you can put that sweet in the refrigerator, and you don't need the sugar to preserve it.

P:

All right, and regarding the balancing of very traditional cooking recipes, or very traditional approaches on how Portuguese cuisine was cooked, and now the implementation of new technologies, what would you say, is technology just there to increase the general balance of the dish, or are they now unthinkable of today in modern cuisine?

J:

So, there's some technologies that you can use in fine dining, but you can also use in industry. With the sous-vide cooking, we understood that you can transform some pieces of meat, for example, much more tender, and you can do like slow cooking, instead of having like a 24-hour pan on top of your stove, on top of your cooker, cooking you can have in a plastic bag, in a water bath, and cooking with using less energy also. But you can do that for fine dining, and you can do that for babies, or for old people that don't have teeth to eat it. So, technology improves. I don't say that makes you better food, but gives you more possibilities. And what happened with technology is the growth is exponential, because some technologies uses another technologies to grow faster. So, when you start creating based on technology, you go faster developing your ingredients, your products, like general products.

P:

All right, interesting. Now, we go over to the strategic innovation part, where the first question would be regarding your general business model. First, you did start with only one restaurant, and then you diversified a bit. Maybe you also diversified in consulting for other gastronomical companies. And of course, you are a very famous cook from TV. How did this differentiation from only one restaurant to now a big global company, how did it influence you as a person? How did it influence also you as an industry character?

J:

Me as a person, it doesn't influence me anything. Of course, I've been working very hard in the last years, but I try to separate what is my professional side of my personal side. At a certain point, I had a lot of ideas, ideas of different concepts of serving food and to get to different public classes, not to do only like the fine dining part, but also to do only like the fine dining, because it's a very small niche, but to be more democratic. And now we have restaurants that the price started at 25 euros to 250 or more. So you get two more people. But first, like the first four, five, six restaurants that I've opened was not so strategic, but more like fulfilling a dream of opening different things with different interior design, with different menus and everything. And then starting, I start to think more strategically, to think about having a company that would be, would have guests from different level of prices, from different parts of the world, more for Portuguese or more for foreign, to survive the different prices and to be economically stronger. So it was especially considering that we start opening more restaurants and developing different concepts.

P:

And regarding, for example, your TV appearances, would you say that they are more influenced by now being an ambassador for Portuguese cuisine and showing the world what Portugal is capable of? Or is it more about your own, like your own promotion, your own marketing aspects?

J:

They can be both. It started for sure for more like personal promotion. I started on TV in 2005, like 20 years ago, almost. So at that time was for sure for my promotion. Then I did some TV shows in Brazil for two years, and that was more like promoting Portuguese cuisine in general. But it's always good when you are on TV because it's still now the place that you can get to more people in one time. So it's important to promote my work, but to promote Portuguese cuisine in general.

P:

All right. Regarding partnerships and corporations with, for example, delivery or food delivery, meat delivery people, technology partners or in general food partners, how would you say did they influence the success of your corporation? The world changed a lot in the last 10 years, I

would say, especially because you had very important food critics, and you still have some, but you had and you have Michelin star guide, the 50 best lists, the best chef list, and all of that, it's important to promote your restaurant and to give status and to bring your restaurant to the world of mouth. Now, all the, like even the TripAdvisor is like this guide in the world, and it's the critics are made by anonymous people. I would say 95% of them, they don't know what good food or great food is. They only write about the experience that they have that could be good or bad or more or less. And then you have a lot of so-called influence or even influencer people that have a lot of followers on social networks that can also promote or dispromote your restaurant saying good or bad things. So what happens now is there was a saying in the 90s that you would say that it doesn't matter if you talk about it, if you talk good things or bad things, it's good if you talk about it. And then at the beginning of the 21st century, you would say that world of mouth is extended. It's very important that if you say good things to one person, he promotes to another. If you say bad things, he promotes to seven other. And what happens now with the social networks is that you have the world of mouth amplified by technology. So one person can talk to 100,000 or to 10,000 instead of talk to a small group of friends. They can talk about something to thousands of people. And that changed a lot what is like the marketing one-to-one and the world of mouth. So technology entered there by amplifying the good and the bad things.

P:

All right. And now we go over to the last part of the interview. It's about innovation management. And we have four more questions in this region. First question would be, what's the weight distribution between strategic and technological innovation within your corporation? Is it 50-50 or is there more a focus on one of both innovation styles?

J:

I'll say strategically sometimes use technological innovation. But I don't think that I can divide it by a percentage. We use both to innovate, but I cannot say if it's 50-50 or 20-80 sometimes. I cannot say.

P:

All right, all right. And when you, for example, have a new business idea, a new strategic innovation, or also you are thinking about implementing a new technology into your concept, do you then follow these developments with specific KPIs?

J:

Yes, it's always for us. We have, I would say, four main KPIs. That is the satisfaction. It's four kinds of satisfactions. The guests, the inside guests, that is the team, the owners, and the providers, the suppliers. So you need to maintain those four public satisfying. And when I try to do some where we innovate, it's thinking about that. And there's a lot of things that we consider that we don't know what will happen in the future because of AI and because different technologies and whatever. But there's a lot of things that you know. People will always like good food, good service for a not very expensive price. They like to have the food fast. They like to have a good service, a nice and educated service. And they don't want to pay a lot. So if you consider this, that are the things that you already know, you use technology to do that.

P:

All right. And now also talking about maybe past experiences in your career. Have there been cases where a strategic or a technological innovation did not work out as planned, for example, a new restaurant opening? And how did you then deal with it?

J:

We closed. We closed. Of course, we made mistakes. A few years ago, I decided to open a restaurant that was actually much cheaper because I really wanted to be democratic and to reach levels of the prices that everybody could afford in Portugal. But actually, being under my name, the expectations makes you want something very special. And it was very difficult to do something very special for a very low price. So the thing to do in like a 12, 14, 15 euros average price, we had to close. Because you could not support the structure that you wanted to have to deliver a good service for the expectations that people had. So we failed on that and we closed after less than one year.

P:

All right. And now the last question of the questionnaire is also thinking about the future role of innovation of strategic and also technological side. How do you see it in the future of fine dining? What role will innovation play?

J:

I think that more than innovation or strategic or technological, we need to hear our guest and we need to understand what he really wants. People have less and less time because they have a lot of things to do. So we need to understand that if they want to come for a gastronomic restaurant to eat very fast, they will use the gastronomic restaurant to stay for four or five hours. And maybe the answer will be some will do in a way and others will do in another way. So maybe you need to maintain serving a la carte and serving tasting menus, not going only for tasting menus that you can only serve like for three hours. All of this. We need to answer the markets and not to use creativity or technology, strategical thinking to do different only because we want to make it different or because we want to innovate. I think in some kind of restaurants, you will just press a button to ask for your food. You don't need a lot of people for the service. You have people cooking and some that will deliver your dish. But you can just press something on your iPhone. And in others, you need somebody to talk to and to explain about the wine and about the history behind the food or the dish. So you'll start to have different levels, more identified. And you can choose if you want to have a very fast meal. Because even now in McDonald's, you see that you have these machines that can do all your requests. So that was an evolution in service in McDonald's. You don't ask to a seller, to the waiter. You ask to a machine. And that will make things that maintain the price. And you will be more affordable in the future.

P:

All right. And also one last question from my side. Off script now. So we're already done with the interview. Thank you very, very much. But I'm curious how you perceive the current state in the fine dining industry. Do you say it's rather very good times currently? Or also now coming back from the pandemic, currently challenging times of repositioning. Repositioning yourself, repositioning the general industry. Yeah. How do you perceive it?

J:

I think that fine dining right now, in the next 10 years, only the best will survive. I think that people are more and more, they understand more and more about fine dining and about food in general. So to have a fine dining restaurant, you need to be, the restaurant needs to be really, really good. Or else people don't have time to sit for three hours to have an average meal, only because it's creative. People want the best ingredients, the best service, best accommodations. So I think that there are a few fine dining restaurants that will close in the next years.

P:

Okay. Very interesting. So again, thank you very, very much. It was very insightful.

J:

Thank you. Good luck for your work.

8.4 Appendix D – 04.10.2024

P:

So, for the very first time, how are you?

F:

Top, thank you!

P:

What is your name and what is your current position in the company where you work?

F:

My name is F., I'm the demi chef de partie at C.

P:

Cool, cool. And the idea of the restaurant, can you briefly explain what is going on? Modern Cuisine?

F:

Basically, it's an upscale steak restaurant. The focus is on high-quality meat. Of course, a not quite classically structured menu, which differs mainly in the main courses, because we have such a modular principle, if you look at it closely. So a gastro insider will notice this directly. So you have your entrecote, your tomahawk, filet chateau and then look for your side dishes and appetizers accordingly. We supplement the whole thing with a season ticket, which actually changes monthly.

P:

This is certainly also a big differentiating factor, which makes you so unique as a company. This means that you are all about meat and around this meat you then have seasonal offers. As an example, please correct me if there is something wrong?

F:

Just like that, then we sit together in a team. I've only been there for two months now, but I've already contributed diligently to the current pumpkin menu. I have been producing pumpkin pies again and again in the last two weeks, so that we can always fall back on them. The idea came from me, so I was allowed to bring in my own recipe.

P:

Super interesting, super interesting. Then let's go straight to the technological part. In the company where you work, do you have any innovations there? Do you have innovative technologies that you use or is it just cooking pots, cooking spoons?

F:

Indeed, but that's the case in most restaurants. We simply produce a lot with Thermomix, i.e. for the sake of simplicity. You often hear that somehow. This is also a super good helper in itself. Then actually a classic in the kitchen, clearly a combi steamer. It's actually everywhere. Hold-o-mats, three of which we use every day. We have a beeper for the meat. Yes, it goes back in. Another cool crust, exactly. That's the main thing. We use sous vide sometimes, not always. Now, however, we have thought about cooking the pumpkin, among other things.

P:

Do you then also look at how they do it from outside, from other companies, i.e. from other kitchens? So if you just, I don't know, leaf through the gourmet and then see a steak restaurant XY from Munich has right now, no idea, they freeze some egg yolk down to minus 20 degrees and then plane it over steak?

F:

Yes, absolutely. In any case, you can always be inspired. I'm a fan of Rolling Pin and also of the FB of the trade magazine. I'm actually always up-to-date. Sure, social media, you inform yourself. But you also bring a lot of them, so in the meantime you can actually see it even after five years of cooking that a lot of things from the past that I have done before keep coming back to my mind. In other words, ferment an egg yolk or something like that is then to be used. That's always good.

P:

Interesting. You have outside, so now I still have here in the questionnaire, maybe you just have knowledge about whether the restaurant C. has an online reservation system in it, for example, to simplify it and not just have a thick book. It used to be like this, you have a thick book, they call and then you say, okay, you're tricking yourself somehow.

F:

Yes in any case. We use C. for that, let me lie. So we definitely have an online reservation program and actually, as far as I know, we are now doing that via OpenTable. Do you know OpenTable? Yes. Yes, of course, we use OpenTable. These were the last restaurants where I worked. Actually, that's always the reservation program. Plays a very big role how you are positioned there. If you can track a standard, you know what's nearby, what's available. You can also say, if you know, okay, it's going to be a very busy day, that you take the liberty of leaving the kitchen and say, okay, we'll make a reservation stop. This is also super easy via OpenTable, as well as the fact that you can now get the reviews through reviews or with the exchange with the guests as a waiter and then score accordingly with the program. And we as a kitchen have the opportunity to view the reservations via a special account. But we also print

it out individually for each evening. You know that too. I know that from my training and from star gastronomy, that you then have a piece of paper, there comes a table of five, there comes a four, a two and then you just work your way through the aisles, also cross off what the guests have already received. That's great for coordination.

P:

That's very interesting. And what would you say, sure, you haven't been in the business that long, you say you've been cooking for five years. How important would you rate that in your everyday work? The technological innovations, Vorwerk, Thermomix, that's part of your daily business, isn't it?

F:

Absolutely, yes. This is very important and I always say this to all colleagues, you have to deny the trainees that you also handle such devices responsibly, in order to do prescription work, to simply implement it with certain rules in such a way that it achieves the same result every day. And that works very well with the Thermomix, for example. Very good. Paco Jet too. Perfect, actually. You can actually think that out of the environment. It just results if you do it right and if you know how a perfect balance is.

P:

Sorry, I just didn't understand the last sentence. What did you say?

F:

This results, so it just achieves an even result if you handle it well.

P:

Okay, great. That's also the second part of the question, in terms of improving quality or reducing costs, is technological innovation then indispensable in this regard, or how do you assess that?

F:

So it is no longer possible to imagine life without it. It's such a constant pressure that you have somewhere. Everyone wants the better sorbet, everyone wants the better cream. These are simple things that come from classic cuisine, but which can be improved with a sophistication and, yes, I have now also noted here, magic powders such as agar-agar, for example, xanthan gum and all the additives, so to speak, and supplements. So I think it's exciting, I'm a hundred percent fan of it, because you can somehow abuse it a bit and then the real culinary art comes up a bit short. But if you use it optimally, it's ideal.

P:

And if you, now a question off-script, if you look at what you see as innovation, what do you think, what percentage are dish innovations in your restaurant and how much are so, yes we now have a new high pressure or, for example, now this beeper topic, there is now a new beeper version, that we can buy. Is it worth acquiring then? So what would you say, is it more in the direction, we really buy new utensils or we are looking more in the direction of dish innovations in terms of innovation?

F:

Both. So Dish-Innovations has a lot to do with the staff. Of course, it is known everywhere that it has been neglected lately, that it has declined a lot in recent years. Employees get carried away, there is an ever-increasing change in the cards. I would say that it is more worthwhile somewhere to take care of your colleagues, your employee, because the more they are up for it, the nicer the plate will be and the more beautiful the whole menu and the general will be in the end, if there is now a chef who can't handle the Beefer at all, then he has a short circuit the next day and the whole thing is fucked up, then nothing was worth it. Yes, if the menu says beef from the Beefer, then that's just a problem. Yes that's true. That's just one thing is related to the other.

P:

You are certainly such a beeper when it comes to meat, your restaurant is about meat, so you always want the customer to be satisfied with his degree of doneness, as he wants it to be. Medium rare, rare, through, medium, such a beeper is certainly super helpful, isn't it?

F:

Yes in any case. We now have one, we work so roundabout with knapp, so the part goes up to 800 degrees, when it runs full steam and then there are just simple tips, so of course we pre-fry it, then flavor it afterwards and then have for the guests, quite interesting, I got to know that for the first time, such simple wood castings, , with which we then mark the steaks and then you know, okay, next table wants rare, then I announce that, then fits, really cool, during this time I'm also more in front and I'm allowed to coordinate it, I'm very proud, and then it's just a matter of communication and the right sports, that the guest then does it well. You always have to check the meat, that's logical.

P:

Very good. And what would you say, how do you balance traditional cooking techniques, such as putting on all the sauces in the after-school care kitchen, goodies and, and, and, with the integration of new technologies, because, for example, I don't know, you can certainly make such a sauce in a Thermomix, and as you just said, with additives you sometimes get a little bit

into traditional cooking, a little bit lost, you have to be careful not to do it too much. So would you say it goes hand in hand, or how do you assess the topic?

