

INTERVIEW: FERRAN ADRIÀ



Adiós **El Bulli**

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Pretposljednja je nedjelja u srpnju i u španjolskome Rosesu, ljetovalištu na sjeveru Costa Brava, poprilična je gužva. Sunce prži i sezona ulazi u svoj zenit pa su uličice uz veliku marinu za jahte i malu ribarsku luku, prepune restorana i trgovina, natiskane turistima. Jednako je i na glavnoj mjesnoj plaži i onima uz goleme hotelske spomenike masovnome turizmu koji se nižu nešto dalje uz obalu. I dok se milijuni eura slijevaju u španjolsku turističku blagajnu, gotovo nitko od turista (pa čak ni domaćina) tu i ne sluti da se u njihovoj blizini upravo završava najvažnija era u povijesti moderne gastronomije.

Naime, samo sedam kilometara od Rosesa, dvadesetak minuta oprezne vožnje uskom cestom koja vijuga visoko nad morem i na kojoj su na brojnim zavojima parkirani automobili kupaca što uživaju na plažama do kojih su stigli strmim kozjim stazama, udaljena je Cala Montjoi, uvala s prostranom plažom na čijem je jednom kraju smješten El Bulli (zbog lakšega praćenja teksta izbjeći ćemo pisati elBulli, kako se restoran službeno zove od prije deset godina), najvažniji restoran naše ere, čiji je *chef*, slavni Ferran Adrià, gotovo samostalno potpuno izmijenio svijet suvremenih restorana i naglavačke okrenuo način na koji današnje generacije gledaju na hranu, bez obzira radilo se o pristašama njegove kuhinje, posve neutralnim gurmanima ili ostrim protivnicima molekularne gastronomije, kako tu vrst kulinartva volimo nazivati (Adrià kao i njegovi istomišljenici groze se toga komercijalizirana naziva i govore tek o *znanošću potaknutu kreativnom kuhanju*).

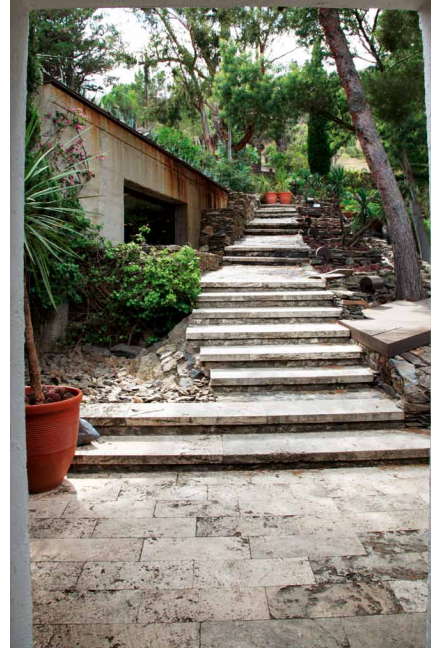
Spomenuti kraj jedne ere zapravo je povezan sa zatvaranjem El Bullija, barem u smislu klasičnoga restorana. Te nedjelje, kada smo se uputili u El Bulli, Ferrana Adriju čekalo je još samo tjedan dana rada, sedam večera na kojima će ugostiti ukupno 350 sretnika koji su imali tu povijesnu čast svjedočiti posljednjem tjednu rada toga legendarnog restorana. Posljednja od njih, u subotu 30. srpnja, bila je rezervirana za pedeset najbližih Ferranovih prijatelja i suradnika, a na njoj je posluženo točno pedeset sljedova (organizacija je, zbog ograničena broja mjesta, bila obavijena velom tajne, pa smo Adriju iznenadili pitanjem o toj večeri o kojoj smo doznali iz povjerljivih izvora).

