



# Tanja Grandits

in the interview



Restaurant Stucki, Basel  
18 GaultMillau points,  
2 Michelin stars

**We celebrate 10 years of Lifestyle. We Create Friendship is our new hashtag for our anniversary year. What's your spontaneous reaction?**

For me there is no longer a need to create a friendship with V-ZUG as we already have one. I'm friends with all my contacts at V-ZUG and with the other ambassadors, it's like belonging to one big family. Having friendships at work is really important to me, and of course as time goes on my friendship with V-ZUG is becoming wider and deeper, and that is really wonderful.

**You have been part of the Lifestyle Ambassadors Team almost from the very beginning. Do you have a special memory or moment relating to your partnership with V-ZUG?**

I have really clear memories of the many events I've had the privilege of working on with V-ZUG, and one of the highlights was definitely making food in Milan last year – that was really special. It was also great to meet up again with an old colleague, Ryan Clift, who is now also a V-ZUG ambassador in

Singapore. I really loved that event, also because it was in such a beautiful location. Apart from that I also find all the events in Zug itself really amazing. One thing that immediately springs to mind is the huge 3-day anniversary that we catered for, how there was a complete kitchen built behind the scenes so we could cook for the hundreds of people who came to eat at the event. It was amazing and unforgettable.

**What does partnership mean to you?**

For me partnership means a very deep bond on a variety of levels. It also signifies trust, finding out about new things and discovering different worlds. And it signals unity, sharing similar ways of thinking and similar values. I work in partnership with V-ZUG because above all I love the way we cooperate and the amazing amount of give and take there is in what we do together. In addition to that, V-ZUG has the best appliances and I want to work with the best tools for the job, so from that point of view as well it's an ideal partnership.



### **What's your vision for the next 10 years? What could the ambassadors do?**

I have managed the restaurant here in Basel for almost 10 years now and have been a V-ZUG partner for almost as long. I'm particularly looking forward to the next 10 years; I feel very relaxed and secure about how things will go with me and V-ZUG, just because we know each other and we know how things work. I'm looking forward to lots of new experiences and joint events with our V-ZUG colleagues, which will be really interesting.

### **10 Ambassadors create an anniversary dinner, each chef celebrates a course. Why did you choose the Ceviche intermediate course?**

For the anniversary dinner I have chosen to make Lemon Zander Ceviche.

I don't have a signature dish. Guests have always asked me what mine is, but I've never been able to answer that question because I'm always changing and recreating my dishes. I've made this Lemon Zander Ceviche at lots of events before, including last year's V-ZUG event in Milan. It's a dish that is relatively simple and quick to make. The marinade can be prepared the day before, the lemon pickled and the oil infused, and then you simply need to cut up the fish on the day. It's an uncomplicated dish that you can make in the food truck or wherever else you are in the world. There's also a connection with V-ZUG because I made this yellow zander in Milan and have served it from the food truck too, so I thought it was a fitting choice for the anniversary.

### **Do you use any special ingredients for this dish?**

For this dish I'll be using my favourite ingredients, one of which is lemon. We use it for the lemon zest, lemon oil and pickled lemon, and there is lemon juice in the marinade too. I love lemon, it's so unbelievably zesty and refreshing, and I adore its acidity. My other favourite ingredient in this recipe is fresh turmeric, which I also really like. I love its colour and the way it makes the dish so wonderfully yellow and vibrant. I drink ginger tea with turmeric in it every day.

### **Which heating mode is helpful for preparing ceviche?**

For this dish I need the steam cooker primarily for the lemon brioche and for the mini croutons used to garnish the dish. We always make brioche in the V-ZUG steam cooker because it makes the inside wonderfully light yet bakes the outside to perfection. I also need the steam function to make the lemon-infused oil. We mix the lemon zest with fennel seeds and a little star anise, add olive oil and then leave it to marinate in the oven at 60 degrees.

### **Do you have any serving tips?**

For me personally it's really important for everything to be round. To start with, the plate has to be round, I don't like plates with corners. I also love everything to be placed in the centre of the plate, relatively unspectacularly, so no long lines across the plate, and everything placed quite close together. I also like aspects of the food to be rounded, like the lemon yellow dots in my ceviche dish. Oils are great, especially if they mix with the sauce to create patterns, and depending on the dish I also like to have petals on the plate, like the little yellow flowers used to decorate the ceviche. Apart from that I feel that the presentation should all be very relaxed – it doesn't matter if something lands in the wrong place on the plate because it will still look nice. I think pure chance plays a part in presentation, too.

### **Do you have a first/early (childhood) memory that you associate with food or cooking in general?**

My grandma made lots of things using apples; we had a big field behind our house with lots of apple trees in it. My favourite was apple purée which my grandma cooked for us. Apple purée and pancakes ... I can still remember the lovely smell of cinnamon and apples in our kitchen. I would stand on a chair next to my grandma while she cooked things on the stove and watch carefully how she made everything, that's my earliest memory of food and of cooking in general.

### **What should eating be about today?**

I think that above all eating has to be enjoyable, the food should taste great and you shouldn't only cook lovely things at the weekend. By lovely I don't mean that you should spend



ages cooking every day, in fact quite the opposite. Meals can be really simple, but the ingredients have to be right and also easy to prepare. The actual cooking can be fast, too, because it's not really time that makes good food. It often even takes longer to read the instructions on ready-made food than it does to quickly prepare something yourself. And above all it does you good. Food should also be healthy, but not healthy in a limiting way; you shouldn't be religiously following an eating plan, in fact quite the opposite, food should simply be food. Food is nourishment for us, not just for our bodies, but also for our souls. It should be nutritious and also enjoyable.

What effect would you like your culinary creations to have?

I primarily want my creations to be fun. I want everyone to enjoy eating them, and I also want my team to enjoy making them. There's a quote from Oscar Wilde that puts it perfectly, "The maker should be as happy as the buyer." And I agree. Everyone who makes lovely things should be happy and enjoy making them. We do that here as part of an amazing team. I want to share and pass on the joy I have doing all this and I can do that brilliantly with my wonderful guests and of course my fantastic team.

### **Where do you get your inspiration from?**

I find inspiration everywhere. It's always there, in my daily life; I can't specifically say that I get it from travelling or from listening to good music. For me inspiration is fresh produce. When I pick something up and smell it, that's all inspiration in some way. I really do believe that everyday life is the best inspiration.

### **From look and feel to smell and taste is our guiding principle: what treat do you particularly like to conjure up in the V-ZUG steam cooker?**

When I'm at home, cooking for my daughter Emma and of course for myself, it's all about baking. At the moment we're completely mad for pizza, which the oven makes perfectly. By contrast in the restaurant we primarily use the oven as a steam cooker, for warming up all manner of dishes, from making purées all the way to keeping cooked meat warm with the sous-vide function. Downstairs in the patisserie with Julien of course it's the bake function that is required, and he also uses the appliances a lot for dehydrating.

I think we all completely exhaust all the functions on offer, and in terms of operational time, some of the steam cookers are on 24/7. I sometimes pop down to the basement on my day off and the steam cooker is still on, full of tiny strawberry pieces that are dehydrating. I think we are definitely testing the appliances in every way possible.