F:

Can I ask again, how did it just start? So how to balance traditional cooking techniques with these new revolutionary ways of cooking?

P:

Yes, so a funny example in advance, and also to take that out, so I would never cook a choux or a sauce in a Thermomix or etc., there are always large pots, blanchers, tippers, kettles, so you have to fall back on the old-school techniques at first, so the best method is still the most valuable, everyone has a bit of their own way, of course, but you can also combine tradition with service and experience in the restaurant itself, we now have for our guests, for example, that the tartare is made on the fish, tartare super classic, the condiments accordingly, you can try it out a bit, we always change there, in the sense of let's leave out the egg and make a chili cream to go with it, so you can fall back on classics again, that's great for me too, you can change the tartare, sure, doesn't always have to be from the ox or the wrong fillet, and we make spaghetti ice cream, for example, then the waiter comes to the table, that's just classic, that's classic cooking, and then the waiter presses the spaghetti ice cream onto your plate, that's just a mega thing when you get a great view, and I think that if you create a basis there, then you can take liberties again, maybe with gels and granites and whatever, what there is, to handle dry ice, dry ice I don't have much experience now, in the Hyatt we had that a lot, and also granites, here it's now on the amount of guests we have, sometimes difficult easy, that doesn't work partly either, but the balance is just important to keep that if it's bouillabaisse, it's still best to cook yourself.

P:

Super, super, thank you very much. Now we're going to the strategic innovation part, so no problem at all if you can't say anything about it yet or something, or don't want to say anything, but maybe you got it from the chef or something, or maybe you sometimes get inquiries, for example, in general, what diversification looks like for you, whether you say to yourself through strategic innovation, we'll take a look at whether we, I don't know, Porsche Zentrum, wants to do something, we'll do catering for it, or we'll give cooking classes on how to fry the perfect steak, or there will be theme evenings, is there anything that influences your business model, what do you see in strategic innovation?

F:

It's funny that you just mentioned it, Porsche Center, we are partly sponsored by Porsche, and yes, we do have events there, namely our top floor in the tower, is a quite large, beautiful banquet area, where Porsche and various companies, but also weddings, organize events, we also have occasionally. Recently, I think, scenes from the crime scene were filmed on the floor, so the floor is simply rented to shoot films, or to record scenes, and I haven't experienced cooking courses yet, but it's definitely under attack, towards winter we certainly have something up our sleeve.

P:

Now there is a question that goes so deeper, namely regarding this differentiation, how you expand your business model a little more broadly, would you say it is essential for you for sales, for revenue, or is it more for you to show presence for the customers, of course, you have a partnership with the Porsche Center, for example, It's no coincidence, how do you see it, or how do you rate it in the kitchen?

F:

Yes, so at first glance it occurs to me of course that we do it in the kitchen, so we take it as we get it, we then also consult in the team how we can implement a certain action, we still have a hotel, two streets away, the hotel belongs to us, there are many more possibilities to do something then, we then exchange ideas with colleagues in the kitchen at the same time, in other words, you come across, yes, you grow a bit, and we have, yes, so in direct contact with the guests, for example, we have introduction cards from the waiters, if the guests are German or English, we then, yes, Hello, my name is F, and such promotional things, and I think it's very well received, lately we've been using it too, interestingly enough a lot for Google actually, that guests are then specifically asked for their opinion, that's actually a smart thing for me, and you can build a restaurant well, pay significantly to the guests, and the colleagues are of course happy, because then a name comes up again in the recession, for me it's also super important to stay on the beach from the kitchen, from a kitchen point of view.

P:

That's good, then I would just say, let's go further in the questions, that I won't keep you too long now. Another question is, such cooperations, such as now with the Porsche Center, we have already mentioned it, or you certainly have an in-house supplier for your steaks, for example, and certainly a technology provider who provides you with the ovens, or is your conversation partner. How important is it for you in general, i.e. for the success of the restaurant, if you want to eat good meat in town, you have to go to C., which means you need a good contact person. How important are collaborations and partnerships for you?

F:

So it's natural, it somehow all depends on having reliable partners and opportunities to fall back on them in an emergency, but to keep that certain trust and that it will remain in place in the long term, you definitely have to stay in touch. Each of us has the contact details, for example the relatives. In other words, when I have an early shift or had an early shift, for example in Karls I worked before and in Louis D. Jakob, it was often the case that classically the fish supplier does not come until eleven and at twelve the first guests arrive. That doesn't play into cards and you have to change properly. It can happen that a meat supplier brings a batch of entrecotes that could easily have matured two weeks longer, are actually inedible. It is important that you then have tips and tricks or that you also learn with training in order to react properly from this action. It's like that everywhere, it's also the case in the cooking process, that when I'm on everyone's menu, I have to cook well. But that's with Rational, for example, if the oven fails or the oven doesn't work, then you have a problem. Or if the Hold-o-mat doesn't work. Last week, this has more to do with the house, we are on the 23rd floor and the coolers are on the 22nd floor. And the elevator is broken. That happened last week Saturday. And on Sunday morning, a technician was there.

P:

Regarding innovation management. Do you have certain KPIs, i.e. numbers, data, facts, where you can use the keypoint, indicator, that's what it's called, or key figures in general to track innovation? For example, if you now put a new dish innovation, such as the pumpkin pie, out on the menu, are you already behind it to count, ah, we see that this innovation is being accepted, or rather not being accepted by the customer?

F:

Yes, that's just an interplay with the food costs in the end. Everything plays into it somehow. The pumpkin pie is a good example, because it's actually quite manageable when producing. Everything I needed for this, the boss did quite well. He ordered me a few new molds so that I could really get started. Unfortunately, I can't give you more detailed information about this because I'm not a chef yet. But for sure there is. Just to track certain numbers, there is definitely an office floor behind it, which deals extensively. And then we get the go-ahead, so to speak, which is then to act accordingly in order to improve and produce.

P:

Ok. In terms of technological standards, technological and strategic innovations, have there been cases in your working life where you noticed that it didn't turn out as planned? And how did they adapt then? Or did they change something then? How did that go there?

F:

Yes in any case. I was present at a new hotel opening last November. From the very beginning. We built the hotel back in. The kitchen was brand new. And then after a week of business, or after a few days of business, you notice that if you want to learn the deep fryer, that the fryer is built into the kitchen work surface in such a way that the tap is not usable for draining. Up to Karls, a stove was ordered that stopped working every two days at once, no longer heated properly. Then a technician came. The technician then dropped the window while repairing it. It was cancelled again. The part didn't do anything at all. As I have now understood my colleagues, someone comes up who said that the part is no longer there. He probably bought it cheaply at home. He just has a cheap part that doesn't do anything at all. You have to see if you need it or can you somehow ... We had a super cool smoker, which worked perfectly, smoked the whole kitchen. I was hated once when I did that. But I had to do it, sometimes even twice a day. Until we came up with the idea that you can actually do it in a combi steamer. We cleaned the whole part once and went to the basement, and then enriched it with the combi steamer pretty easily from the part.

P:

This means that there is also a learning process behind it, and you are adaptive in order to simply feel like you... It's not set in stone, it always has to be that way, but if there is an idea that also brings the solution, you are willing to go this way.

F:

In any case, try it out well and then weigh it up.

P:

The last question regarding differentiation factors, we have already discussed strongly at the beginning. What key factors would you say make C. unique compared to the other competitors?

F:

Yes, among other things, definitely the building itself. The closeness to the guests in any case, so just this spaghetti ice cream at the table, this tartare at the table. The people are very, very trying, we are a rather smaller team at the moment, but that's super pleasant, which just brings a bit of a family approach into it, or a very friendly one, if it may just seem upper class snobby to some people, we are all somehow human beings and in my opinion we compete very well with the guests. the quality of the food is actually our top priority, which includes food, but also good interaction with his colleagues and the team. Yes, I personally enjoy working there. It's

not like before, that you're constantly under a really unpleasantly stressful pressure to perform, but you just calm down, okay, we'll do it the way we can at the moment, but now next week we'll be two more, that you can loosen up a bit, just be cool together, and of course the guests notice that too, they then walk past the pass, sit at the chef's table, thank you, I always think chef's table is a strong thing, if a restaurant can offer that, we also have really cool ones, at L. C. J. we had a chef's table, two stars until 2021, and there we had a chef's table right downstairs in the kitchen, that was a super interesting kitchen in any case, that was in the minus, so minus 1, so in the basement actually, but still had the opportunity to go out, and there was actually an escalator on, the waiters, who always went up there, that was really cool in terms of coordination, because Mr. M., boss, I really like, then stood upstairs and looked at the food, and then went to the guests, and then radioed through such a microphone downstairs into the kitchen, and he was there, you could hear it all over the kitchen, and said, take your time with aisle 2, it's getting guilty slow, the exchange is important in any case, that you just have things like such a chef's table, where you can see how such a menu is prepared and arranged, despite everything I am glad that I can cook upscale food right now, but a bit slowed down, training time, hotel opening with Viva Con Agua, where unfortunately things are not going so well now, where we have now completely suspended the evening business, two years ago, three months, because it was simply not accepted, we then only cooked vegan-vegetarian, there was definitely a lot of heart and soul in it, now there are only two of us, there are also events at noon on week, yes, what a pity, and so you came to the Chaos Planet, so I know where the operational problem is, that was a wild time.

P:

Thank you very much for your time and the valuable insights.

F:

I was super happy.

8.5 Appendix E – 18.10.2024

P:

All right, so the first question is like, what is your current position and what's the current like organization you're working in?

Â:

Okay, so we are working at Â, Â it's a very small restaurant as you can see, it's only it's a communal table with 10 seats, two chefs basically doing everything in front of you. So it's me, M and A and I vouch for that. And basically we cooked and we serve you and we talk the all of the dishes in front of you. And yeah, we do one shift per night, we just work with tasting menu of 10 moments, five times a week. We are kind of the storytelling of a restaurant, so we are very close to the customer and I think that's for us the most important part, that's why we opened this place. It's like the storytellers in MTV, when there was a big concert and then it was a smaller concert where the bands talk to you, they are closer to the public. I think we are a kind of a version of that. Like an unplugged version.

P:

And the general idea behind the kitchen, is it more modern cuisine, is it Portuguese style?

Â:

We always have an argue about what we normally do. We say it's modern, yes, we say it can be fine Dining, if you want to call it that way. It's our view of modern cuisine. So with Portuguese ingredients, but not Portuguese influence we can have. We do, we have a lot of Asian influence, for example, something that goes throughout all of our menus, but we can do a version of a curry, we can do a version of a, I don't know, something more Portuguese, it depends a lot of what you want. I think it changes a lot, we change four times a year, so we have four different, complete different menus a year. And it always revolves around probably the last six months of our lives. Of course all of our lives, but the last six months are very important, the last vacation we took, the last places we had dinner at, the last drinks we had, the wines we have available at that moment. But like M said, Asian influence is always there, especially Japanese influence. We will have Portuguese influence, if not in the plate, but on the products, because we use a lot of Portuguese products, and I think then we can just do whatever it feels appropriate at that time. I think the whole menu has to flow, but from one menu to the other, it can be something completely different.

P:

Very, very interesting. Now we will talk about differentiation factors. The first question would be, what would you say, what key elements from your concept, from your restaurant, like is it the menu style, is it the service style, is it the general chef's table idea? What does distinguish you from the competition?

Â:

I think the big first thing is the table. There's another, I think there's one more restaurant in the 5,000 that exists in Lisbon that has the same concept that we do, which is the one shared table, and I think that kind of differentiates it straight away from any other restaurant. Being a restaurant with a menu, a tasting menu, with a fine dining approach to food, but in a very relaxed environment, in a very laid-back environment, because we are right there, and we are not very poshy about it, we are really relaxed about it, I think it makes a difference as well. With time, the customers that came, they started really talking about this place, and I think now most people come here because of that, but in the beginning what made those people come was maybe the table, I think. First of all, the table.

P:

Very interesting. And then you also talked already that you have very Japanese influences, in general regarding inspiration. Do you take it rather from regional aspects? You just talked about that you always considered the six months you had before your redesigning of your menu. Do you then have more international aspects in your ideas?

Â:

Yes, I think because we are always trying to make difference and trying to not do, or trying not to copy things that other restaurants are doing, so I think it's easy for us to go international and to focus a little bit on that, but even so, I think it's our way of seeing cuisine and to see ingredient combinations and dishes. And if we do food that we would like to eat, we go out a lot, and we love food, we really love food, we go a lot, especially outside of Portugal, in Lisbon I think we visited most of the restaurants we really wanted to visit, but every time we travel we try to eat out as much as we can, and then we bring everything that we love, we kind of mash it all up and it kind of works into a menu. I think we really make food that we would love every time we plate a dish, especially the beginning, after three or four months of doing the same menu,

we're sick of it, but in the beginning we're like, this looks good, I would be happy if someone served me this, and I think that's kind of the cuisine we're always trying to do, while doing different, like M said.

P:

That's a nice aspect, regarding technological innovation, so we will now dive into our first innovation part, do you say that in your kitchen, do you regularly use aspects from innovative ideas, we already talked about the chef's table concept, which is also very innovative already, but do you for example use a sous vide machine, do you use digital reservation systems, or molecular gastronomy aspects from there?

Â:

Yes, for sure, basically being us two, and doing everything, we have to rely on those factors, so at first, well, in the kitchen, sous vide, yes, always present, because what we say, we do a menu that was thought out for one person to be able to execute for ten guests in the kitchen, and one person to be in the living room. So, if anything goes badly, I have to perform for ten guests and do a completely set menu, and then they have to deliver in the living room, so sous vide, it's a must, it's consistency without even looking with it. The booking part, the reservation part, that's another factor, it's something that helps us a lot, we don't have to be constantly, in the beginning we were, we didn't have a booking system, so yeah, all of the emails, all of the phone was ringing non-stop, and it got to a point that, no, we cannot, because we have to focus. Just writing everything down, we already fully booked on this day and this day, it was insane. So, these technological helpers are like, you cannot think about a life without them anymore, it would be a tougher life for a kid. Exactly, it would be another person that we need to hire. Okay, one or two different people, yeah, one more for the kitchen, maybe one just to manage social media and to manage the booking system, and in this case, literally two people are taking care of everything with that help.

P:

Would you also say it improved your quality consistency?

Â:

Of course.

P:

Very interesting, and you now have a very new aspect on how to generally host a night of dining out, but in general, you still have your Portuguese roots, how do you balance traditional culinary practices, aspects, with the incorporation of new technologies?

Â:

It's tough, I think there's always a little bit of Portuguese, especially, again, we're a very different restaurant, we are very close to the people, so the welcoming, I think it's very Portuguese, it's very warm, we are literally receiving people almost to our living room, to our home, we always keep a moment, which is our bread moment, which I think it's very Portuguese, so big, rustic bread, olive oil, butter, where people can just eat with their hands, and we start with snacks, which is with their hands as well, that sometimes shocks some people, but we think it opens a little bit of the table, and it kind of gives you a more communal vibe, and more Portuguese vibe, which is community, in general, and we always have a little touch of Portugal on the menu, not just the products, even right now, we have, it's the last moment, but it's still a very small thing, a petit four, that's called chocolate salami, which is something very Portuguese, something we did as kids, at school, or with our parents, and we still keep a little bit of those little details in here, something traditional that we did in our places, or something like that.