Nakon što smo od proljeća intenzivno dogovarali posjet (rabeći sva moguća prijateljstva i poznanstva iz kulinarskoga

It is Sunday, one before the last one in July and it is quite crowded in Roses, Spain, a summer resort in north Costa Brava. The sun is scorching and the season is reaching its peak, so the little streets along the big marina for yachts and the little fishermen's harbor, filled with restaurants and shops, are crammed with tourists. The situation is the same on the main local beach and those next to the big hotel monuments to mass tourism lined up a little farther down the shore. And while millions of euros pour into the Spanish tourist treasury, almost none of the tourists (or even the hosts) suspects that the most important era in the history of modern gastronomy is just ending nearby.

As it happens, only seven kilometers from Roses, some twenty minutes of careful driving on a narrow road winding high above the sea, where bathers enjoying beaches reached via goat paths park their cars on numerous curves, is the remote Cala Montjoi, a bay with a spacious beach – on one end of it is El Bulli (for convenience, we will avoid writing elBulli, which has been the official name of the restaurant for the last ten years), the most important restaurant of our era whose chef, the famous Ferran Adrià, almost singlehandedly turned the way modern generations perceive food upside down, regardless of whether they are supporters of his cuisine, completely neutral gourmets or fierce opponents of molecular gastronomy, as we prefer to call this type of cookery (Adrià and his followers are appalled by this commercialized name and speak merely of science-stimulated creative cooking).

The said end of an era is actually associated with the closing of El Bulli, at least as a classical restaurant. That Sunday, when we set off for El Bulli, Ferran Adrià had only a week left to work, seven dinners to host a total of 350 lucky ones who had the historical honor to witness the last week of operation of this legendary restaurant. The last one of them, on Saturday July 30, was reserved for fifty Ferran's closest friends and associates and a exactly fifty courses were served (due to the limited number of seats, the arrangements were kept secret, so we surprised Adrià with a question about this dinner of which we had learned from confidential sources).



svijeta) pozitivan odgovor stigao je tek tri tjedna prije. Budući da je navala svjetskih medija na El Bulli tijekom njegove posljednje sezone rada bila enormna (intervjuirati Ferrana Adriju tijekom posljednjih dana rada najvažnijega restorana u povijesti gastronomije bio je golem izazov za gastropisce), postignuće je daleko nadmašilo i potvrdu rezervacije za stol, događaj koji je u slučaju ovog restorana ravan zgoditku na lutriji. Naime, u El Bulliju tvrde da za oko osam tisuća mjesta u sezoni godišnje zaprime dva milijuna zahtjeva za rezervaciju (broj u koji je teško povjerovati, već iz tehničkih razloga), kaos koji ponajviše ima zahvaliti pet puta osvojenu prvom mjestu na poznatoj listi pedeset najboljih svjetskih restorana (2002, 2006, 2007, 2008. i 2009), što svake godine objavljuje britanski *Restaurant Magazine*. Upravo zbog te liste El Bulli protekloga je desetljeća često bio na ustima čak i gurmana opće prakse diljem svijeta.

No pogledamo li unatrag, u drugoj polovici sedamdesetih sve je ukazivalo na to da će Fernando Adrià Acosta, rođen 1962. u četvrti Santa Eulàlia u Hospitalet de Llobregatu (grad jugoistočno od Barcelone, koji često pogrešno proglašavaju njezinim predgrađem) prije postati dobar nogometaš negoli slavni svjetski chef. Ipak, 1980. postao je kuharski pripravnik i posao mu se baš nije svidio. No za vrijeme služenja vojnoga roka u mornarici (na mjestu kuhara) sudbina je prvi put umiješala svoje prste u njegov život. Na nagovor kolege Fermija Puiga (danas poznati katalonski chef), koji je već radio u El Bulliju, za kratka odsustva otišao je s njim 1983. pogledati taj restoran nedaleko Rosesa koji su tada krasile dvije *Michelinove* zvjezdice, i na licu mjesta odlučio tamo doći raditi po svršetku vojnoga roka.

Četiri godine poslije sudbina je ponovno intervenirala, pa je Ferran postao šef kuhinje El Bullija i istodobno u Nici upoznao francuskoga chefa Jacquesa Maximina te od njega čuo rečenicu – *Stvarati znači – ne kopirati*, sintagmu koja je odredila njegov profesionalni put (*Tada je pojam kreativnost bio rezerviran samo za umjetnike, a ne chefove. Maximin mi je pomogao da shvatim da i ja imam pravo kreirati*, reći će Adrià).

