



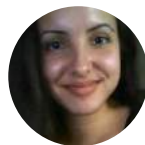
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Road to the World's 50 Best Restaurants 2017: Eduard Xatruch of Disfrutar

CULTURE FOOD & DRINKS INTERVIEWS & RECIPES



30TH MARCH 2017



MARIA DOLORES BARRIOS

From working at Spain's most celebrated restaurant to opening his first place

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Xatruch tells us about his experience at elBulli, his perspective on creativity and running the cutting-edge, award-winning restaurant Disfrutar.

Hello Eduard, thanks for talking with us. First of all congratulations for the Ones to Watch award and the 55th position in the World's 50 Best Restaurants list. Did you expect this attention from the 50 Best this year?

Actually we didn't expect this at all. Our restaurant has a broad team and we were all really happy for this, especially because it's an international award and our restaurant is only three years and three months old. So yeah, we were very surprised and grateful.

Can you tell us about your restaurant Disfrutar?

Disfrutar was born after many years of professional and personal development from our part. We are three cooks, and it's been more than



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of 30 cooks and 20 waiters. We focus on a degustation menu, which is deeply creative while remaining accessible at the same time. We always try to keep our clients in mind and to make sure that they enjoy every dish. Let's just say the dishes are more approachable and less extreme.



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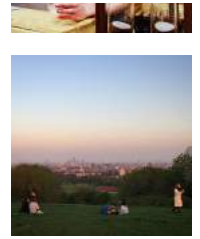
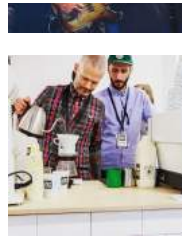


People who dined at your restaurant say it's the closest experience to elBulli, what do you think of that?

Well, Disfrutar it has its own personality. I mean, we spent 16 years working in elBulli so you can't deny its influence on our latest projects. However, the style we try to express here and the menu we offer is very different from elBulli's. We had irreplaceable synergies there, though, and we lived for creating.

It's unusual for a restaurant to have more than one chef. How is the relationship between the three of you in the kitchen?

The three of us have a strong relationship. We treat each other like family, or even more than that, and we've been through a lot of things together. We are the leaders in our kitchen looking after a team of 50. It wouldn't work otherwise. There is mutual understanding and trust among us. Even



good to know you can count on your associates who will support you and cheer you up when you need it.

If you don't agree about a dish or a change in a dish, how do you make a decision?

We decide things together, always. The three of us are a great team and we trust each other a lot, so there are really no issues with the decision-making.

You know with boybands you have the bad boy, the funny one, the innocent one. How would you describe yourself, Mateu and Eduard with an adjective each?

If I had to use only one, I'd say Mateu is the organised one, Oriol is more impulsive and more emotional and I am the perfectionist. I consider myself quite demanding. The truth is we are very different people, but with respect and compromise anything is possible.





This is your second restaurant with Mateu and Eduard, do you find it difficult to look after Compartir as well now?

Actually, it's not complicated at all. We coordinate very well to take care of everything. Right now, while I do this interview, Oriol is in the kitchen and Mateu is taking care of Compartir. He lives very close to the restaurant. However, we are always moving from one place to the other and with technology today, communication is not a problem.

You experiment a lot with your dishes, where do you draw a line for when it's too much?

I don't feel that I limit myself, ever. The creative process is changing constantly, so you never know how a dish could end up. You can start with an idea and then make something completely different. The best thing is



Can you tell us about a dish in particular that didn't finish on the menu because was great but maybe too much?

I could tell you about several actually. We create 100 dishes a year, and for various reasons many of them never end up on the menu. For instance, it could be difficult to reproduce it during service. Also, if we see the client is not going to like it, we won't include it on the menu, either.

Barcelona is such an exciting city, how did the food scene develop in recent years?

From a gastronomic viewpoint, Barcelona is one of the richest cities in the world and it has experienced a huge growth in recent years which is caused, among other things, by the gastronomic culture we have here. People enjoy eating good food in Barcelona, and for that reason they are used to going to restaurants quite



has also influenced the food scene a lot, and Barcelona being a global reference in gastronomy means that competition is much higher among restaurants. We all make an effort to improve our cuisine, including bars and restaurants that offer more traditional types of dishes. This is very positive, of course, because it forces us to keep working hard and to constantly improve ourselves.



I imagine you are close to Albert (Adrià), what do you think of Enigma?

The truth is I haven't been there yet, but knowing Albert, I'm convinced the restaurant is the bomb.

You worked for years at elBulli, if you closed your eyes now what would it be your first memory of it?

level, both personally and professionally. I could tell you hundreds of great experiences I've lived thanks to my work there. Just to give you an example, I have the wife and daughters I have today because of a trip we made to Japan. If I hadn't worked there, my life would be completely different now.

Are you still working with Ferran (Adrià)'s foundation?

No, we worked with the foundation only until 2014. We are still informed about the projects they make, but it was impossible for us to make time for that and we are now very busy with our own projects.

Ferran has been a huge influence for the national and international food scene. Do you think the Spanish cuisine will move on from him any time soon?

I don't think so. Ferrán is one of the best cooks I've ever seen. Besides, the circumstances that took



career and his decisions. 25 years ago no one assumed you could be creative with your cuisine and there wasn't much freedom in that sense. It's much more complicated to revolutionise like that now. Nowadays, creative cuisine is very popular and a lot of cooks are trying new things all the time.

Maria Barrios

*Photos: Adrià Goula
(restaurant) Joan Valera
(portraits)*





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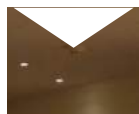


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