



Franck Giovannini

in the interview



Restaurant Hôtel de Ville
19 GaultMillau points,
3 Michelin stars

We are celebrating 10 years of Lifestyle by V-ZUG. What would you like to see Lifestyle by V-ZUG celebrate?

My vision for the next ten years is to keep improving together with V-ZUG. The idea is to tell ourselves that what we're doing is good, but we can do even better. And I think that if we keep that in mind, we can continue to improve. The ultimate goal is to make progress and give customers a better product and a better result. My ambition for the next ten years is to continue developing and improving everything.

What does partnership mean to you? Why do you work with V-ZUG?

Because of its high-quality appliances, and its respectful manufacturing processes. We try to use local produce, to not buy products from too far away, and to work with local producers. And I feel that V-ZUG follows the same principle because their products are manufactured in Switzerland. They don't manufacture ovens on the other side of the world, so this

philosophy is the same as ours: there's a certain simplicity to our standard of quality. This is a source of great pride for me, and it's something that I've been able to put into practice for many years now, since both of my predecessors were already partners of V-ZUG. So I'm very proud to continue this tradition, and while of course I appreciate the quality, I also like the local aspect, the Swiss aspect – that's also something I consider very important.

10 ambassadors create an anniversary dinner, each chef celebrates a course. Why did you choose this recipe?

Because it's a very easy recipe that doesn't take long to make. Plus, there's the practical side, since when you're making it at home you can cook the royale in the bowl or on the plate directly. You can finish it off and then you can sit down with your guests and all you need to do is heat it up in the oven for just a few minutes. It's nice to be able to sit at the table with your guests. When you're cooking at home, you also want to enjoy yourself – as we were talking about friendship before – and I



think that it's important to be able to spend some time with your guests too. That's why I like creating dishes that can be prepared in advance. There's a bit of work involved first, but when your guests or your friends arrive, you can all sit down together, and that makes a huge difference.

Do you use any special ingredients for this dish?

The special thing about this dish, depending on the season, is the black truffle, which is always a very elegant product, and I think that combining a very simple product like the leek, that you can get everywhere here, with a more elegant product like the truffle, gives a very nice result. But you can also replace the truffle with caviar or plenty of other things. The aim is to take a simple product and give it a sophisticated twist.

Which heating mode / steamer programme helps you prepare it

Which programme do I use? The Steam programme. To prepare this dish you need a humid heat, so the Steam programme does the job perfectly.

Do you have any serving tips?

We decided to use some truffles and the idea is to put them in at the last minute. First, we can put in all the vegetables and ingredients that will withstand being steamed in the oven. But the black truffle should be added at the very last minute so that it is only just warm, which allows it to develop its flavour. If it's cooked for too long, it loses some of its crunchy texture. This is why it needs to go in right at the end.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

I have absolutely no idea where my inspiration comes from. Mostly, the products themselves are our source of inspiration. We're lucky to be able to change the menu regularly, there's always something new. We're constantly creating new things, coming up with new ideas. But there's not just one thing in particular where I draw all of my inspiration from. On a day-to-day basis, most of our inspiration comes directly from the products.

What values do you and your cuisine represent?

What my cooking represents is... my entire life. I also try to show my personality through my cooking. On the one hand, my cooking is simple in terms of flavour, even though it's very technical, complicated and extremely detailed. But there's a lot of simplicity in the products and the flavours.

What effect would you like your culinary creations to have?

I'd like for people to remember my creations and the emotions they evoke in people. In my view, the important thing about what we do is the emotions that we give to our customers, our friends or our family at home. I think we're extremely lucky to do a job like this one, because we give people a lot of joy and emotions.

How will your cuisine develop in the near future?

I hope that it will be in a positive way. I want to keep using the same high-quality products, as this is ideal for me. And to stay as close as possible to the product. I've seen that this is something that customers really like because they can recognize what it is that they're eating. And that's extremely important. For me personally, I'm going to continue heading in this direction, and cooking healthier and lighter meals. This is something I'll keep doing in future.

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

What I remember the most is that we ate meals prepared from scratch, using fresh products, twice a day. My mother cooked at home, my father cooked too, so we always ate properly and healthily. There weren't many ready meals, we ate proper home-cooked food each day, and I think that I was lucky in that respect.

What should eating be about today?

It needs to be healthy, of course, but I think that we need to take time to cook, especially at home. I think we've lost sight of that a little. For some people, spending time in the kitchen and preparing fresh products is a bit old-fashioned, because today we've got the convenience of ready meals, things that we



can just buy and eat straight away. So I think that's something we need to bring back, we'd eat more healthily and we'd also rediscover the joy of sharing a meal that we've prepared ourselves, at home, because sharing a frozen ready meal that you throw in the oven is not quite the same thing.

We Create Friendship is our new hashtag for our anniversary year. What's your spontaneous reaction?

Once again, it defines what we aim to do. When cooking, the best moments are the ones we share. If you're cooking just for yourself, it's not the same thing. So the idea of sharing your cooking with friends, or people who will become friends when they share a meal with us, that's a beautiful thing. It was a smart choice of name. There's a great deal of friendship between V-ZUG and the chefs, among the chefs ourselves, and also with the customers. Everything we do is based on friendship. We can't do what we do without love, I think, so love and friendship are two very important concepts.