Već 1990. uspio je El Bulliju vratiti drugu zvjezdicu, koju je u međuvremenu izgubio njegov prethodnik (treću će osvo-

After intensively arranging the visit since spring (by using all friends and people we know in the culinary world), a positive reply had arrived no sooner than three weeks before. As global media had fiercely swarmed on El Bulli during its last season of operation (interviewing Ferran Adrià during the last days of operation of the most important restaurant in the history of gastronomy was a huge challenge for gastro writers), the achievement exceeded by far even the confirmed table reservation, an event that equals winning the lottery in case of this restaurant. As it happens, El Bulli claim they receive two million reservation requests a year for around eight thousand seats during the season (a number hard to believe, for technical reasons if nothing else), a chaos that is primarily a result of five first places won on the famous list of world's fifty best restaurants (2002, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009) published every year by the British Restaurant Magazine. It is because of this list that El Bulli has often been spoken of during the past decade, even by general practice gourmets across the world.

However, if we look back, in the second half of the 1970s it seemed Fernando Adrià Acosta, born 1962 in the Santa Eulàlia quarter in Hospitalet de Llobregatu (a town southeast of Barcelona that is often incorrectly referred to as its suburb) would become a good footballer rather than a world-famous chef. Still, in 1980 he became a cook apprentice and did not like the job very much. However, while serving in the navy (as a cook), destiny interfered with his life for the first time. During a short leave, his colleague Fermi Puiga (presently a popular Catalan chef) who had already worked at El Bulli, talked into visiting this restaurant near Roses in 1983, which then proudly wore two Michelin stars, and he decided on the spot to come work there after he finished his military service.

Four years later, destiny intervened again, so Ferran became head chef at El Bulli and at the same met the French chef Jacques Maximin in Nice, who told him – Creating means not copying, a term that determined his professional path (At the time, the term creativity was reserved for artists only, and not for chefs. Maximin helped me realize that I too am entitled to create, says Adrià).



KUHINJA EL BULLIJA

jiti 1996). Iste godine Adrià je, zajedno sa šefom sale Julijem Solerom (u El Bulliju je radio još i prije Ferranova dolaska, a s njim je suvlasnik i dan-danas) restoran uspio kupiti od njegovih osnivača, čime je sudbina nastavila svoju igru neobičnih slučajnosti. Otad je započela kreativna faza El Bullija, inicirana Ferranovom *tablicom asocijacija* (moguće kombinacije namirnica, kulinarskih tehnika, emulzija, začinskog bilja, začina...), nastavljena fazom nazvanom *Elaboraciones* (razvijanje koncepta i razvoj tehnika), a kulminirala u razdoblju između 1994. i 1997. Temelj svega bila je katalonska kuhinja u kombinaciji s lokalnim namirnicama i aditivima preuzetim iz slastičarske industrije. Uporabom te palete Adrià je počeo mijenjati teksture namirnica, iznalaziti njihove nove kombinacije, dekonstruirati tradicionalna i klasična jela te stvarati avangardna začudnih svojstava, koja su se poigrala nepcem, razumom i stajalištima gostiju, pronicavo aludirala na tradiciju i kulturološke aspekte hrane, ali često i drsko provocirala (Adrià je, primjerice, rabio sirovi mozak kunića u mnogim svojim kreacijama). Zahvaljujući svemu razvio je osebujni kulinarski vokabular, koji je oduševio mnoge, ali mu priskrbio i jednako brojne protivnike (kritike su se uglavnom odnosile na neprirodnost jela i njihovu štetnost za zdravlje, iako su aditivi koje je rabio uglavnom bili prirodnoga podrijetla).

