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INTERVIEW

Renzo Rosso
Merging the worlds of wine and jeans

CONCEPT

Innovative approach
New York, Brussels

10
best

MUSEUM



AUSTRIAN SWEETS AT THE NEUE GALERIE



Kurt Gutenbrunner, chef at the Neue Galerie's Cafe Sabarsky, offers thoughts on his approach to convincing Americans of the merits of Austrian cuisine.

How long have you been at Café Sabarsky? Are there differences with prior restaurants and cities?

I opened Café Sabarsky in Fall 2001, one year after my first restaurant Wallse opened. The concept at Sabarsky is to uniquely showcase the setting of a Viennese cafe in this wonderful museum, the Neue Galerie with German & Austrian Art from the 20's and 30's. It's very different than any other restaurant I have done before and I think, with its setting, Café Sabarsky is a unique landmark in New York City.

Do you bring food over from Wallse and are the concepts very different?

Most of the food and cakes for Café Sabarsky are produced at Wallse. The kitchen at Sabarsky is what I call a satellite kitchen. It is very small and with the museum gas and electric restrictions it is necessary to have most of the big production completed at Wallse.

Is it challenging to convince people to eat Austrian food, which is often considered to be heavy?

The heaviness of Austrian food is a common misconception. I encourage people to visit this wonderful country and experience the enormous amount of young talented chefs taking their Austrian roots and love for the cuisine to a modern and exciting level. Because I believe I am a pioneer of Austrian cuisine in the United States, carrying one of the largest Austrian wine lists and educating several chefs in my restaurants, eventually that transports the word to other places. It makes me very happy to see that other restaurants feature classics like chestnut soup and spaetzle on their menus. We are on the right track with doing this, but I also feel that though I was born in Austria, personality needs to be set in front of nationality for a successful concept in the United States.

Are there any particular areas that you are proud to have introduced into the restaurant? Are there any themes or signature plates of note?

The Neue Galerie is a unique place where the art, bookstore, design shop and cafe play an equally important role together and create this phenomenal experience. It is very important that all of these elements play together on a high standard on a daily basis. There are always changes in cafe dishes but the cakes like the Sabarsky torte or our version of the classic Viennese cakes like the Sacher torte or the Klimt torte are dishes that I am very proud to have at Sabarsky and serve on a very high level.

Does the Cafe have wine lists and food menus specifically related to exhibits?

All of the special events at Café Sabarsky are held in cooperation with the Neue Galerie. It is our rule that both food/wine and art must play an equal part in the events we hold.



Is there a tasting menu?

Café Sabarsky is modeled after a Viennese cafe and it would be totally against the cafe culture to have tasting menus there. However we do offer these with much success at Wallse. At Sabarsky we are open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and the base of a Viennese cafe house is a spot where people go and eat a lot of cakes which I call sweets and some little dishes which I call savory. I started the menu this way eight years ago and so far people seem to enjoy these little separations

Do you see new trends in the food and wine world?

My biggest love is the classic cuisine and I always try to use these classics and put my personal twist on them. I am interested in many kinds of trends but also find that it is very dangerous to jump on every trend and risk losing your identity.

I think when you go to a museum and enjoy wonderful art you should also be able to enjoy wonderful food. When we opened the Neue Galerie and Café Sabarsky we put a different spin on museum dining.



Italian architect Renzo Piano who added 75,000 square feet and increased the exhibition space by more than fifty percent. Piano also added a new performance hall, a welcoming entrance on Madison Avenue, a new café, a new restaurant, a shop, and a new reading room. Piano's style is very distinct and his project for the Morgan's three buildings was to off set them with three new steel-and-glass buildings around an internal piazza.

At the same time, the Morgan also decided to improve its dining options. The library signed on with Restaurant Associates, which has award winning Chef Charlene Shade Walker in charge. One of the Morgan's new dining options can be accessed without admission to the museum while the Morgan Café is part of the museum and can only be reached following admission to the museum. The cafe has salads, soups and small food plates as well

“When you go to a museum and enjoy wonderful art you should also be able to enjoy wonderful food, said Café Sabarsky's Kurt Gutenbrunner”



as traditional American fare like macaroni & cheese, herbed fries, and s'more cheesecake.

The Morgan Dining Room has a more complex and elaborate menu with dishes such as Moroccan royal daurade with legumes, couscous and carrot salad. The Morgan also serves

brunch with an assortment of dishes including a beet and goat cheese salad, lemon mascarpone-stuffed French toast and balerine pasta. Much attention is paid to organic foods both on the menu and on the wine list. In addition to wine, the restaurant has an impressive line up of cocktails, new versions of old standards such as the Algonquin, the Bronx Cocktail and the Mazoozalum, which are said to be J.P. Morgan's personal recipes.

NEUE GALERIE Café Sabarsky

The Neue Galerie is housed in a landmark building that is part of the Museum Mile that includes the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim, the Cooper-Hewitt, the Frick Collection and the Jewish Museum. It was built in 1911 by Carrere & Hastings, the same architects that created the New York Public Library. Formerly a home of Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III, it was purchased in 1994 by businessman and philanthropist Ronald S. Lauder and Art dealer Serge Sabarsky. The two men were passionate about German and Austrian art and had long dreamed of opening a museum to showcase the finest examples of early twentieth-century art and design.

The museum cafes are run by Austrian chef Kurt Gutenbrunner who has a restaurant in New York called Wallse that is named after his town of origin. Gutenbrunner's signature style is a lighter version of traditional Austrian dishes. He pays close attention to seasonal flavors and ingredients. His restaurant and the cafe have gotten rave reviews from restaurant critics in New York. The cafes feature dishes from Vienna including strudel and Linzertorte. Café Sabarsky was created with the great Viennese cafes of the turn of the 19th Century in mind, the scene of much of the intellectual and artistic life during Vienna's heyday.

Café Sabarsky serves a variety of breakfast foods, sausages, salads, sandwiches and sweets. Some dishes listed under the savory category on the menu include spaetzle with cream; wild mushrooms, peas, sweet corn and tarragon; crepes with smoked trout and horseradish crème fraiche; and sausage salad with peppers, red onions and apple-pear vinaigrette. These are paired admirably with an interesting selection of primarily Austrian wines made with indigenous varieties including Gruner Veltliner, Zweigelt, Blaufrankisch, and St. Laurent. There are also some impressive Reislings on the list. Desserts are paramount in Vienna and Café Sabarsky does justice to this part of Austrian cuisine. Sachertorte, Linzertorte, apple strudel and a wide assortment of cakes are on the menu. You can also choose from eight ways to have your coffee. On Thursday evenings, Café Sabarsky hosts a cabaret and offers a prix-fixe dinner followed by a performance with an Austrian and/or German music theme.