P:

And regarding your customer base, is the customer a re-accuring customer, is it more a customer that comes to visit Lisbon, and then comes to visit you guys?

Â:

Yes, half and half, so basically we have our list of clients that come, I would say, probably three to four times a year, so we have customers that came every menu, then we have customers, yeah, like two times per year, and then you have the tourist part, that books us with three months in advance, yeah, we have a request for July already, or January, and yeah, those, I'm sorry, but yeah, I would say most of our clients are tourism.

P:

Okay, interesting. Now we're going to switch over to the strategic innovation part, in a question, you are now both, of course, restaurant owners, but maybe also before you were owning the restaurant, and did you have any strategic diversification of your role in, for example, consulting

other restaurants, or having caterings, or cooking lessons that you're on, maybe also here, cooking lessons that you're hosting, theme evenings, do you like to diversify your business model sometimes?

Â:

We want to, we were very unlucky, because this restaurant opened, if you do the math, it opened in the beginning of 2020, so it didn't start the best way possible, it took us a while to get into its right place, now it's been two years of stability, and right now we are, we always thought about this, but right now we are thinking about doing some different things, we just did, we actually just came from, yeah, but for example, during pandemic, we did two different projects, so we did a sandwich project, okay, called the sandwich project, that was out of necessity, yes, but it was a different model, for example, would you like to try it, oh yes, of course, so basically, we did slow cooked meat, and we did a takeaway project, and then the other, the other lockdown, we did kind of a set menu, three dishes, that we cook everything in here, we did the instructions, and the people at home, like finish the, interesting, so it was two completely different concepts than the original concept of this, the wine bar, which has a different concept of food as well, I didn't think about that, yeah, right, and there we work with Portuguese canned food, canned fish mostly, we do some mayos, crumbles, something like that, we just add it on top, serve it with bread, but it's kind of a different thing as well, yeah, we have Portuguese bread, Portuguese cheeses, and charcuterie also, so it's a different concept also,

P:

Okay, would you say the two concepts you were talking about during COVID, did they allow you to have more enhanced revenues, or was it more of a marketing strategy,?

Â:

It was marketing, marketing slash surviving, okay, yes, a lot of surviving. Basically, yes, but it was cool, because it'll allow us to do something different at least, and I think we right now don't do that more, because we're literally just two people, otherwise it would work as marketing, and it would work as added revenue as well, because both projects kind of work really well, yeah, even with the world closed down, they kind of work really well, yeah, okay, all right,

P:

Regarding partnerships and collaborations, you have, of course, food suppliers, you have technology providers, maybe that help you when there's a problem with the billing system, you have maybe also like partners from other companies that hire you for certain events, what would you say, how do you like in general measure the impact of partnerships in your daily business, how important is it to you to have good partnerships?

Â:

To be very honest, we always ask us the same question, whenever people ask us to do an event or something that it's not this, we always measure, okay, it will be profitable for us in terms of the future, it will be something that gain us more clients, and in the future gain us more money, or it is something that we are going to be closed for one day, so we will be losing 10 guests at what cost, yeah, is it just for fun, or is it going to be something better in the future, exactly, because it gets to a point, especially in restaurant business, that a lot of the pop-ups and even collaboration, it's more about doing something different, per se, than work, exactly, than like being profitable in long term, because sometimes it's not your type of client that then appears to you, and sometimes it's not profitable at all, you are just losing money, and once again, we are so small, and that we really have to think about that, and sometimes it's losing a night of good money. Yeah, but I think to answer the question as well, relationships are important, every relationship that we keep, and every producer that we work with, the wines, the food, the olive oil, they are all important, I think we try to connect as much with those people, because I think it makes sense in the end, because we are showcasing their products right here, we actually just changed booking systems, because the relationship we had with the previous ones was not as close as we intended, so every time there was a problem, like you said, it was not as fast, it was not as centered on us as it is right now, right now we send a message, I think in 10 minutes we have an email back saying there's a way of fixing this, if you cannot do this, we will go there, and that's important, but the fishmonger, I call him at 12 o'clock at night, or one o'clock at night, the next day in the morning he has the fish here, so these little things are important, it's relationships that we keep on building since the beginning, and I think in the end it's what makes sense, we're selling the same olive oil as we started selling in the first year we opened, and because we keep this relationship with the producer, and I think that's how it should be, we're small, so I think small connections are important.

P:

Now regarding innovation management, so how do you manage certain new dish innovations, stuff like that, first question would be, would you say technological and strategic innovation is 50-50 within your business currently, or would you say that for example technology is way more important for us, new dish innovations in the strategic part are more important for us currently?

Â:

I don't think technological innovation is important, I don't think it's the focus, especially here for us, especially in a type of cuisine, the bases are still very French, not old-fashioned, but still very rooted to tradition, of course we use technology in our favor, but we don't put that in front of anything else, so I think maybe on the booking system, yes, sous-vide is one of the big things, but that's it, we don't do a very molecular cuisine, we don't do a very complicated and complex cuisine, we do something very simple, but with good roots and with big flavors I think, so I don't believe technological advances are going to be very important in the future, but we don't know what's going to happen, 10 years ago nobody knew about sous-vide, I think it's more a trend factor now, I can see in the dishes, for example now it's not techno, but it is, now you have all of the silicone molds that you just have a lot of crazy, you can put a shrimp, you can put a flower, you can put whatever, 3D printers are printing different molds, that's cool, but at the same time it's a trend, because you put like a paste that tastes like nothing and it's pretty on the dish, that's it, it's technology. In the end what's important is what we already know is that a stock takes a day to reduce or two days to reduce and that's going to add the flavor, so you have a very nice crown on top that tastes like nothing, but the base has a lot of flavor, so it adds flourish, but it doesn't add much more, I would say. Exactly, it's a trend, I would say.

P:

Then regarding your new dish innovations, where you say like now every quarter you will renew the whole idea of your kitchen, do you then measure with specific KPIs on how successful each, for example each dish, each course is, do you maybe say, of course when you're only, when you have 10 guests you can like also see it from their faces if they like it or not, but do you have like any figures you measure it on?

Â:

The two of us. Okay, it's totally instinct. Yes, we talk and talk and talk too much about the food that we're going to plate and the food that we're going to taste, then we plate it, we taste it, M

takes her conclusions, I take my conclusions and we talk a little bit. If we're both very happy with it, we go for it, because in the end, like I said before, it's we're cooking food that we love, we cannot measure the flavor of the the palate of the 200 guests that we serve per month, and it's impossible to please all of them, so we please ourselves first, it goes to the plate, if it doesn't please anybody, then we have to change something, but if it makes people happy, I think it stays on the menu. I think we are the two people that kind of... Yeah, then the first, normally when we set a new menu, the first week it's always the testing week, so we tend to get more close to the client and kind of, if we are still like, if we think about it's missing something or it has a little bit of much of a thing, like more acidity, it needs more salt or more sugar, we ask the client, do you like it, did you don't like it, you can be truthful, and people normally tend to be true to the... That is just a matter of kind of connecting everything, if everybody says, it was good, but it was too acidic, maybe it's too acidic, if one says too acidic, one is too sweet, maybe it's fine, it's just that person that doesn't like acidity, that one doesn't like sweetness. But normally we have a really good feedback, I think it's more instinct, yeah. It's mostly instinct. Yeah.

P:

All right, also now considering maybe the experiences you had in previous kitchens, what would you say, have there been cases where innovation has not worked out as you thought or you wanted, you wished for, how did you then deal with the situation and what was the general outcome?

Â:

I would say sometimes, and the thing that we are now realizing, it's like less is more. Okay. And sometimes a very elaborate dish that we use a lot of techniques or we thought like people are going to be crazy for this, then you have like zero reaction. And yeah, I would say in terms of technology, but I would say, for example, we had a dish of the guineafowl, we had a whole guineafowl that we receive it, we prep it and we age in hay for seven days. And between the seven days, every day we have to look, we have to clean it up, put it in hay again, it was crazy. In the end, we took the breasts, we do a brine, we then do the sous vide, we put it on the plate, we present it all and people say, oh, it's chicken. Okay. We were so proud of showing something different. It was not innovative maybe for most of the world. In Copenhagen, this would not be innovative at all because it's traditional to age meats because of the winter. But for us, it was very innovative. We wanted to do something different. And in the end, people's reaction was,

yeah, okay, chicken. Chicken that stayed in the fridge for seven days. No, it's not that. But yeah, we tried to innovate too much maybe. And sometimes people kind of don't understand you. So it didn't pay off. Exactly. And then sometimes we do like the most basic dishes that we think it's basic because it doesn't show a lot of maybe techniques, new techniques and people go crazy. Go crazy. Exactly. It's always around the same thing. The stock that takes two days to reduce, it's going to be good. The things that we already know and that are rooted in our tradition in cuisine, they're good. So you can innovate, but you're taking it too far sometimes. It's literally taking it too far. I think you have to kind of measure what you want. Is it worth it or not worth it? Exactly. Now we have a beignet. So you have to put the dough in a siphon and then you have a hot oil and you have to have a little like a small ladle or something. Yeah, a spoon that you have to heat it up and you put half of the dough in it and you fill it with anything you want. In our case, it's eel. And then you cover it and it turns into like a perfect sphere of fried dough. It's like a doughnut, a perfect doughnut. Exactly. That's cool and people kind of react to it. But then sometimes, especially I think in desserts, sometimes we are very like... Desserts have a lot of flourishes that sometimes don't eat. People just like sweets. If it's sweet, if it's tasty and a little bit different, it's good enough. Yeah. And I think the beignet is a different case because people touch it with their hands. It's different. You see it, it looks very perfect, very neat and then you can touch it, you can eat it and I think it kind of gives you something extra. Yeah. Yeah, but desserts people tend to gold dust and canals of this and that. Sometimes it doesn't eat. Yeah, true. Innovating so far, not too far.

P:

So the second to last question would be regarding the white man over there, the small statue from the Guide Michelin. How important would you say this city is filled with many kitchens? It's culinary wise very, very interesting major city in Europe. How important would you say is the Michelin for you currently?

Â:

It's important. I wouldn't say it's the most important thing that we have here, the most important factor that we have in the restaurant, but it's important. It's one of the best awards that you can get as a chef, as a cook, as a restaurant owner and being a very small independent restaurant that two people work in and getting that prize after two years of working in here, it's amazing. Renovating it every year. It's amazing for us. It's fulfilling. It means we're doing a good job. It kind of puts our restaurant in a place where it kind of is a little bit different from all the other

5,000 restaurants that exist in Lisbon. And there's maybe I think 90 restaurants on the list, which kind of narrows people's choices a little bit more. But I think that's it. In that perspective, that's it. It's a good pat on the back for us. It means we're doing a good job. It means we are getting more customers, but it shouldn't let us get carried away. So we do the same thing as we've done before after getting into the guide or even if we leave the guide, eventually we will do the same thing. We just do what we believe that came. Perfect. I think it's important, but not the most important part. So you're not working towards always maintaining the status, just like you do the best and while doing the best, of course, good results will come back. We are not working for this. This appears because of our work and we like to think this way because we work for us and we work to make us happy and to do what we want to do and disappear. Yeah, perfect. But we are not going to change anything or going towards what they want. If the rules change to get that, we wouldn't change to go with the rules. So if the rules now follow what we do, perfect. That's what we want. But if things change, we wouldn't change. Exactly. It's the same thing. We have clients, people ask us like, oh, you're going to get the star eventually. And I'm like, no, we know our restaurant, it's not star profile. Oh, but aren't you working for it? And I'm like, no, once again, if the rules change and we fit in it, perfect. But we are not going to change to fit in the star. So if anything else adapts to us, especially because once again, we are a very different restaurant from the typical. So it's different to judge this restaurant as a normal restaurant. But if the rules would change to fit us in, perfect. If not, we will do the same. We are not a restaurant that has star material. We don't have the space for it. We don't have the stuff for it. But for the Michelin Guide we do, so we keep on doing that. Again, 10 people happy at the table, two people happy working here. That's kind of the point. And I think that's kind of the future of cooking.

P:

Yeah. All right. And now regarding the last question, we will also look into the future on what your, not belief, but what you're feeling about this is. What we already heard is that currently there are new technological trends with the 3D printing of food. You have silicon molds where you can mold stuff into different shapes. But how do you perceive the role of innovation of technological side and also strategic side in your current field, in fine dining?

Â:

I think the future, and we had this conversation, we have this conversation a lot at this table with our customers. I think the future is going to be smaller and smaller. I think restaurants in

here and in the world are starting to realize that smaller is a little bit better, because the future of this, I think, goes a little bit with what people want to pay for. Because we can think about our future and we can think about our egos for the future, but that doesn't pay bills. So the customers that are coming, they are looking for something more intimate, something more interesting, something that gives them an experience, not just good food, because good food you can find anywhere in the world. And I think the future is smaller. It's maybe less technological. I think there is always going to be trends. It's very easy to make a menu now. If you go to chat.gpt, you can write that you have Asian influence, that you have this product, that you work in Portugal and you have a restaurant like this, it'll give you a menu. But it's something more. You need something more. You need connection. It's the connection. It's the love that people feel on the food. It's the time that we spend with the people. And I think chefs are realizing that as time goes by. I think technology will be always present, because you kind of have to sell your business somehow. And, well, social media, I think it's always going to be a part of it. You look, you're scrolling. If you see a restaurant that looks good or if you see a plate that looks really good, you're gonna search it out. And having a website is gonna help you out. But what makes the client come and leave happy and returning or somehow recommend you, it's that. It's that part. It's not technology. It's people. And, yeah, the thing about being small and being able to be there for your guests, I think it's what people are starting to look for. And the idea of, like, people just staying in the back and you're, like, talking to a waiter that doesn't like his job or... Oh, it's just a job that he's doing now, because he wants to go to something different. He's just taking a degree or something. Yeah. At the same time, paying for a fine dining dinner, the prices of a fine dining dinner, it's going to be... It's not going to be compatible. And people are starting to... I think that's very important as well. We're now getting into a point where we're paying sometimes 200, 300 euros for a meal and you don't feel the connection. The restaurant is cold, you don't see the chef, you don't see... You just see a waiter, a happy waiter, because normally when you pay 300 euros, the waiter is happy. It depends. It depends, but most times. But you don't see anything else. It's just a waiter, a very stuffy waiter with his tuxedo... And really nice food. Really nice food, but that's it. And then you feel that, where's the essence? Who cooked this food for me? And you go to the kitchen in the end, if you ask them to go to the kitchen, you don't see the chef. You just see 10 or 20 miserable people and they are just cleaning everything. And you know that they're going to do a 17-hour shift today and it's not what you want. And then you go to another restaurant that is nothing alike and way cheaper and you see happy people cooking, the cooks... The old lady in the kitchen and you kind of still feel that. You feel it more. I remember when we went to Seville, we did good meals, but the meal

that stuck with me was the old lady in the kitchen, alone, just doing her thing. Just putting a little bit of this, a little bit of that. It was very traditional, but she was happy, the staff was happy, the restaurant was full. It was highly recommended to us and the food was incredible. And we didn't pay 300 euros, of course.