Kreativnom procesu bitno je pogodovala činjenica da je, zbog nedostatka gostiju, El Bulli bio zatvoren tijekom zime (navada koju je Adrià naslijedio od prethodnih vlasnika, kada izvan sezone nije bilo gostiju), pa je to vrijeme posvećeno eksperimentiranju, razvoju novih koncepta, tehnika i jela (najprije u *poligon-restoranu* Talaia Mar, a potom u kulinarskom

As early as 1990, he managed to restore the second star for El Bulli, which had been lost in the meantime by his predecessor (the third one was awarded in 1996). That same year, Adrià managed to purchase the restaurant from its founders together with the head waiter Julio Solero (who had worked at El Bulli before Ferran joined them and still co-owns it with him), whereby destiny continued its game of unusual coincidences. That is when the creative phase of El Bulli has begun, initiated by Ferran's table of associations (possible combinations of ingredients, culinary technique, emulsions, herbs, condiments ...) and continued with a phase called Elaboraciones (development of concepts techniques), only to culminate between 1994 and 1997. The foundation for all this was the Catalan cuisine in combination with local ingredients and additives adopted from the confectionery industry. By using this range, Adrià began to change the textures of ingredients, seek out their new combinations, deconstruct traditional and classical dishes and create avant-garde dishes of amazing properties that played with the palate, sense and guest views, shrewdly hinting at tradition and cultural aspects of food, but also often boldly provoking (for example, Adrià used raw rabbit brain in many of his creations). Thanks to all this, he developed a peculiar culinary vocabulary that delighted many people, but also created many enemies (criticism was mostly directed at the unnaturalness of food and their harmfulness for health although the additives he used were mostly of natural origin).

The creative process was very much supported by the fact that, due to a lack of guests, El Bulli was closed in

ateljieru-radionici Taller, oba u Barceloni). Ferran je svoje kreacije i dostignuća dijelio nesebično sa svima, pa se na prijelazu u novo tisućljeće formirala vojska njegovih (najčešće loših) oponašalaca, a njegove aromatizirane pjenice počeli su u svoja jela ugrađivati i najnedarovitiji kuhari. Neobičnost i radikalnost Ferranova stila privukla je i medije, koji su skovali nesretnu sintagmu *molekularna gastronomija*, te zajedno s *Restaurant Magazine*ovom listom *San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants* definitivno stvorili mit El Bullija.

Kada je u siječnju prošle godine na gastropriredbi Madrid Fusión Adrià objavio da po završetku sezone 2011. na dvije godine zatvara restoran, vijest je munjevito obišla svijet i našla se čak i na naslovnicama nekih od vodećih svjetskih dnevnih listova. Manje od tri tjedna poslije, dok su svjetski *foodies* smišljali načine kako priskrbiti rezervaciju tijekom sljedeće dvije sezone, Adrià je najavio da restoran zapravo zatvara trajno. Gurmansko ludilo potom je poprimilo neslućene razmjere. Razlozi za zatvaranje vjerojatno su počivali na činjenici da restoran trpi prevelike gubitke, ali i Ferranovu shvaćanju da je njegova temeljna misija završena, kao i tome da su ga neki mlađi kolege u međuvremenu nadigrali u njegovoj vlastitoj igri i unaprijedili njegovu filozofiju, odnosno da je El Bulli postupno, čudno je to i reći – zastario. U jesen 2010, pak, Ferranov je tabor najavio osnivanje Fundacije El Bulli, koja će u prostorima restorana održavati radionice, uz sudjelovanje *chefova* iz cijeloga svijeta (zamijenit će ulogu Tallera) i gdje će restoran, u smajnu opegu, biti samo popratni sadržaj.

