How a legend is reborn, the passion for Viennese cuisine is reignited and Wiener Schnitzel receives the celebration it is due.

MEISSL & SCHADN ON THE VIENNESE RINGSTRASSE

LEGACY AND ORIGIN

In September 2017 a new restaurant with an old name – a name steeped in legend and lore – opened at Schubertring 10-12 in Vienna.

In a sense, the Meissl & Schadn name stands for the memory of everything that once made Viennese cuisine illustrious and grand. So much time has passed since the restaurant at Neuer Markt was destroyed during the 1945 liberation of the city that the name resonates only with the few who once rushed to its doors, their mouths watering in delicious anticipation.

After all, turn-of-the-century Vienna, where the Meissl & Schadn hotel and restaurant opened in 1896, was practically the centre of the world. It was here, in the capital of a crumbling multinational state, where ideas were conceived that would shape the world throughout the 20th century and beyond – for better or for worse. It was the city of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Schönberg, of Trotzky and Hitler, of Loos and Wittgenstein, of Billy Wilder and Friedrich von Hayek, and of numerous other geniuses and criminals. The unique blend of peoples, religions and flashes of inspiration was explosive yet incredibly productive. It was the perfect breeding ground for the modern age.

In music, literature and craftsmanship, the aim was perfection, as it was with food. This is precisely the feeling that the Grand Ferdinand Hotel wants to bring back – in the design of its rooms and suites and at its restaurant. Naming the restaurant after the original Meissl & Schadn has been a long-held dream of Florian Weitzers and is the crowning glory for a hotel that has dedicated itself to paying homage to Austria at its best.

COSMOPOLITAN TASTE

Viennese cuisine, which assumed its definitive form at this time, was at its core the first cosmopolitan cuisine – so brazenly and naturally it borrowed from the ideas, influences and traditions of every corner of the empire (and beyond) that could be found in the bubbling metropolis. It was in this Vienna that Meissl & Schadn served the locals their cuisine with incomparable richness and class: the „common people“ ate in the „horse trough“ on the ground floor, while „society“, the ostensibly better – or at least financially better off – dined on the first floor.

Here, Vienna‘s cuisine was revered with savoir faire and proud devotion. According to legend, enough different types of boiled beef needed to be prepared to be able to satisfy even the most particular of preferences of the restaurant‘s illustrious guests. Other Viennese classics, too, were served in excellent quality – from Styrian roast chicken and stuffed breast of veal to grilled pikeperch and the dish that connoisseurs of the city‘s cuisine would export around the world: Wiener Schnitzel.

A TEMPLE TO SCHNITZEL

The „new“ Meissl & Schadn provides a worthy home for the city‘s greatest culinary legacy.

Although Schnitzel is Austria‘s favourite dish, these days it is rarely prepared in the traditional way – pan fried – with the attention and commitment to unconditional quality it deserves. This icon of our cuisine is long overdue for its own temple, where it is fried to perfection, achieving true greatness.

The characteristic sound emanating from the Schnitzel show kitchen is the lovely, regular rhythm of cutlets expertly being pounded flat. Heard throughout the new Meissl & Schadn, the sound heralds the delicious meal to come. Cut from the lean topside, or fricandeau, the piece of veal is breaded in lightly hand-beaten eggs and not too finely grated breadcrumbs from a hand roll or emperor roll. They are then fried golden brown in the finest butter, rich lard or neutral vegetable oil and served with your choice of garnishes – some long forgotten – and sides.

But that is by no means all. Meissl & Schadn of course continues Austria‘s culture of table-side service of its legendary beef dishes, such as Tafelspitz, flat iron steak and short ribs, as well as a number of other great Viennese classics and their more rustic cousins: from „Kaisersuppe“ (a veal soup with vegetables, sweetbreads and tongue) and Esterházy lentils with cream to timeless classics of Austrian pastry: the legendary apple strudel, of course traditionally hand-pulled, freshly baked Salzburg Nockerl, Powidltascherl, or violet sorbet à la Sisi. Not to be left out are Vienna‘s legendary „assiettes“, such as pikeperch with tomato and paprika-seasoned cabbage and Tafelspitz in aspic served in a small Gugelhupf mould. All of these marvellous culinary treasures, which cosmopolitan Vienna used to fuel the accomplishments of its sons and daughters, are now being resurrected with new panache, more than a century after the first Meissl & Schadn opened its doors.

And if you‘d like to learn how top-quality meat becomes authentic Wiener Schnitzel, you can try your hand. Register for our Schnitzel class, held in our show kitchen from 4:00 to 5:00 pm on Tuesdays, to learn the secrets of Schnitzel. Here, interested individuals are initiated into the secrets of schnitzel preparation before they are enjoyed on-site, and guests are presented with a certificate and a ‘Schnitzel Love’ book to take home.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Meissl & Schadn emerged in the second half of the 19th century from an inn at Neuer Markt and the Meissl Hotel on Kärntnerstraße – managed by Anna and Joseph Meissl. Meissl & Schadn was born when their daughter Rosa married Johann Schadn, a waiter, in 1880. Vienna‘s table-side service ritual reached its heyday after the restaurant underwent an extensive renovation in 1896. First came the soup. Next, guests didn‘t just order beef; they selected from a variety of different types and dozens of vegetable sides, with regulars being served their favourite meal without even ordering. Many famous composers and writers – from Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss to Friedrich Torberg – frequented Meissl & Schadn. There are even letters that Sigmund Freud wrote while at the restaurant or that make mention of Meissl & Schadn.

The hotel is also remembered for a sad event in October 1916, when the socialist and anti-war activist Friedrich Adler shot Minister-President Count Karl von Stürgkh. Meissl & Schadn remained a hotspot for traditional Viennese cuisine between the two world wars. Then, in 1945, the building burned to the ground in during the final days of the war. After moving to a temporary space, Meissl & Schadn finally closed its doors in 1950 before opening them once again in September 2017, in the centre of Vienna – at a worthy address, Vienna's Schubertring, here and now, and with the aim of reigniting passion for Viennese cuisine.

RESTAURANT

Meissl & Schadn

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