P:

Would you say this foodie... That's just an off-topic question, so we're currently now done with it. Thank you very much. But would you say this movement of people traveling only for this purpose of having food experiences, like this foodie movement, would you say this will also shape the future of fine dining? Because like where I'm from, it's not... I'm from southern Germany and it's... In my region, 11 million people are currently located. There are three or four big cities with like 800,000 people, maybe 5 to 800,000 people. But a lot of it is in province, you know, province areas. And they still have very good restaurants there. Also because very closely located to France, to Alsace. But every time cooking or like dining out there is... You dress up nicely, you go into a nice dining room with big carpets, big, big, big, big curtains on the wall. And then you get there, as you already said, it's a very nice waiter, but you... It's... Everything is white, but you won't see any kitchen staff. You will just have a nice dish. But if you come there four months later, it will still be the same card. So will you say that, oh, what... How is your like general take on... Is the foodie movement shaping fine dining currently?

Â:

I think yes. I think very slowly. Because it's still a minority. There's a lot of people that travel because of food. But restaurants don't live out of that. They cannot. Because traveling has their months where it's better and worse. And restaurants have to persevere all months. So it's shaping it, but it's shaping it very slowly. And it's shaping it for those who keep their eyes open. So most restaurants that... And in most places, especially in province parts of big countries and close to big towns, if you keep your eyes open, you know why people are traveling to your restaurant. And if you start seeing that foodies, only foodies are traveling there, it means you're doing something good. But it... Those restaurants are easier to shape because they can clearly see the people that are going there are going there for the food. But it will take their time. Especially in big cities, it's tough. Because if you do something trendy, I'm sorry. If you do something trendy that looks good on Instagram, even if people don't love food, they can still go there and just take a picture. And Lisbon is going a lot with that right now. A lot of restaurants that are opening are similar. They kind of have the same menu. They kind of have the same vibe. They

look very cool. They have a DJ putting models on, which is very cool. But if you're eating tartar here and you're eating beef tartar there and beef tartar there, it gets to a point where... Where's the essence, once again. It's like... What are these guys doing? It's really cool. If you look on the Instagram, it's perfect. You... Friday night, where do you want to go? I want to go in there. But then you spend the money, like for what? It's the same. It's a cool night, yes, but if you... And then it starts being the place where you want to go. You go to all three or four that have beef tartar. You choose one favorite. And whenever you feel like having beef tartar, you go there. But you don't go there anymore. You don't go there for innovation. You don't go there for warmth. You just go there because it's a cool place. And I really felt like having oysters and beef tartar today. That's it. But it's not a place that you keep on going back to see something different. It's a place, like you said, that you keep on going back. Whether the stuff, the kitchen stuff, is the same or not, the things you see will be the same. And people don't want that. People want to come here and they keep on coming to our place because they know that after six months, they will come for a completely different menu. Same two people, but completely different menu. But at the same time, you have the other spectrum. It's more towards the fine dining spectrum of people that are more classic. So they want to know what they are going to eat. They don't want any surprises. And so they go to the restaurants that it's the same menu all over again because they want that experience. They want the poshness. They want the standard of what fine dining is. And that's it. And they keep on coming to those places because they know it's never going to change. The world will always have those people. They are not foodies. They are people that have some money and they want to have a safe experience. And they want to be seen spending some money as well. It's like there's places where only people with money go. And people with normally a lot of money don't tend to go to joints. They don't tend to go to places where there's a lot of heart in the food because those places are a little bit less poshy. They don't have the curtains. They don't have the white cloth towels. And so people don't feel as comfortable in those places. But those are not the people that kind of really matter into the subject. I think foodies are people that are craving something good here, good around them while they're having dinner. Not the white cloths. They don't care about that. That's why tables are losing clubs in all the world. No one doesn't have a towel. We don't have a towel. Loco doesn't have a towel. In Spain most restaurants don't have towels. People are starting to, they don't care about that because this is more comfortable than a white towel. And I think that's more important. And the foodies understand that. It's a shame that the foodies are not the people with the most money in the world. That's what I was going to say. That's why it's shaping it slowly because at the same time there's people with a lot of money that are tipping the scales

again back to fine dining, classic, and safe places. Or even trendy places. Or trendy places. Yeah but that's the way things take a long time to change. A long time to change. We will not see it but things are changing. I truly believe that things are changing for the better. But right now for example Portugal and probably most of the world is going through a tough stage because restaurants are starting to, some of them closed. Everybody that we talk around Lisbon they're having less people at the restaurants. People are spending less. Fine dining. Especially fine dining. So it's kind of declining a little bit. And most people don't know what to do. Sometimes they do nothing and they expect different results. But with time again people open their eyes. They start realizing what's needed. And restaurants that evolve into that they will continue to be successful. I think. Put their egos apart and just look at what the customers are looking for. I think that makes a difference because customers pay bills and keep the restaurants full. In the end this is a business.

P:

It's a good ending statement.

8.6 Appendix F – 18.10.2024

P:

Now let's begin. So, the very first question is, what is your name and what is your current position and what is the company you are currently working at?

K:

So, my name is K., I'm here at R. in Pforzheim, at the R. restaurant in Pforzheim, chef and master chef and I'm also allowed to accompany R. as head chef for gastronomy. This means that not only culinary, but also in terms of marketing and service, I am then responsible for the entire system, the entire R. restaurant as an employee, not as a managing director, but as an employee.

P:

Okay, very interesting. And what is the core idea of the restaurant?

K:

The core idea of the restaurant is to pick up the guest from next door, as well as to pick up the guest internationally. This means that we have a managing director here who virtually runs the restaurant, who also runs a business that is very strongly represented internationally. This also reflects our menu. So we are talking about a fine dining concept here, which is to be expanded next year, with an exclusive menu, but we are also talking about dishes that are addressed regionally and are known here, starting with cordon bleu or onion roast beef, in order to make the guests who come to visit us international, because of the business trip of our managing director, that he is of course not only picked up here on business, regionally, but also culinarily. So we offer a range from to, that's our goal and also a bit of our credo and also want to offer everything in the quality of to, that is, from good middle-class, innovative always, to the fine dining area with weak vision next year in the Champions League, so to speak, to the gourmet level again.

P:

Okay, very interesting. Regarding differentiation factors, we can see that Baden-Württemberg has a lot of very well-dated restaurants. What key factors would you say differentiate you from other restaurants or from your competitors in your area? Is it the menu, the service deal, is it the ambience?

K:

In any case, we will first of all allow many factors that the employees take into account. That means, as just mentioned, with the menu that we want to offer from to, which is also important to us, to pick up the Pforzheimer and not to step on the gas here now and then cause an international sensation, but we first want to pick up the local culinarily and also pick up the international guest and then, of course, we will continue with our cuisine. For example, I bake or have my own bread baked, so then the culinary journey begins, so to speak, that is, what does Germany stand for and the region is also world-famous for its sourdough bread, especially with regard to rye flour and I have baked and developed my own bread over the years and I am currently doing this in cooperation with our home bakery, who bakes the bread exactly, as I would like it to be and that is the first relief feature regarding all the others, that when you come to the R., you know exactly that you will be served K. bread before the journey even starts culinary. That's the facilitation feature, where you really only get the bread, like with us, always adapted to the season, a butter, currently we are currently cultivating a port wine butter now so in autumn times, which then fits great and matches great with our sourdough bread and then of course it goes on with the cuisine, that's the first factor, which makes us a bit different from what our colleagues are still doing, of course. The second factor is that we are a very wine-loving restaurant, with a lot of high-dated wine and we are now also positioned there because of this, even the onion roast eater can of course also drink a high-quality red wine with it, so you don't just have to look around here in the region, which of course produces excellent wines, but we are also set up in our repertoire so that we have a lot of focus on the old countries, especially with regard to France and Italy, but also, as they say, the new countries, especially New Zealand, Australia, the USA, which also have a focus and of course also bring a certain repertoire of wine there. So the cuisine from the beginning bread to the wine, which is of course also very exclusive and very well positioned, that sets us apart a bit in the culinary arts. Visually, of course, is always a nice story, we are of course lucky that we still have an integrated bar in the restaurant itself, but it is still a private room, so the guest who just wants to sit at the bar and eat is of course allowed to do so without feeling disturbed by the restaurant guests and vice versa. And the restaurant itself, despite its one-room, is actually only divided into three levels, due to the steps. We then have three levels each, which are then set up on 10 square meters, 15 square meters and which of course always look very, very nicely at the altitude. So we start with the first level and then on to the second level, where you would have to take three steps and then again to the third level, where you would have to take another two levels. So it's always

very interesting to sit in the restaurant as a guest and then let the room work its magic on you, because of the differences in height. The third factor would be even more, we still maintain an in-house vernissage here, you can call it that. We represented an artist here who is very active from Karlsruhe, who then knocks pictures for us here, but also paints pictures, on canvases. And they are only set up here with names, with background, with history and with price. And of course, this is also a visual inspection, where you would have to say, it's worth taking a look there or sitting down and visiting the horse woman Rieber, because simply the art, which is exhibited hanging and standing there again, always catches the eye. And who can actually be acquired.

P:

That's very, very interesting. I find the third aspect very, very interesting. We haven't had that in this study before. Regarding inspiration, would you say that, people look at each other's hands regionally left and right or rather internationally with your feather posture?

K:

Of course, there is a mixture of both. Of course, I am very French when it comes to my cooking goal, but of course I also keep my eyes open internationally. I'm also a huge fan of Spanish and Portuguese cuisine actually, coincidentally now. Asian influences and Mediterranean influences are also always a factor, but they are always incumbent on the French Kochtelistik. So I cook classically French, classical probably rather less, but I cook French, they say, seen in the courage. But I'm also not so fine as to put a ceviche on the menu or something Italian, Mediterranean. I'm always relatively open and I'm very, very innovative. What makes my cooking style a bit special is the cooking techniques. I'm a huge fan of the classic cooking methods, so if you talk about grilling again, but I'm also a fan of over-sous-vide cooking or reverse cooking, that's what they say. Of course, I'm very, very technically based or mainly aiming and that then lets my cooking style shape a bit. So even the simple things can be presented innovatively.

P:

That's perfect, because exactly the next question, would be the very first question regarding technological innovation, which is simple, do you use innovative technologies in your kitchen, in your everyday life, for example molecular gastronomy, accents from molecular gastronomy

or sous-vide cooking or, for example, digital reservation systems, as you see quite often these days. Are these innovations also on display at R. on a daily basis?

K:

In fact, and they are indispensable, both. If we start with the technologies within the kitchen, sous-vide cooking is of course unavoidable. He is sometimes more, sometimes less represented in every second dish, actually has several factors. First of all, the time factor and the quality feature, which is usually increased by this, you have to differentiate a bit, not always, but usually always, through sous-vide cooking, gentle cooking, you say a little bit about it. And the second factor, regarding sous-vide cooking, for example, is also that I do a lot of preparatory work, put my stress level more into preparation, as I do now in the daily business with all the karts, at peak times. I now prepare dishes in portions and set my sous-vide cookers, my 2, 3 to the temperature that is needed and then place the product vacuum-packed in the respective water bath, in the sous-vide cooker and I know exactly whether I need it in 10, 15 or 20 minutes when the time comes. I'm ready and can then finalize dishes almost completely stress-free and detached. Of course, there are several factors that speak in favor of using a sous vide cooker. First of all, the time factor, the stress level, shifts significantly and thus decreases again. Then, of course, the personnel costs are due to it, you have to be honest about that. Your sous vide cooker does not replace an employee, but it does give you one or two hands free space, because if you know that I can now rely on the sous vide cooker to keep the temperature constant, then I don't have to send an employee who then pays attention to it and has to catch the right time to take the product out of the water bath again, so to speak. That's a huge advantage. The taste advantage is that the food is in a vacuum bag, is vacuum-packed and does not lose any aroma through cooking. In this way, of course, we also intensify the taste. We can cook another essence from this juice. And so, of course, we always have the highest possible quality, which we then want to offer. So there are many factors that speak in favor of it. We also use sous-vide-cooking molecular cuisine to some extent, even if it is of course not always the right way in terms of nutritional psychology, but as an innovation it is just a nice, interesting way. Of course, we also make our own caviars from fruit juices. That's one of those things, for example, where we then also take molecular cuisine, which is then based on a gelling base of agar-agar. So whether it's a balsamic caviar or a beetroot caviar or an olive oil caviar, we all get it ourselves from molecular cuisine and, of course, all the soufflés or foams. If you then fall back on molecular cuisine with licetin, you can just pull beautiful clouds of foam, you can almost say, or just over the Easy bottle, so to speak, the frame blower is also called that, of course you can

then also create super nice foams and you regularly fall back on that. That's the way it is in daily business, I'll say now.

P:

Would you say that the technological innovations you are talking about now are they in terms of quality and also costs, are they beneficial, what do you call them? So are they advantageous for the company or are they very, very expensive at the beginning and the return on investment can only be seen later?

K:

So that actually pays for itself relatively quickly. If you then compare the possibilities and the innovations and the scope that develops as a result in terms of equipment and innovation, it pays for itself relatively quickly. Has several factors. First of all, the time required to get a relatively high level of quality out of it with few employees. That's the decisive factor, because there's nothing like quality. We don't need to talk about molecular cuisine and innovations if the taste suffers. That is quite clear, everything is up to him. Nothing beats taste. The second factor is that you can actually work very innovatively and very, very imaginatively. You can therefore adapt the dishes and ultimately offer the guest added value on the plate, who then wants to come back next time. I'll take a banana example now. I'm now making a pea soup in summer. From this pea soup I call the cappuccino, a pea cappuccino and make a pea soup out of it, quite classic. And from this mold regarding molecular cuisine, which is based on a lecithin, I can then create a beautiful milk foam from it. This milk foam first suggests a look, which is of course very, very appealing, because then this image of a cappuccino is also suggested again. Secondly, the influence of the air is then in the foam, then also gives a volume of aroma on the tongue again. That's the second effect again. And the third effect is consistency again. This play between foam and yet relatively creamy soup is always very, very interesting. So many factors also play a decisive role, both taste and appearance, but also the consistencies. In the end, the consistencies are also quite obvious in the direction of taste, because they then also demand added value and also generate a desire for more. That guests opposite.

P:

Very, very interesting. Now you have already said that we are now in the Pforzheim region, so of course you would also like to pick up the Pforzheimer. How do you balance traditional cooking techniques that you learned in French cuisine with the incorporation of these new

technologies? Does that go hand in hand? Or are there also, I don't want to say problems now, but are there also phase-wide trade-offs between the two topics, if you cook very revolutionary, new, innovative, but have also learned the old French cuisine?