Na ulazu u El Bulli u spomenuto nedjeljno poslijepodne dočekao nas je sam Ferran Adrià, koji je sa svojim suradnicima, stojeći uz radni stol, dogovarao posljednje detalje oko menija za tu večer. Taj 49-godišnjak srednjega rasta, crne kovrčave i na rubovima sijede kose, prodorna pogleda i rezervirana držanja, iznenadio nas je spremnošću na poziranje za fotografije, ali i nepovjerljivim načinom na koji je započeo intervju. No nakon desetak minuta posve je nenadano rekao: *Vidim da ste dobro proučili naš rad, a malo je onih koji to učine temeljito. Dosad sam dao na tisuće intervjua, ali samo je nekolicina novinara tako pomno pratila naš rad.* Nakon toga intervju je postao znatno ležerniji, iako ne i lišen brza i strastvena govora te odrješitih stavova. Nakon sat vremena (duljina intervjua bez presedana

winter (a habit that Adrià inherited from the previous owners when there were no guests in the off-season), so this time was dedicated to experimenting, developing new concepts, techniques and dished (at first at the testing ground restaurant Talaia Mar and then at the culinary studio-workshop Taller, both in Barcelona). Ferran selflessly shares his creations and achievements with everyone, so an army of his (mostly bad) imitators emerged at the turn of the millennia and even the least gifted cooks began to incorporate his aromatized foams in their dishes. Ferran's unusual and radical style also attracted the media, who came up with the awkward term molecular gastronomy and definitely created the myth of El Bulli together with Restaurant Magazine's Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list.

When he announced he was closing the restaurant for two years in January last year at the Madrid Fusión Adrià gastro event, the news rapidly spread around the globe and even found its way to the front pages of some of the leading dailies. Less than three weeks later, while world's foodies though of new ways to get a reservation during the next two seasons, Adrià announced he was actually closing down permanently. The gourmet madness then went to extraordinary lengths. The reasons for the closing were probably in the fact that the restaurant was incurring excessive losses, but also in Ferran's realization that his basic mission was over and that some younger colleagues beat him in his own game in the meantime and advanced his philosophy, and that El Bulli has gradually, it's odd to even say it, become obsolete. In autumn of 2010, Ferran's team announced the establishment of the El Bulli Foundation that would hold workshops in the restaurant, involving chefs from across the globe (former Taller's role), where the restaurant, reduced in volume, would be just an amenity.

On that Sunday afternoon, Ferran Adrià himself met us at the entrance to El Bulli standing by a desk with his associates and arranging the last details regarding the menu for that evening. This 49-year-old of medium built, with curly black hair with grey around the edges, a penetrating gaze and sustained bearing, surprised us with his willingness to pose for photographs, but also with the mistrusting way he started the interview. However, after some ten minutes he quite



ORIO CASTRO (JEDAN OD TRI CHEFA EL BULLIJA) I FERRAN ADRIÀ



u Adrijinu slučaju) čak je pristao odgovoriti i na dodatna, nešto osobnija pitanja. Kada smo mu na koncu zahvalili na vremenu i dobroj volji, odgovorio nam je: *Hvala vama što ste utrošili vrijeme na proučavanje povijesti El Bullija. Ne sjećam se kada sam posljednji put dao ovako zanimljiv intervju – na što smo se nasmijeli i zahvalili, podrazumijevajući gestu kao kurtoaznu. No Adrià se odjednom, shvativši što mislimo, uozbiljio i dodao: Ne, ne. I ne slutite koliko novinara tu dođe, a da ne znaju ništa o El Bulliju. Potom se vratio u kuhinju, gdje su njegova tri ravnopravna chefa, šest kuhara i 32 stagiariae (kuharski stažisti, u slučaju El Bullija uglavnom već iskusni kuhari iz ponajboljih svjetskih restorana), svi s plavim pregačama (prije sama posluživanja jedino će Adrià i chefovi odjenuti svježe izglacane bijele bluze), u potpunoj tišini bili u jeku priprema za tu večer, prizoru koji je više podsjećao na kakav rutinski pokus u laboratoriju svemirskoga broda negoli klasičnu kuhinju (nigdje nije bilo vidljiva plamena).*

Potpuno originalna organizacija rada u kuhinji samo je vrh ledene sante ukupna Adrijina doprinosa gastronomiji. U dvadesetak godina intenzivna razvoja, tijekom kojih je svake sezone predstavljao meni od trideset sljedova, s novim jelima i onima koja su s vremenom evoluirala (svake je godine na repertoaru bilo oko pedeset jela, a svaki od petnaestak stolova dobivao je drukčiji meni složen iz tog repertoara), Adrià je definirao svoj stil temeljen na *tri stupa* – tehničkom i konceptualnom istraživanju, ulozi osjetila u kreiranju i pri jelu te ulozi razuma i njegova utjecaja na čin jedenja. Iz svega je proizašla i njegova kulinarska filozofija, koja je ujedno njegov najveći doprinos povijesti gastronomije. Ona, između ostalog, podrazumijeva služenje malih porcija i brojnih sljedova, iznalaženje novih namirnica, rad s kontrastnim teksturama i temperaturama, pretpostavku da sve namirnice mogu imati jednak potencijal (repa i sardine vrijedni su kao kavijar i tartufi) te ideju da svako jelo mora sadržavati i element iznenađenja. Dakle, riječ je o postavkama koje su danas preuzeli svi iole ambiciozniji chefovi svijeta. Uz to, nemjerljiv je Adrijin utjecaj u obliku razvoja kulinarskih tehnika (pjenice, sferifikacija, uporaba tekućeg dušika...), uglavnom u svrhu pojačavanja okusa visokokvalitetnih namirnica, od kojih su mnoge već ušle u kulinarski *mainstream* (uskoro će se pojaviti enciklopedija posvećena samo tome segmentu Ferranova rada).

Iznimno je važan i Adrijin utjecaj na mlade chefove širom svijeta. Spomenemo li samo da su kroz njegovu kuhinju kao *stagiaires* prošli mnogi prvoligaši suvremene kreativne kuhinje – José Andrés, René Redzepi, Andoni Luis Aduriz, Massimo Bottura, Joan Roca, Graham Elliot Bowls, Grant Achatz..., jasno je da će divovski skok koji je Ferran Adrià napravio u povijesti gastronomije biti i kotač zamašnjak kulinarstva budućnosti.

Vi ste prvi, a eto i posljednji novinari iz Hrvatske kojima sam dao intervju. Volio bih doći u vašu zemlju, ali moj je raspored popunjen za sljedećih nekoliko godina. U svakom slučaju, vidjet ćemo se 2014. kada El Bulli započinje novo poglavlje. Obećavam vam rezervaciju već danas, nasmiješio se na koncu Adrià.

Bez obzira kako bude funkcionirala nova Fundacija koju Ferran Adrià priprema sa svojim suradnicima i kakvu će ulogu El Bulli u njoj igrati, sasvim je sigurno da će svijet koji je Adrià stvorio i dalje snažno utjecati na budućnost gastronomije.

unexpectedly said: I see you've studied our work well and few do it thoroughly. I've gave a thousand interviews, but only a few journalists followed our work so carefully. After the interview he became much more casual, though not deprived of his rapid and passionate speech and firm attitudes. After an hour (a duration of interview unprecedented in Adrià's case), he even agreed to answer some additional, more personal questions. Finally, when we thanked him for his time and good will, he replied: Thank you for spending your time on studying the history of El Bulli. I can't recall the last time I gave such an interesting interview – we then smiled and thanked him, taking the gesture as courteous. Realizing what we were thinking, Adrià suddenly became solemn and added: No, no. You have no idea how many journalists come here without knowing anything about El Bulli. He then returned to the kitchen where his three equal chefs, six cooks and 32 stagiaires (cooking interns, in case of El Bulli experienced cooks from world's best restaurants), all wearing blue aprons (before the actual serving, only Adrià and the chefs would put on freshly ironed white blouses), were in the middle of preparing for the evening in complete silence, a scene that looked more like a routine experiment in the laboratory of a space ship than a classic kitchen (no flame was to be seen).