K:

Of course, this is always exciting, because it is then of course exactly the exciting task of a restaurateur, a chef or a chef to create this fusion. There is also a good example. We now know the classic onion roast with spaetzle and vegetables here, with the classic onion sauce. But this can also be made more interesting. And of course again in terms of redesign, innovation, but also the French character. Of course, you can also use an entrecote instead of normal beef loin. That's where the whole thing begins. From the classic onion sauce you can take the onions out of the sauce and then cook a jam from the onions, a confit is called, from the red onions. And of course, instead of the fried onions, you could, for example, make an onion paper, which we have already done for an event. Puree the onions, mix, add a touch of colour, in the colour you want them to be, and then let them dry. And then you have onion chips in the form of a paper. In the end, you have nothing else than an onion roast, with the sauce and the same products, only with an innovative touch, a contemporary touch and with the onion confit of course a bit of French cuisine incorporated. This is such a prime example of where we had last time at an event. A guest also wanted to have a classic dish, but innovative. And then we resorted to it.

P:

Very interesting. This means that the satisfaction of the guests is influenced by it. And how would you say, in what direction is this influenced? Or in what direction do you influence satisfaction?

K:

First and foremost, the taste again. There is no way around it. But then, of course, there is also curiosity about the new. But that's also as nice as it sounds. But it is also a motivation and also a factor to keep inventing a new sign, to create new ideas and from simple possibilities, because we still want to involve the region again, to bring something innovative to the point from simple things and bring it to the plate. The curiosity of the guest is always the be-all and end-all after taste, because of course photos are taken from every second plate even in this day and age. These photos are then reproduced in statuses or shared on social media. The feeder is then also linked and thus we are always non-verbally present and also maintain marketing without

maintaining it ourselves. Every plate is already an image, a face, a marketing aspect that leads to the next, because you simply always have to expect that it will be put online again. The next, the second, the third, sees it. Based on the picture, we then decide whether to address the second or third guest or not.

P:

Okay, that's also a very interesting aspect. Now we're going over to the strategic side of innovation, because I'm sure you will have a lot to talk about, for example, diversification in other business areas, be it consulting, be it catering, which you have just mentioned, be it perhaps theme evenings, which may be held at Rehwag or cooking courses. How have these types of differentiation influenced your business model so far?

K:

From to actually. For example, we now also have events that are very classic kitchen parties. We always related to themes. Now the theme of Halloween comes up in the kitchen party. Of course, we will leave that present again. Then in December we have the kitchen party regarding the St. Nicholas Christmas flare and accordingly also adjust the dishes on the following and also try to pick up the guests in the same breath what we say or tell them what they can and may expect and thus also initiate the dress code a bit, non-verbally, without having to say what we want to see, but the guests know exactly what to expect and then follow the whole fashion track. That's something we try to influence a bit. The second is of course catering. Of course, we are also partners with many companies and make small buffets, small finger foods, small canapés. Porsche in Pforzheim in particular is an important topic, which we also accompany there and, logically, also the cooking schools, which we then also make available here and thus bring the guests a little closer to the R.. It's always very important to look behind the scenes, to look into the cold stores, to look into the kitchen, of course, to cook with us, to stir something ourselves, to bind sometimes, to cut something and then we try to pick up the guests again and again, to bring the R. closer and even then, who are the faces behind it all? Who are the hosts, who are the chefs, why does a restaurant run the way it does and what is our ambition for the future? You always have to nudge yourself a bit so that you don't stand still, but I mean, time runs away a bit, you have to run behind a bit and you always try to find the balance between guest, between the zeitgeist and also your own innovation.

P:

Okay, very interesting. In terms of the business aspect, would you say that different types of diversification, such as the theme evening now, that there is more marketing, a larger marketing aspect, such as catering and catering, for example, now taking Porsche's catering as an example, is then more of a source of income, or would you say that each type of diversification fulfills the same thing from a business aspect?

K:

Yes, there are several factors, because of course not every factor has the same importance, at least not at the present time. Many kitchen parties, caterings or events have a strategic wink for the future. So the Porsche pick-up who picks up a Porsche at the Porsche Center and then gets the canapés from us to celebrate the day, we don't expect him as a guest tomorrow. We then try to pick him up with a little smile, so to speak, culinarily, but when he sees a Porsche and thinks of the Porsche Centre, he also thinks of the R.. That means we try to pick him up for his wedding anniversary, birthday, communion, confirmation, then remind him again where he can go out for a good meal, where we have already picked him up and that there will be a celebration bus afterwards. That's a certain strategy that we have to cultivate in order to pick up the customer who also has a Porsche ready and then hold his celebration here. The celebration of a kitchen party or a theme party is of course the one where we try to get many suppliers on board, who in turn bring many guests internationally or nationally to us at R.. But the primary goal is to pick up the regular customers and the neighbors opposite or next door to show, look here, you can visit us every day, you know what we cook, but of course we also offer a celebration and sometimes a culinary delights that dance a bit out of the menu. From a strategic point of view, it's more strategic to pick up the guest from next door. And then, of course, we also have all the catering at the big companies. There, too, we try to pick up the worker, the assembly line worker, the cassette mechanic, the hairdresser, who then works in the companies, to say, but we are also there and sometimes offer a simpler kitchen. It is also worthwhile to come by with your partner, with your partner and enjoy the evening. So every celebration always has the same effect of satisfying customers, creating a treat and, of course, a feel-good factor. That's always very important. But strategically speaking, every celebration has a focus on where we see ourselves through this celebration or what added value can we generate through this celebration. Strategically, it is more likely to be very obvious in the future or then rather in certain partnerships. So every celebration has a certain attention, at least a strategic focus.

P:

Great, great and you're already talking perfectly about the next question or leading perfectly into the next question. The next question would be about certain partnerships or certain cooperations and the certain effects, such as, for example, we have suppliers, we have technology partners who are important for certain kitchen utensils. We have other partners for restaurants, like, I don't know, let's take the truffle supplier now. How do these collaborations and partnerships affect the success of your restaurant?

K:

So there's no way around it and it's an essential part that we work with suppliers and work with producers who are just as focused on quality as we are, and it's a hand-in-hand business. So we can't make anything high-quality out of a fish supplier who brings a cheap fish or a fish that is not of good quality. So a kind of basis of trust and hand-in-hand work is of course a decisive factor. Right now, when you take the truffle supplier on board, it is of course often the case that the truffle supplier follows the chef and not the restaurant, because the supplier knows exactly what the chef wants, what quality he wants, what he is willing to pay for this quality and vice versa. The chef knows what quality the supplier can guarantee him even then and it is then also a partnership, how is a cooperation, so to speak. The same goes on with vegetables and the same goes on with meat. So we work here with the butcher's shop, which is also very closely connected, in this case with R., which also knows exactly what R. wants, with whom I would also have to fit in a bit, because my partner, with whom I did the meat business, I didn't want to bypass him now, almost voluntarily, but I was then also willing to take the partner with whom R. had already worked in the past and even then we had to find a way to understand what quality the chef wants, now in this case me, and what quality can also be guaranteed. Of course, it also goes on with the vegetables and the fish suppliers, which I was then allowed to take on board because I know exactly how high the demand is to deliver a certain quality. So every vegetable supplier is important to me, for example, who goes to the market himself. Whether it's in Karlsruhe or Stuttgart on the market, it's important to me that he does it himself, so to speak. There is a big focus on how he sends it to someone, because only then can I know that the goods and the quality are really top and flawless and that the way from the supplier to me is as short as possible. And of course you can grow it congruently with a truffle, with an olive oil, just like with the fish, the same in green. And nothing beats quality, you don't need to beat around the bush, it's no use if I buy the fish for two euros cheaper, but have huge attunements in quality. The guest notices that, he comes again, a second time, and the third time he also thinks to himself, okay, this is just not the way it used to be.

P:

Very interesting, very interesting. Now let's move on to the third and final category of this list of questions regarding innovation management. In your day-to-day work, technological and strategic innovation are 50-50 or is the focus in daily business more on one of these two things with which you come into contact more?

K:

So there is then again more 50-50, I would say. The strategic impact only makes sense if you can deliver it in turn. If we say that we focus more on our daily business, on our a la carte, then of course every second catering, every second event should only be considered secondary. We are so small as a restaurant, such a small team. It's just that we really concentrate on the daily business as well as on the events with all our focus, because only then will we also cover our financial cushion and only then will we really cover the guarantee that we will be able to continue to work successfully in the future. So of course you can't afford to be just a good host in gastronomy, but to put everything else aside a bit, but it really has to go hand in hand what we say, we are good hosts, we offer good quality, but you can also rely on us for certain events. And even there, there are no losses to be made in terms of the event, the larger events and, and, and.

P:

Do you use specific KPIs or key figures in that you can measure innovations, for example, when you say we're doing a new partnership with the Porsche Centre?

K:

We know, for example, that we also maintain a booking system and in this booking system we can see very, very precisely which guest has been there how often and what he has paid. And in any case, it is very clear from the partners and guests, whom we are then also able to welcome, that there is a lot, a lot of rush and much, much more influx has been accumulated, where we were then really able to win new partnerships. So especially if you take the Porsche Center on board again, we were able to see that a relatively large number of events were then moved to R. via the Porsche Center, that many R. events were then moved to R. by employees or customers of Porsche who treated themselves to something there and then, as already mentioned before, then his pillars were celebrated here, then from our side. So there is definitely

an added value to be seen. Yes, if you take the example of Porsche on board, because the effort and the efforts have definitely been worth it.

P:

Okay, okay. Now come two more questions that are a bit either retrospective or a bit future-oriented. The first question would be, have there ever been cases, if it's not in the R. now, then it doesn't matter. I saw in your CV that you were in the G.. Were there cases there, for example, in which, technologically or strategically, the innovations did not work as planned and how did you then adapt or how did you deal with the situation, how did you deal with the situation?

K:

There was actually a prime example with me. And we maintain a reservation program, a booking system that is of course not only designed for booking, but also in that a real economic program has been deposited. The theory is of course very simple and at first glance also very plausible, but in practice it has not paid off at all. Of course, we were able to order our purchases via this booking system or reservation system, our true economic system, which is almost always the responsibility of one unit, and then we could also enter into cooperation with the quittel suppliers via this booking portal. But what is the problem in this story is of course that you need an employee for this story who only maintains this booking portal. This means that every apple, every onion, every piece of meat that has been taken out of the cold store must be entered in order to ensure a certain inventory and also to ensure the true commitment and contribution margin with which we can then also work here. But as a result, it is a huge bureaucratic effort. So every meat you buy must first be processed, parried, let's say, that is, freed from silver skin and tendons. Thus, the weight that we originally bought is no longer the same as the product should actually look like at the end of the day. And these are always differences that we then had to enter and also entered, only then quickly realized that it would no longer bring any more in daily business, because we are simply so distracted from the actual business, can no longer keep to the schedule, up to the day-to-day business, up to the Allercard, that we then advised against it and then do it relatively very conventionally. In any case, it is always the responsibility of a good calculation, a very good calculation even and a good purchase of goods and merchandise management. But to cultivate this now within the kitchen, if you want to cultivate it as a chef, was an innovation that was very easy to sell on paper, but could not be implemented in practice, because simply one more man was needed in the kitchen, who would have to meet the daily needs of merchandise management even then.

P:

Okay, very interesting. And now the last question regarding the role of innovation from a technological and strategic point of view in the future of fine dining. How do you evaluate the impact that innovation will play in the future?

K:

Innovation will always play an important role, sometimes more important, sometimes less important actually. At the moment, we are back at the focus, especially when it comes to fine dining and gourmet cuisine, that people are very happy to return to the classic track. So the topic of grilling on an open fire is a huge topic at the moment, that cooking for dishes for two, which are then carved by the guest, are filleted, is a huge topic. So I'll say a whole chicken in the pig's bladder, for example, which in turn has a sous vide effect actually. Or carving meat or fish out of the salt crust or out of a dough, these are such classic aspects that then get rolling again, are pushed back into focus, but are celebrated in an innovative way. So this fusion of classic cuisine and innovation will always play a role, sometimes more innovation, sometimes more classic, but this is hand-in-hand work and there will be no way around it either. And above all, the future, the past has also shown that many supposed innovations are actually old classics that are then sold under a new name, so to speak. So in any case, gastronomy has never stood still, only many things are repeated and are presented a bit in a way that is a bit transparent and a little different, but basically everyone cooks with water and the kitchen can't be reinvented in the way it was 50 years ago, but many old classics are being revived and have another chance to guarantee their added value for the guest once again.

P:

Great, that's it from my side now. I would like to thank you very much for these really very, very deep insights into your daily life and how you see innovations.

K:

I'm glad I was able to help.

8.7 Appendix G – 28.10.2024

P:

Hey M. how are you?

M:

Good afternoon P. I hope you are well.

P:

Please state your name and what is your current function in the organization you are working in:

M:

M. I'm the Manager and sommilier of T.

P:

What is the core idea of the restaurant/kitchen you are currently working in?:

M: Our main concern is respect for the product and we base ourselves a lot on everything around their seasonality.

P: What key elements (e.g., menu, service style, ambiance) make your restaurant distinct from competitors?

M:

The factor that makes us unique is the fact that first all our decoration meets our terroir name (all the factors that make a wine something special) and above all the respect for the product.

P:

Do you use innovative technologies (e.g., molecular gastronomy, sous-vide, or digital reservations)? Are the technological innovations you implement revolutionary or incrementally impacting your kitchen?:

M:

At the moment the only thing we have is the digital reserves that help in the communication of living room and kitchen.

P:

How do you perceive the role of technological innovation in improving the quality, and reduced costs of your restaurant?

M:

We are a small restaurant with no investors behind us, which means that we really have to do the math before any investment in new technologies, because every penny makes a difference at the end of the month.

P:

How do you balance traditional culinary techniques with the incorporation of new technologies? Has this affected customer satisfaction?

M:

At the moment we do not have any technology applied in our restaurant.

P:

How have strategic innovations, like diversifying into consultation, catering, cooking lessons, and theme nights or other ideas, influenced your restaurant's business model?

M:

The innovation we have in our restaurant is the surprise tasting menu in which customers go from the beginning to the end of the menu without knowing what they are going to eat, the only thing that happens is at the beginning of the meal, customers say they have any allergies or restrictions and through that we change our menu in order for the customer to have a complete experience.

P:

What impact have partnerships or collaborations (e.g., with suppliers, technology providers, or other restaurants) had on your restaurant's success?

M: Partnering with hotels for us is the most important as they bring us new customers in exchange for money.

P:

Are Strategic and Technological Innovation 50/50? Or the focus is more on one of the two?

M:

It is more about strategic innovation, about understanding new techniques and through that we change things in order to achieve a better profitability of the restaurant.

P:

Do you use any specific KPIs or performance metrics to track innovation outcomes?

M:

No

P:

Were there cases where technological or strategic innovations did not work as planned? How did you adapt?

M:

Working in a small restaurant is like a child's education in which every day is an adventure and we have to risk a lot for the results we are having. I hope I have helped.

8.8 Appendix H – 07.11.2024

P:

And then we start with the first question. Could you please state your name and the actual position you are currently working in?

T:

So, my name is T. In my current position in the restaurant, I'm the owner and the chef of the restaurant. The thing is, nowadays, I run the kitchen with M.. So, M., she's my right arm. And she manages the kitchen. We do all the creation together. But then, during the service, I run the room. Because I want to give freedom to M., but because it was a necessity that we had. And what would you say is the core idea of your kitchen and your restaurant? The core idea of B... We work product. So, I think that when you have a small restaurant like this, you will always aim to work product. And then we give our own approach to it. So, basically, we don't have a specific kind of kitchen that defines us. It's... We want to use creativity. We want to use imagination and, first of all, we want to have fun. Because this is not easy to do and we need to have fun. Otherwise, we won't be able to put all the love that we want in our dishes and creations.

P:

All right. And then we're going to start now talking about differentiation factors. What would you say are core factors that set you apart from the other 5,000 restaurants here in Lisbon? Is it the menu? Is it the service style? Is it the ambiante?

T:

Yeah. I think it will be the menu. Because you have... Here in Lisbon, you have a lot of restaurants like us that aim to work product and use their creativity. So, I think that the thing that will set us apart from the other restaurants will be the menu. Because it's my point of view and M's. point of view is that its about the product. And we use our own guidelines, let's say so. So, I think that will be the thing that will set us apart from the other ones. Because service... We aim to have a proper service like all the other restaurants. Otherwise, clients don't come back. And ambiante, yeah, this is our vision for B.. The place that we have and the decoration that we have and the music that we play in the restaurant. For me, personally, it's very important because I'm a big fan of music. So, I do all the playlists here. And for me, it's a key role. We have plenty of clients that notice that and that they say that to us. So, when the clients come

here, you want to sell them a feeling. Yeah. With everything, with the package of good music, good tasting food. Yes. I want them to feel at home and to have fun. That's the main thing for us. They need to come here and we wanted to give them a cool time.

P:

And regarding inspiration, do you take them from regional aspects or from very international scoping?

T:

International. Regional as well because we work Portuguese products. So, we go around what we have available close by. And we work with local producers, small producers only that aim for quality and have a lot of care for the product that they have and that they're selling. But then in terms of menu, yeah, we go international.

P:

Okay, alright. And now we're going to dive into the first dimension, the technological innovation dimension. The first question here would be, are you currently using in your daily business innovative technologies? Like, for example, I see here the blowtorch. Are you using maybe aspects from the molecular gastronomy or sous-vide or a digital reservation system?

T:

Yeah, we have a digital reservation system. And we use a lot of technique, yes. So, we will use, we have blowtorch, we use sous-vide. So, we cook a lot of things in low temperature. We do some fermentations, but that won't go inside the technology. But yeah, we use, We use the siphon that you charge with the gas, with the NO₂. We do a lot of foam, so we do a lot of those things in the restaurant to play with the textures.

P:

And now regarding the reservation system, also the sous-vide, would you say that they have like, what effect do they have on your working, on your cooking? Is it for food production, is it stability of quality? Does it help you with... It would be stability of product etc.

T:

We are able to give to some products more different textures from what people are expecting. Or we can give them a longer shelf life. With that we can gain other flavors, other aromas when we do dry aging, when we do stuff like that.

P:

And would you say regarding cost, do they also affect your cost?

T:

It will affect because it will be more expensive. Because you have to buy, to work one product, we have several things around it. So, yeah, it will be more expensive, of course.

P:

Okay, and how do you balance traditional approaches on working product and traditional cooking techniques with the implementation of using technology?

T:

I think that we use the regional techniques and the old techniques to push flavor. Because I think that the new techniques, of course, they will give flavor, but the big base of the kitchen will be the classic style, the regional style, the old style. If you don't have that, I think that the new technology won't be able to have the same impact. If it's missing the other.

P:

And regarding your customer base, would you say that the customers appreciate your... for example, when there is a new dish innovation and you are preparing a new foam?

T:

I think they can recognize that and we have a lot of feedback from that because we play with textures, for example, and people... sometimes we have very simple dishes and we have one very simple dish that we have since the beginning of B.. So we have five years and a half, more or less, right now. And I have this dish that is with us since day one and it's a very basic thing. It's potato, egg and pata negra ham. You have it all around Spain, you have it in Portugal as well, they call it ovos rotos. We do it in a different approach. So we do a potato foam with a 64 degree egg and the pata negra ham, it's pure. So it's the best pata negra we can get for that dish. And even yesterday, for example, I had two clients that they were walk-ins. We were fully

booked and we had one table available and they were passing by, they stopped at the door and they said, yeah, okay. It will be here that we are going to have dinner. At the end of the dinner, the guys asked me to do another booking for Friday because they really enjoyed it and they weren't expecting what they had for dinner. And one of the things was the potato. And the guy said to me, look, this was a crazy simple dish, but the texture, the chanin, let's say, that it had, it was like, oh my God, this is what I was looking for. So, yeah, we have a lot of that.

P:

Nice, nice. And now we're going to go over to the strategic part of innovation. We see your restaurant concept is very focused on quality of the dining experience, of the service. It's not broad, not very big because you want to keep an eye on every table. Do you still have other strategic practices you're practicing also outside of the restaurant? For example, you're maybe consulting other restaurants or you're doing caterings for events or cooking classes or even theme evenings?

T:

So, from time to time, we do here in the restaurant some dinners with wine producers, for example. Usually, we work Portuguese product. We own the wine list. We go a little bit international. And usually when we do dinners here, we'll be with international wine producers because I have a very good friend of mine. He's a wine distributor here in Portugal and he has a lot of foreign producers. So, from time to time, he likes to come here and he likes the way we work and the way we have flexibility with the menu to be able to change easily and to do different things from what we do every day here. So, yeah, we have that. We don't do caterings. We don't do consultancy. We were never asked for. It wouldn't be a problem for us. But we would never do a copy of B. because B. makes sense for the size that it has and everything. And from time to time, we have some clients that ask us to do dinners at home, so like a chef at home, and we do that. Okay, all right. That we do and it's very easy for us to do because since we have a big kitchen, if you compare it with a house kitchen, of course, so, yeah, we do that because it's easy for us to manage everything.

P:

And would you say this cooking at home or ordering a chef at home and also the wine evenings on the other side, what would you say, what function do they give your business model? Are they more like a marketing aspect or are they for extra revenue, extra planned revenue?

T:

For the dinners right now, at home, will be for the extra revenue, yes. And the thing is, we always get new clients. It won't be hundreds of new clients, but we are always able to because when we are hired to do a chef at home, we are not a cheap thing because we work product. We won't be a cheap dinner. And usually when this happens, it's a special occasion for this client of us. And usually what he tries to do is to invite new friends that hadn't been to the restaurant, for example, to be able to provide them a different experience from what they were expecting to have as a dinner at home.

P:

All right, thank you very much. And then second question about strategic innovation is regarding partnerships because you're working product, meaning you have a lot to do with partners and cooperation, with delivery from product, of course. What would you say, how do they affect your success of the restaurant, the importance of partnerships? And what would you say are the most important partnerships? These partnerships with maybe the meat delivery guy or the fisherman?

T:

I think that for a very small restaurant like us and what we try to do here, I always try to have a very good relationship with all my suppliers. And I think it's easy because we are small, they will be small as well, so we are able to be flexible and they're able to be flexible with us as well. So we always try to have that and we try to feed that because it's good for us and it's good for them. Because sometimes they only have a certain product for a very short time in a very small quantity and we are able to get it because of this good relationship. So yeah, it's good for us because of that, because we are able to have very specific products that usually not a lot of restaurants are able to get. So yeah, that's very important for us.

P:

And regarding the online reservation system, do you also step into contact if there are problems with contact people over there? Yes. And how would you say how important is it?

T:

With the online system or with the clients?

P:

With the online system.

T:

Yeah, I don't have big problems with them, but yeah, when I need. And it's easy because nowadays we do WhatsApp and everything, so it's very fast to communicate.

P:

And also regarding, because we have contacted over Instagram, how important do you see Instagram or the social media influence on your restaurant? Because you have many people that come here, maybe they take pictures from your food. How do you evaluate it?

T:

For us, as a very small independent business, it's very important because it's a free way to show ourselves. Basically, it's that. We would love to be able to invest and to have more work in communication, in PR and everything, but it's very expensive for a very small operation like us. We are profitable, yes, but we don't make a ton of money, so we have to use the tools that we have for free or that we can use them in a very effective way and it won't be crazy expensive. And I think that with Instagram, one of the things that we feel here at B. is that we have a very fast feedback and we feel that communication very fast because we work products, so we have products that we have for one week only because here at B. I have a fixed menu and then I have a suggestions menu. And the suggestions menu, today if you come here for dinner, we have seven dishes. Tomorrow, if we work a lot tonight, maybe tomorrow if you come and visit us, I will only have two because we weren't able to get new products or we have to produce other things, so we have to manage that. With Instagram, when we have a very good product that we need to use it fast because it will only last for three days, for example, otherwise we have to put it on the trash. We put it on Instagram and we instantly understand that people will book online to come and eat that dish and they will arrive here and they will turn on their phone and they will say, look, I came because I saw this on Instagram and I want this. You still have it? Yes. Or when they book it, they write, look, I will go for dinner but I want this dish, so if you have only two or three portions, please save me one because I want to have this.

P:

Okay, cool. And are they then doing this over Instagram or can they also do it over the reservation system?

T:

They can do it over the reservation system as well, yes.

P:

Okay. And do you see that, what would you say, how much percent of the reservations do you take over the reservation system and how much percent are walk-in customers?

T:

It will be 80%, 85% online reservations or when I say online reservations, they can call in to us and we do the booking and they give us an email and everything and they will receive everything to pay the fee. Okay. When we speak about online reservations, we have a lot of people that book online, but we are in Portugal and people still like to call to the restaurants and say, look, do you have a table, can I book a table? Or we don't have the culture to book in advance. Okay. It's starting to change but it's not that common and I have that problem, so.

P:

All right. And now we're going to dive into the last section of the interview. It's about innovation management and the first question would be, how would you say is the weight between strategic and technological innovation within this operation? Is it 50-50 or would you say one of them is more important for your company?

T:

When you say strategic, what do you want to say with that?

P:

The cooking at home for the customer or the wine evenings, stuff like that.

T:

No, it would be more the technology. The technological. Yeah.

P:

And what would you say is currently the most important technological innovation you're currently working with?

T:

For us, I think it would be the sous-vide. Because it keeps us, it helps us to cook in low temperature, so to keep. For example, we have an octopus dish and we cook the sous-vide because when we boil octopus, when we cook octopus, we cook like five octopus at a time. And because we use fresh octopus, we need to freeze it first to break a little bit of fiber and everything. So, when we cook it, we cook a big, nice quantity for us. And this way we are able to have octopus for one week. Even if I have to save it for two, three weeks, it will be good because it was sous-vide cooked. So, it's not a problem. We need to manage that here because we have 27 seats. It depends on the days, of course, but we aim to do 30 dinners per night. If we do 30 dinners per night, we're good. And since we are only three, and it's me and Marguerite and then we have a dishwasher working with us that gives us a hand during the service in the hot section. So, that's why one of the things that we use a lot of sous-vide is because of that. Because when we want to have a hot fish dish that is cooked, because we work a lot of tartars here, to be able to provide all the single portions the same texture, the same cooking point and everything, it's easier for us. And with sous-vide, because this way Marguerite works in the front of the kitchen, she's able to control a few more things because Daniel, our dishwasher, he doesn't have yet the experience that we need to give him a little bit more dishes to cook.

P:

All right. And regarding when you have a new dish innovation, you make a new foam on the tartar, or what I've seen, the oyster with also a scoop of tartar inside. Are you using any specific KPIs or measuring points how to measure the success of a dish innovation? Or are you, like for example, are you looking into the satisfaction?

T:

We don't do it because we are a very short operation. So, we would love to have more time for more things, but right now we don't have that. Okay. This year it's been a little bit difficult for us. That's why we are such a small team because we need one more person to work with us, but unfortunately right now we are not able to hold that expense for us. So, that's why we are only three and we need to skip a few steps.

P:

Okay. Okay. And the second to last question is now looking into the past a bit. Have there been cases regarding an innovation, a dish innovation, a technological innovation that you've maybe seen somewhere and then you wanted to implement it and it didn't work out as you wanted? Has there been something like that?

T:

Yeah, a few things because I'm a cook. I love what I do and I'm always trying to do new things and to have new ideas and to apply new techniques. And I have a lot of cookbooks. I buy a lot of cookbooks on Instagram. I follow a lot of chefs. Nowadays it's easy to see new things and to know how they work. And from time to time we have a few that we say, yeah, this would make a lot of sense to us. It would be very good with this, this, this and this. But it's too much for the space that we have, for the amount of things that we have to do. Because we have to manage our time very well to be able to do everything and to have at the beginning of the service everything ready to be able to give proper service. So yeah, a lot of things that I wanted to apply, that I tried, that they worked. But they didn't work because of the amount of time that I need to spend on that specific thing. So it didn't make sense because that dish would be crazy expensive. Or at the same time it would be crazy expensive and I would miss a lot of other dishes. At the end maybe it wouldn't make that sense because, okay, maybe we have this very expensive dish, very cool technique. But then we lose three dishes because we weren't able to produce everything that we needed to have that dish proper. So maybe we will lose money because we have three less dishes to sell and the other one is very expensive.

P:

Okay. And now the last question, which now looks into the future and how you evaluate or how you see the future. What would you say, what will the role be of innovation in technological sense and also in strategic sense in the future of gastronomy or in high cuisine?

T:

I think it will always be very important because it can help you to provide a better quality of product. In a few cases to last longer so you will have less food waste and we need to be aware of that and we need to pay attention to that. And here we do that and we try to, and we have as least food waste as possible. So I think it will keep going to be very, very important.

P:

Are you currently seeing a new trend on the horizon that will come in the next months or years?

T:

I think that fighting this food waste and this environmental impact that a restaurant has, because I think that a lot of people don't have that idea and you still have that in Portugal. If you go around the restaurant scene, we have several examples here in this neighborhood only, that it's a classic style restaurant. You go there and you ask for a portion of stewed beef, it doesn't matter. And the amount of food they will give it to you, it's too much for what you need. And you won't be able to eat everything and they put it to the garbage. I think that people are starting to be more aware of that and to pay more attention to that. I think that will be one of the things that will start to change because prices are getting, everything is getting very expensive so you need to manage everything way tighter. I think that even the clients are more aware of, yeah, I don't need a ton of food in one tray to be happy because if I eat 110 grams of a fish tartare, I will be well fed as well. In the other one I will be well fed but probably I will be overfed.

P:

And what would you say in your opinion, the last part of the question, what would you say in your opinion is now a food trend or an innovation trend that has been in the cooking industry but now is, I would say, starting to get out of date?

T:

The old style fine dining. Yeah, because I think that old style fine dining, it's very beautiful to see but it has a lot of food waste. And I think that even those restaurants that are very classic and that they are very expensive and they work every day constantly so they are on a cruise speed, they are starting to change that. They are starting to change their point of view because people ask, people want to see that and people want to feel that point of view, that knowledge, that care for a product and the respect for the product. I think so. Or at least I hope so.

P:

Okay, alright. So thank you very much. It was a pleasure. That was the interview.

T:

Thank you very much.

8.9 Appendix I – 25.10.2024

P:

Thank you very much for deciding to help with my master's thesis today. The very first question I ask you is, what is your current position at the company you are currently working for?