This completely original organization of work in the kitchen is only the tip of the iceberg in Adrià's overall contribution to gastronomy. Over some twenty years of intensive development, during which he presented a menu of thirty courses every season with new dishes and those that had evolved over time (there were around fifty dishes on the repertoire every year and each of the fifteen tables was assigned a different menu derived from the repertoire), Adrià has defined his style based on three pillars, technical and conceptual research, the role senses in creation and during eating, and the role of reason and its impact on the act of eating. His culinary philosophy arose from all this and is also his greatest contribution to the history of gastronomy. Among other things, it includes serving of small portions and numerous courses, finding new ingredients, working with contrasting textures and temperatures, the assumption that all ingredients can have the same potential (turnip and sardines are as valuable as caviar and truffles), and the idea that each dish must contain an element of surprise. These are the postulates that have been adopted by all chefs in the world that are at least a little ambitious. In addition, Adrià has had immeasurable influence in the form of developing culinary techniques (foams, spherification, use of liquid nitrogen...), mostly to enhance the taste of high-quality ingredients, many of which have already become part of the culinary mainstream (an encyclopedia will soon be published, dedicated only to this segment of Ferran's work).

Adrià's influence on young chefs across the world is also very important. If we only mention the many first-league players in contemporary creative cooking that passed through his kitchen as stagiaires – José Andrés, René Redzepi, Andoni Luis Aduriz, Massimo Bottura, Joan Roca, Graham Elliot Bowls, Grant Achatz..., it is clear that the giant leap Ferran Adrià has taken in the history of gastronomy will also be a driver of the culinary future.

Regardless of how the new Foundation Ferran Adrià is preparing with his associates will function and what role



Ipak, želio to slavni *chef* priznati ili ne, jedna era u povijesti gastronomije, slažu se i neki od njegovih najboljih prijatelja i kolega, definitivno je završena. Upravo smo zato razgovor s najutjecajnijim *chefom* naše ere i započeli pitanjem o težini trenutka.

Gospodine Adrià, kako se osjećate neposredno prije početka posljednjega tjedna posluživanja El Bullija?

Gledajte, El Bulli se već desetljećima zatvara svake godine na šest mjeseci, pa sadašnji osjećaji nisu mnogo drukčiji. Ne razmišljamo o značenju kraja ove sezone. Tridesetoga srpnja bit će poseban dan, jer ćemo prirediti veliko slavlje. To je jedina razlika.

Ima li možda kakvih pomiješanih osjećaja – zadovoljstvo, ponos, nostalgija, tuga...?

Nema tih osjećaja. Oni će vjerojatno nastupiti u siječnju ili veljači, kada shvatimo da se dogodila preobrazba. Znam da svi pričaju o tome da se El Bulli zatvara, ali mi ga zapravo ne zatvaramo. Vrlo je bitno da se to zna. Da ga doista zatvaramo zauvijek, naravno da bismo osjećali tugu i nostalgiju, no mi smo sada vrlo zadovoljni jer ćemo zapravo proslaviti početak novoga projekta. Ne slavimo prošlost, nego budućnost.

Koliko se dobro sjećate svojega prvog dana u El Bulliju u ljeto 1983?

Najjasnije se sjećam trenutka kada su došli po mene. Bio sam u Rosesu i krenuli smo za El Bulli. U pamćenje mi se urezala jako loša cesta koja je vodila do restorana. Nije nimalo izgledala kao danas. Pomislio sam da je riječ o nekoj šali, jer cesta još nije bila asfaltirana. Izgledala je kao da ne vodi nikamo, a ponajmanje prema restoranu. Kada sam stigao, najviše me se dojmio odnos tamošnjih kuhara prema poslu koji su radili. Odmah sam zapazio da je za njih kuhanje nešto više od sama posla. Uživali su u onome što rade.

El Bulli je tada već imao dvije Michelinove zvjezdice. Kakav je bio vaš dojam o njegovoj kuhinji i jelima?

Da, restoran je tada pripremao francuska jela po principima *nouvelle cuisine* i radilo se o prilično mimetičkoj stvari, dakle kopiji nekih francuskih uzora. Vidjelo se da je kreativan duh već prisutan, ali jasno u mnogo manjoj mjeri nego danas.