R:

Owner and also chef. Okay, and what is the core idea of your restaurant, your kitchen, where you are currently working? We try to offer a natural cuisine that provides interesting dishes from the regional ingredient pool and is permanently on the market.

P:

Okay, and in terms of key factors, such as the menu, the service goal, the ambiance, what do you say makes your restaurant unique compared to competitors?

R: I think that we offer a very good quality in a relaxed atmosphere, without it being too artificial, you can get a really very good quality in all three areas, I would say now, and at the same time feel relaxed without thinking that you have to take yourself with you or something.

P:

Interesting. In terms of inspiration, would you say that you only take regional accents into your kitchen or do you also look around internationally?

R:

Yes, definitely internationally. Our credo is actually already in the kitchen that you use as many regional products as possible and make them interesting in some way, either through a perhaps unusual combination or, we work a lot with spices, that you somehow bring in a different touch without having to get the main ingredients from far away. I think spices are clear even from far away, but these are small products where I can somehow reconcile with my conscience that the world is carted. But that's a bit of an inspiration for us and we have very different influences, but definitely internationally. So we look around a lot and always have a bit of phases sometimes Mediterranean, sometimes Oriental, sometimes Asian, but that's not so fixed. That's just how we feel about it. It's a very personal cuisine. So we are a small team.

P:

And how many times would you say you change your style per year?

R:

I can't say that now. We do it really subconsciously and we sometimes notice that way, but now we suddenly have a pretty oriental card like this. Or with us, it's also the case that the card is always in evolutionary change, I say. So we never change the map all at once. The individual dishes are on the menu for five to six weeks and then change. And then you change this and sometimes that, sometimes that. We have a small map, I think we may have looked at it. We don't want to establish classics. This means that the menu is slightly different every time the guest comes. And that makes it super changeable. So you can't tell how often it changes style. So that comes quite organically somehow.

P:

With regard to your guests, your customer base, would you say that you see very, very many reoccurring guests, i.e. guests who come back again and again? Or do you see that now through a bit of this foodie movement, which of course is much more in such travel advisors as the Michelin Guide, do you also see a little more growth?

R:

I think it's nice to have more data, to be honest. But my feeling is that we are in a very touristy area, but because we are something in the hinterland, not directly on the lake, our main clientele is already regular customers. And from my gut feeling, I say that 85 percent of them are regular customers. And in the summer we notice even more pressure, or that there is already more going on and more inquiries are from people who have never been there before. And of course you get that some people who have never been there find us via Guide Michelin. That's actually one of the best advertisements, I'd say now. We like this award very much. I think we fit in very well there. And that's also what the people, those who know their way around, who go by the Bib gourmand, will find with us what, I think, that says. We have a very good quality, but somehow still at a certain acceptable price level. Guests do come through it, but that's not our main move-in. So sometimes someone finds us through Google or Instagram or something, but not our main goal. So the main customer base is already regular customers. And that's why we're somehow long-term oriented and also try to be successful in the long term and not just take the quick customer with us. We sometimes do it so painfully in summer. We often send guests away because we are simply at capacity limits, which people sometimes don't

understand. Sometimes we have practical freedom, but we just don't pack anymore at that time. That hurts sometimes, but I say it's the better approach in the long run.

P:

Okay, very interesting. Now we are entering the first technological dimension, or rather the first phase of innovation. The first question would be, do you use innovative technologies in your kitchen, such as those from recent years? Are we seeing a little more monicolor cuisine, monicolor gastronomy is half coming again or is already a bit on the verge of decay again? Then, of course, we have sous vide, we have digital reservation systems.

R:

So in the kitchen itself, the only thing, I would say now, is something technologically new, the sous vide that we use from time to time, not in general. And because I also have a bit of a hard time, with the environmental aspect, with all the plastic and also in terms of health, that everything is used in a differentiated way where it makes sense. I know restaurants that vacuum pack things in portions and then cook them, we don't want that. Yes, of course we have a good stove, but that's not a new technology, I would say. Where we're a bit newer now is definitely that we have an online reservation system, Open Table, which I've had for four years now and I'm super happy with it. That made it much easier for us.

P:

Would you say that this Open Table reservation system, which is also a very well-known reservation system in the catering industry, would you say it improves your processes?

R:

Absolutely. There are several reasons. So, we are a small team or I am here alone during the day and that means I used to be on the phone a lot for reservations, which took an enormous amount of time. That's one reason why you can take it off your hands once people have made their own reservations online and also with direct feedback, because that's the main advantage of these tools. In contrast, I can write an e-mail, but I don't know if it will work or not. And I see immediately or maybe another time that is only possible and it works. I get a response and it fits. And all customers who have done this for the first time will always do it from then on. That means my phone load has gone down great. And what is another advantage, first of all you also get a certain customer base, so sometimes with data or you know how often the people

were there. You have automatically created a customer file. That's an advantage sometimes. And that's also the be-all and end-all for us, that you stagger the reservation times, i.e. the arrivals of the guests, over the evening, because, as I said, we are a small team. And that's why we have to be super careful that not too many guests come at the same time, that the processes are good. And there you can store how much per half hour slot, how many guests are allowed to arrive and then it is distributed. So in the past, I had a bit of an eye on it myself in the reservation book, but sometimes an employee accepts a reservation, who sometimes don't have it on their radar. And there we used to sometimes have 20 guests at 7 p.m. That's far too much for us. And those are the advantages that I see there. So that has brought an enormous amount. It's not cheap, but it's definitely worth it.

P:

Ok. And how do you see the impact of your online presence? So if you say now that you sometimes have customers who come via social media. Are they all at once, are they at the door or do they come via your website?

R:

So the online presence is becoming more and more important, I would say now. For me, the most important tool is, I would say, Google. The Google entry that you have good reviews there. I think guests often use the homepage to look at the Swiss menu. So you have to have them, of course, but that's not the new marketing tool, I would say that there is something coming about it somehow. So for me, Instagram is very important. Facebook is dead. There is nothing left. I'm doing something on Instagram. But these are the tools. So Instagram, Google, homepage, these are the online tools that I try to maintain. I have just this fall, I'm trying to update my online presence in general and see where we are represented. Is it still right to have an overview? That's an enormous number of channels and I think that it also helps if you somehow have up-to-date photos everywhere, which is not the case at the moment, but what my goal would be to keep everything up to date and also focus on certain channels. There is still TripAdvisor. But there are also Speisekarte.de where I have also seen that they are actually very well connected. Then all the gastro guides, where I think Michelin is the most important. We're actually represented everywhere, but you just have to focus somehow. There is ultra much. So then you just have to see where you specialize.

P:

Okay, very interesting. Now we are moving in the direction of strategic innovation and there was the very first question regarding differentiations in your business concept, such as caterings or cooking classes that you might offer or theme evenings. How have these topics or, for example, a consulting or consulting for another restaurant, influenced your business model?

R:

So far we have been very single-track with purely restaurant, pure food gastronomy. What we do from time to time are special promotions. We're going to have a special menu right now this week and a mint. We also sometimes do a theme week, but that's all limited to the core business of gastronomy and food gastronomy. For me, the next strategic consideration: We have to partially rebuild our house and there will be three more holiday apartments, probably that you will get a bit of a second mainstay with overnight stays, because you have to say that pure food gastronomy is becoming more and more difficult to be profitable there. And that's what I see in the development and I'm trying to do something about it. Especially if you don't want to be too big in good quality, then it is sometimes really difficult for it to work. That's why you need other mainstays. But that's the only thing I would say now that I'm strategically active in another area.

P:

Okay, okay. If we briefly talk about these winegrowers' evenings, would you say that this is more for marketing reasons or is it more to be seen as a figurehead or is it then to flush extra sales into the coffers?

R:

I don't think I can evaluate it so directly. My feeling is more marketing.

P:

Okay, okay. Now always very important is a question that is always seen as very, very interesting in the catering industry, namely the general cooperations and partnerships. Of course, you have suppliers, you certainly have technology partners in phases, for example the open table topic. How do you measure the impact of partnerships on the success of your restaurant?

R:

Ultra-important. It's super important to me and is also one of my biggest motivations. That's what I enjoy the most, exchanging ideas at eye level. In the meantime, I have built up a very good network of different people. That is very enriching and inspiring. I can't overstate it, honestly. We now also have such a reputation that producers approach us who say we have tried this and that, we try a special cheese, a special vegetable or someone slaughters a calf. We cross-fertilize each other. We sometimes do evenings not only with Winzeln, but with a wide variety of people. We've had a cheesemaker before, we've had a vegetable farmer before. Just this cooperation and exchange, discussing the menu, is an idea for the evening. It's not always the same, we do something different every time. For example, with a vegetable farmer who is very close to us, we had preserved, dried, frozen things a year in advance, so that we could make a menu that evening for a year. That's fun. This is very important for me and also for visibility.

P:

Regarding innovation management. For the first time, we can say that these strategic steps that you are now taking with the construction of accommodation, for example, are far more important for your company. Would you say that you are still using certain key figures or certain forecasts that you have set up for such ideas? Or do you have it calculated?

R:

I also studied economics, economics. That's why I've been there a lot myself. But on a small scale. Especially for the holiday apartments, I did a market analysis myself. What are the average prices before staying? What are the average occupancy figures in Baden-Württemberg? You get quite good data that you have a guideline of where you end up, what sales you can make. For the restaurant I will be, I try to see my evaluation of my BWA as quickly as possible and see what happens there and have my key figures, in the end percentage of goods sold, percentage of personnel deployment and other costs. But these are also the decisive factors in our business, that you can see what I have for it. These are the biggest cost items. If they don't fit, then you don't do any more business. What I also analyze is the number of guests per month, per capita turnover. These are also things that I observe. Now, of course, we can also pan a bit into the past with the penultimate question. Have there been instances where you had a technological or strategic innovation but it didn't work out the way you thought it would, the way you planned it would? I don't really think I would have come up with anything bigger that wouldn't have worked, I don't really think.

P:

Then we can go straight to the last question. It looks a bit into the future. You have just said that another mainstay for you in the future is very important, essential. How do you see the role of technological innovation in general, but also of course strategic innovation in the future of gastronomy?

R:

I think it's very important. I just have my feeling that I can't prove it now, but my feeling tells me that of course you know colleagues and follow many colleagues. Especially comparable businesses of our size, purely in the catering industry, you can tell that they are all having a hard time. Or that you notice that everyone is trying things out, somehow trying to have a different concept, to have special evenings where you realize that you can't continue normally because the business just gets stuck. I've also noticed that we've had a very big price increase in the last two or three years. I was still shocked myself when I looked at one of my menus three years ago. You have to say that we went up there properly, but it was necessary. We had to do that. It's not that we're enriching ourselves, quite the opposite. That's when I realize that you have to be innovative, that you have to think about it further. This year I changed my entire calculation, i.e. changed it, because it just didn't work anymore and used a completely different calculation method. I continued my education there. I think if you don't stick to things like that and observe them and keep coming up with something new, new concepts, then you go under. Technologically, it will certainly get even better. I think the reservation tool has brought an enormous increase in efficiency, but otherwise I honestly don't see anything that really benefits me right now. Maybe a new POS system, but that's ultra expensive, which could save a bit. But otherwise I think that if you are computer-wise, then it fits. Technologically, I don't know how much can simplify when you're already a bit digitalized. I think strategic innovation is super important. My feeling.

P:

That's it. Thank you very much for taking the time.

R:

No problem at all. Happy to help.

8.10 Appendix J – 14.11.2024

P:

So the first question would be, could you please state your position and the company you're currently working in?

R:

Okay, so my name is R., I work with Chef M.V., the company is called M., and I started as a maître d' here in Z., but then I went to just do reservations and groups, like events and stuff, but now actually I'm working in both restaurants as manager, and doing the reservations also, and serving tables, and doing a bit of everything. And I like that, I like that.

P:

Okay, and when we now go only into this restaurant, the idea of this restaurant, what would you say is the core idea of the restaurant?

R:

So Z. Gastrobar, it's traditional Portuguese food, but with world techniques, so we use Portuguese products, but with world techniques, so we have like a pink swordfish ceviche, so ceviche is a Peruvian technique, but we use the pink swordfish that only exists in our coast, but we only use Portuguese products, we only have Portuguese wines, and even the white drinks like vodkas and gins, we only have Portuguese. We try only to have some things we don't have here, but we try.

P:

And what would you say are the core factors that differentiate yourself from other restaurants around you?

R:

So, we have a female chef, that's different, who is very charismatic, she was the judge for Masterchef, and she has a cooking show on a TV cooking network, and she has like 20 years in this profession, and she does a lot of things, she does events, and she's a teacher also, and so I think people come a lot because of her, and the food is good, it's very comforting. And regarding, we've already talked, that you for example have the pink swordfish as a ceviche on your dish, on your cart.

P:

Regarding inspiration, do you rather take regional inspirations, or very international inspirations?

R:

Well, she, a lot of regional inspirations, and we just have been briefed about the new menu, so I'm freshly informed, so we have like a lot of dishes with inspiration in Azores, the islands, and Madeira, our islands, and a lot of things from the Lentejo also, but then also the techniques that like Japanese techniques, so we use those flavors, but a lot of regional flavors, but the techniques we go outside. All over the world. All over the world, yes. So it's a mixture.

P:

Now regarding innovation, we will now dive into the first dimension, which is technological innovation. Okay. What would you say, do you, or does the kitchen use a lot of technological innovation on a day-to-day business, like accents from the molecular gastronomy, or sous-vide, for example, or a digital reservation system?

R:

Here in Z., not so much. In the other restaurant H., which is more conceptual food, more. But here we use sous-vide, we, I don't think, they use like gelifications, agar-agar, they use a little bit of that, and I think when they use the world techniques, they also want to evolve in some things, because Portuguese food is very traditional, very, like we do it in big pans, it's different food, it's like comfort food. But they use, I'm thinking in the kitchen, what do they use more, like different things. But I think they use a lot of techniques even to facilitate their jobs. So it's easier in the end to do a dish. So they use, but I'm not aware of a lot of techniques. I know sous-vide they do, they do sous-vide, they do agar-agar, they gelify lots of things to put in, to decorate. They use pastry techniques also. So I don't know if I answered your question.

P:

No, it's perfect, perfect. Would you say that they are like improving the processes of cooking? You just said that they are like maybe time savers also?

R:

Yes, they are, they are. And then D., which is the sous-chef now here, he comes from Japanese kitchen, so it's he uses that here to save time even, because here at restaurant H. we give like 15 dinners and that's it. Here at Z. Gastrobar we try to turn tables over, and so the timings have to be precise, and people here are in a hurry, they come for lunch, business, we have one hour, so they need to sometimes cut ways.

P:

And in general, about quality and improvement of reducing waste, would you say these technologies are improving or are they beneficial?

R:

I think people are the ones that need to, so we have a lot of waste in restaurants, a lot of waste. Here we don't have a lot, because I think people are the key to that, not the, I don't think the techniques are the, because you have to see that, oh this will give me to, the experience also gives that, right? But here we don't have a lot of waste, because they, for instance, we have a dish that goes on Sunday, which is the Portuguese stew, and what's with the leftover? We do gyoza for the, so this its people thinking about that, it's not, so I think, I don't see how the, like the, how do you say, the machines can, I don't think they can do that, but maybe closing in vacuum helps to not have waste, like, yes, maybe.

P:

And you already told that it's every, like everything you sell here is Portuguese product, with some international accents of course, but also you told me that Portuguese kitchen is often times very traditional, so how do you balance the traditional approach with, like, very modern approaches here, and innovative approaches here in your restaurant?

R:

So, chef was saying that now this new menu, we have more Portuguese traditional food, because she wants to bring Portuguese here, because now we are having more foreigners than Portuguese, and she, because Portuguese like the traditional flavors, but she wants a pretty presentation, I think that's where, instead of putting everything on a dish like Portuguese do, she wants to make it beautiful, and so I think that's the best mix we can have, and not a lot of food, because Portuguese, like, you go to some traditional, and they put a lot of, one dose is immense, and here we put a little bit less, so there's not so much waste also, right?

P:

And when we just talked about the guest, what would you say is your primary customer base?

R:

So, this is a middle-high class customer, and they know what they want, so they're demanding, but they're also easy, because they know what they're going to have, but you need to pay, so we need to be very hospitable with them, so, because they're travelers, they know things, so we need to be on, we need to pay attention to them.

At the restaurant M., which is of course very, very small, we only do closed doors, we only do reservations to have food calculation planned way more precise, to be less wasteful, because of the price of product, because it's very high product priced.

P:

Is it more tourists, or more Portuguese?

R:

We started only Portuguese, because we opened in the pandemic, so, but now it's, I think, 60 or 70, 30 more foreigners than Portuguese, because I think we're expensive for Portuguese, because we're not, the salaries are not as good as outside, so, but yeah, so we want to bring the Portuguese back, that's why we have more traditional dishes now on this menu.

P:

And how do you evaluate the impact of the Bib Gourmand? Like, you are now a second-time Bib Gourmand, is it important for your business?

R:

Yes, so the Bib Gourmand, and being in the Guide Michelin, on the Michelin Guide is very important, because you have people that only go to recommended Michelin restaurants, and the second time gives us consistency, I think, and it's very, I'm very proud of it, because, and it still is the Guide Michelin, it is what it is, you're not good because you have a Michelin star, but usually it is, because when you go, I went to Bilbao, like, months ago, and I only went to the recommended Michelin, and they were all good, so, because, you know, they use, because they

have to, because, you know, they use good products, that they know the service is good, so, I think it's very good for us.

P:

Does it, for example, does it give you, like, guarantees, like, a guarantee that you will have more customers?

R:

No, no, no, no, no, and we, so, you have the, when you want to see restaurants, you go to the site of Guide Michelin, and only if you have the fork can you book through the Guide Michelin, so, and that's what, and, but the fork offered us, like, this year we didn't pay, we were not going to pay some certain taxes, so we went to the fork, because we were not there, so we can have that link through Guide Michelin, which is important, and when you, when the people make the reservations, I can show you. If the reservation is online and , and if there appears a little flower next to the reservation, it's because it's through Guide Michelin. You can see the reservations, which one came from the fork, from Guide Michelin, from our site, and on, on the phone, okay, so, and we can do, in the end of the month, a little statistic, which is good for us, it's useful, and a lot of people come through Guide Michelin.

P:

Okay, okay, and regarding, when you were just taking about the phone, regarding social media...

R:

We have people managing our social media, it's a communication agency, and, well, I think it's good to have an idea and a concept, because people like that, but we have also the link for reservations here, and so, they're taking care of us, like, for a year now, but I don't see a lot of difference. I don't know if a lot of people come through the social media, but maybe.

P:

Okay, now we're gonna dive into the second part of innovation, which is strategic innovation, where you, as, like, a manager of two restaurants, can maybe talk a bit more about that, regarding, also from your role, not just Z. Gastrobar, but also M., regarding differentiation, for example, here you also sell different products from other producers, maybe you have a catering,

which you offer to people, or cooking courses, or theme evenings, how do they influence your business model?

R:

So, I'm trying here in Z. Gastrobar, especially, to arrange groups, because it's a big place, you don't have a lot of places here in Lisbon, that can sit, like, 80 people, and so, I've been trying to sell this to companies, so, we've had some events with Galp, and even with Guia Michelin, they did here, it's not Guide Michelin, it was the tires, the Michelin tires and Chef gave a workshop, and that was nice, and we're trying to see, but Chef is very busy, because people want to be with her, so, what I've been trying to do, is sell the space like a whole, and M. , which is a more private, it has 30 places seated, and it's all around the kitchen, so, I've been trying to sell, like, for companies, for the CEOs, and over there, and here, more groups, not for Christmas, I'm sending for a lot of companies, if they want to do Christmas dinners here, but we don't have, like, activities, or theme nights, no, because we don't want to, this is our concept, it's food, and service, we don't want to go to where we don't know how to do.

P:

Okay, would you say these, like, when you want to, like, promote for companies to come here, are these an extra, for extra revenue, these actions, or just to, like, for extra marketing, to retain more customers?

R:

Extra revenue, yes. And in Christmas time, our chef cooks the turkey for very valuable customers, so that they have their Christmas food or Christmas dinner prepared in our restaurant, which is also an extra revenue for us.

P:

All right, now, regarding partnerships, because, as I said, you also have partnerships with, I don't know, olive oil over there.

R:

So, the chef wanted to, for tourists, that wanted to take home, like, last minute thing, and the products we use here, so the olive oil is the one, the one I use here, and one of them, and we have our bags, that's more marketing, but sometimes I just give it to customers that are nice, or,

but we used to have more products, but we had a lot of things going to waste, because people didn't buy them, and we threw it away, so now we only have little things, olive oil, salt, but products that chef likes, and believes, and also uses.

P:

And, yeah, regarding, like, food deliveries, like, you know, produce deliveries, how important do you see the partnerships you have, for example, also, maybe, I don't know, with connections with the fork, with your online reservation system, how valuable do you see those partnerships?

R:

Yes, so, here in Z. Gastrobar, I think it's been, because we, when we open, we have worked with the fork, but it's very expensive, we pay a lot of taxes, so besides what we pay mentally, we have to pay, like, three euros per person reserved on the table, so if it's a table of four, it's three times that, it's four times three euros, so in the end of the month, they bring us a lot of customers, but we have to spend a lot of money, so we stopped working, working with them, and started just working with some software reservations, but they didn't bring us customers, the fork brings you customers. Okay. And now, like, since six months, we started to having the fork, and it changed, we have much more customers, especially foreigners.

P:

Okay, okay, and now, in regards to the last section, which is more innovation management, would you say, in this restaurant, what is the distribution, the weight distribution between technological innovation and strategic innovation?

R:

Oh, I think strategic is, it's more important, yes, because in the room, you have, well, you're talking about, like, the computers, or the, so yes, here in the room, it's service, service, service, we don't have a lot of, we don't use it, we have the, that, maybe if we had the, on the tables, it would be easier, but we have to memorize it, but in the kitchen, they have, so they have two new ovens, for instance, which is important, good brands, they have, like, the grill thing, it's, like, different, it's a robata, which is Japanese, they made it especially for that, so I think in the kitchen, they use much more than this in the room.

P:

Okay. Yes. Okay, and regarding specific KPIs, so measuring certain, like, customer turnovers and stuff, you told me that you can see over the fork, for example, like, over the reservation system, from where they come, do you, and you said that you have, like, in the end, a statistical, like, calculation, yeah, and what else do you, maybe, calculate? Do you calculate, I don't know, when you have, like, now a new menu, and you have a new dish innovation, yes, how do you do that?

R:

Well, we have in the end of the month, we always see the sales, what, which dish or which one we sold most, okay, and try to understand if it makes sense to keep it on the menu or not, that's why, when we changed the menu now, it was a little bit, we went to see the sales, went to see which people wanted, which they liked, wines also, more, I don't know, I don't know if I, maybe desserts, desserts is a thing that we have, we change a lot, we don't have a menu for desserts, we have them, I think that's innovative, we have the desserts on the, when you enter, so the chef wanted to do a dessert bar, on display, so people get up and see the desserts, so we don't have a menu, so we can change them, that's nice, and it's interactive with the customer, and we have to go there and explain and make jokes, and chef always wants us to tell a story about the dishes, okay, so that's important, I think that's a strategic also, and makes a difference, she always likes us to tell the story of the dish, or how it was born here in the restaurant, or what it means to her, that's why she was here in the briefing, telling us she was, she's the chef, I don't know if you understood, this lady is the chef, and she wanted, she wants us to tell the story, in restaurant M. it is the same, we have to have the story tell, to make sense for the customer, and for us as servants, now like, we need to, in our mind, it has to be a, like a plot. Right, and this calculation, is it allowed by register machine. Actually the guys that installed this, they said that they also offered us that, we can also pay, like, we have the portable machines, when we go to the terrace, and we could also pay there, which was good for us, but we didn't activate that, because it was more money, so instead of their paying on the portable ATMs, they could pay on the, where we register the things, okay, so, and the, so, but we don't, I know some restaurants are doing that, and you could pay, like, by QR codes, and stuff, and, but for us, I think it's very confusing, because the terrace has a lot of people, and then you had to see who had paid.

P:

And now the last two questions, one looking more into the past, one will also, like, your future outlooks, have there been cases where a strategic or a technological innovation, like a dish

innovation, or where you wanted to, like, to incorporate some new, you know, some new technique, or also some new style here in the dining room, what happened when it fails, what happened when innovation fails?

R:

So, our chef, we fail a lot, because she has an idea, and she wants to implement it, and then after some days, okay, this is not working, so, like, opening days, we started opening all days, at all time, and then we started closing two days in a week, then she said, no, let's open again, so, this is the most confusing, because now we're open, then we would close in the afternoon, so, lunches and dinners, but then she said, no, we have to be open all day, so, we're always trying, and even with the menus, this is always trying, in M. also, we closed the last year, we closed after Christmas, on January, and then in August, because we didn't have a lot of people, but this year, we, she, oh, no, this year, we'll be open, but August was awful, we didn't have anyone, so, she was like, we should have closed, so, we're always trying to, but it's not easy, the restaurant is very volatile, we never know, today, we can give, like, 30 lunches, and tomorrow, two, and, but you have to have the staff for it, right, in the kitchen, and in the room, you have to have the food ready, because if they come, you have to be ready, so, it's not easy.

P:

All right, and now, the last question, yes, how do you see the role of innovation and technology, technological or strategic, doesn't matter, in the future of restaurants and gastronomy?

R:

So, I think it's, it has to be more planning, no doubt, so, we don't have more waste, because I think there's a lot of waste, not here, fortunately, but there's a lot of waste in the cooking business, and I think, maybe, like, management programs for the, like, economy, I don't know, how do you say, the back office, so, if you have, like, some program, I don't think it exists, like, Primavera, I don't know if you know it, Primavera is for hotels, they manage the stocks, so, okay, what goes in, you have to, when it comes, you put it on the register, and then, when it goes out, you have to, so, it makes, he makes the buys for you, the program, so, I don't think there's, there's one for restaurants, because I think that would be interesting, so, now, I read, I would sell my last bottle of wine, and he automatically would order that, but he, but he knows how many persons we had the last month, so, he will order, and he knows how much, exactly, and in hotels, that works a lot, because my father, he's a, he works with, he's a technician of

computers, and he does that, it's a program of management, but only for hotels, for restaurants, because it's, it's much larger, much larger scale, but I think that would be helpful, because people make mistakes, and machines also, but people, because I'm afraid that this weekend will be good, so, I will order, like, three boxes of wine, and then, the wine is there, because it would, so, maybe a help like that, it would be good.

P:

So, you evaluate the future to be more calculated, more precise.

R:

Yes, so, because there's a lot of waste, and it's bad for the planet, there are a lot of people, especially now in Lisbon, we see so many homeless, and it's, I think it should be, we should be caring more about that, and recycling. Cost optimization. Yes, of course, of course, that's, that's the main point, but, and recycling, I think there's a lot of people that don't recycle in restaurants, it's mandatory, but there's no one seeing if you're doing it or not, so, but that would be something also important, because I've worked in restaurants that they didn't do recycling at all, but it's little things, but it's important.

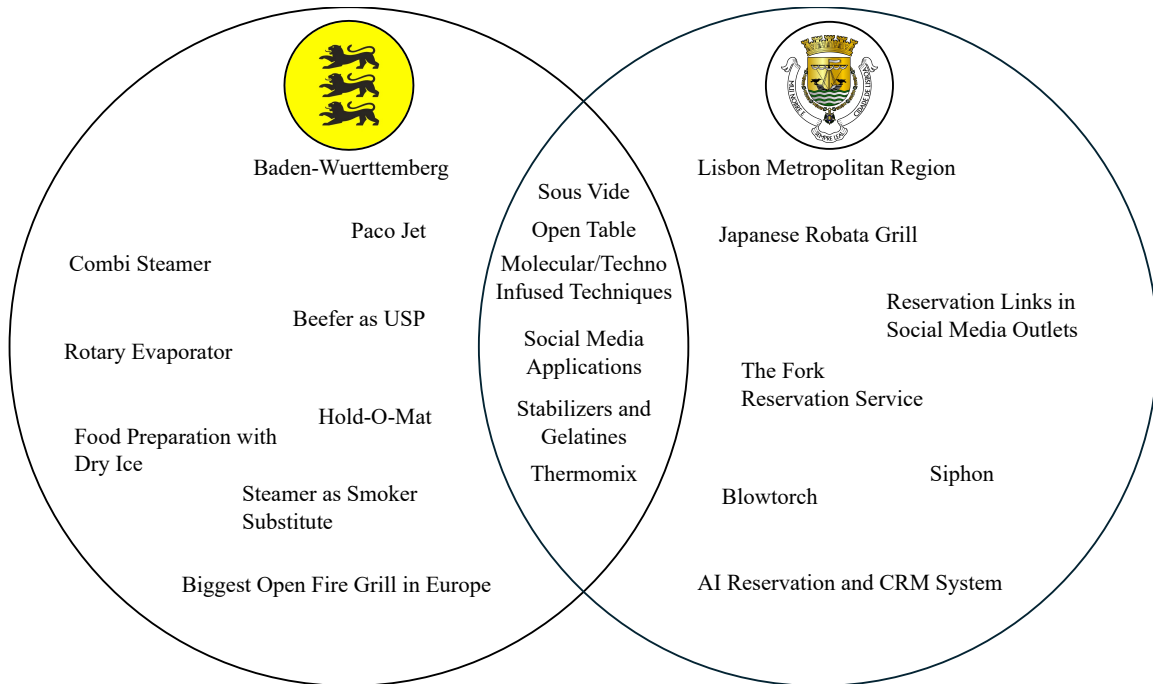
P: Perfect that's it. It was very insightful thank you.

R:

Perfect. Yes.

8.11 Appendix K – Figure 2

Figure 2: Distribution of Technological Innovation Noted by Interview Respondents



8.12 Appendix L – Figure 3

Figure 3: Distribution of Strategic Innovation Noted by Interview Respondents