El Bulli will play in it, it is quite certain that the world Adrià has created will continue to have a strong impact on the future of gastronomy. Still, whether the famous chef admits it or not, an era in the history of gastronomy is definitely over, with which some of his best friends and colleagues agree. This is why we began this interview with the most influential chef of our era with a question about the gravity of the moment.

Mr. Adrià, how do you feel immediately before the beginning of the last week of service at El Bulli?

Look, El Bulli has been closing for six months every year for decades now, so the present feelings are not very different. We are not thinking about the significance of the end of this season. July 30 will be a special day because we will have a big celebration. This is the only reason.

Are there perhaps any mixed emotions – satisfaction, pride, nostalgia, sadness...?

There are no such emotions. They will probably appear in January or February when we realize that a transformation has taken place. I know everybody is talking about how El Bulli is closing, but we are not actually closing it. This is very important to know. If we were actually closing it forever, of course we would be sad and nostalgic, but we are now very pleased because we will actually celebrate the beginning of a new project. We are not celebrating the past, but the future.

How well do you remember your first day at El Bulli in the summer of 1983?

The clearest memory is of the moment they came for me. I was in Roses and we departed for El Bulli. A very bad road leading to the restaurant remained carved in my memory. It looked nothing like today. I thought it was some kind of a joke because the road was not even asphalted yet. It looked like it led nowhere, least of all a restaurant. When I arrived, I was most impressed with the cooks' attitude toward their work. I immediately noticed that cooking was more than just work for them. They enjoyed what they were doing.

El Bulli already had two Michelin stars at the time. What was your impression with the kitchen and the dishes?

Yes, the restaurant prepared French dishes at the time based on the principle of



Tada ste već bili dobro upoznati s principima nouvelle cuisine. Koliko vam je u tome pomogla čuvena serija pariškog izdavača Roberta Laffonta, u kojoj su se predstavili vodeći chefovi toga pokreta?

Jako. Imao sam knjige *La cuisine c'est beaucoup plus que des recettes* Alaina Chapela, *La cuisine du marché* Paula Bocusea, *La grande cuisine minceur* Michela Guérarda, pa onda knjigu braće Troigros... U to doba visoka kuhinja bila je isključivo francuska i nije bilo potrebno tražiti bilo što dalje od toga.

Kako biste opisali sebe 1987, kada ste preuzeli vođenje kuhinje El Bullija i upoznali Jacquesa Maximina?

Bio sam vrlo mlad, imao sam 25, 26 godina i počeo sam ozbiljnije razmišljati o poslu, iako još na nekoj podsvjesnoj razini. Počeo sam tražiti svoj put i oblikovati vlastite ideje. Malo-pomalo počeo sam s pokušajima prenošenja principa *nouvelle cuisine* u španjolsku kuhinju. Zapravo, najprije u katalonsku, a onda i onu ostatka Španjolske.

Kada ste prvi put počeli razmišljati da bi se uobičajene teksture nekih namirnica mogle izmijeniti?

Do toga je došlo dosta kasnije. Najprije smo počeli raditi na modernizaciji španjolske kuhinje, a tu još nije bilo govora o izmjenama tekstura. One su nastupile mnogo kasnije. S tim smo započeli tek 1991. i 1992. Upravo se tu vidi ono najvažnije za El Bulli, a to je neprestani razvoj. Mi se razvijamo iz godine u godinu.

Ideja o izmjeni tekstura namirnica rezultirala je velikim skokom u razvoju moderne gastronomije. Kako ste do nje došli?

Ako ćemo govoriti iskreno, izmjene tekstura postoje oduvijek. Nisam ja to izmislio. Primjerice, kod pripreme juhe od jagoda dolazi do potpune promjene teksture. Ono što ja radim jest stvaranje novih tekstura, a to je nešto sasvim drugo. No opća je zablude da mi u svim jelima mijenjamo teksture. Uopće nije tako, ima mnogo jela u kojima uopće ne utječemo na izvorne teksture namirnica.

Držite li tablicu asocijacija iz 1990. temeljem stila koji ste razvili devedesetih?

Kombiniranje namirnica, odnosno okusa, sastavni je dio posla svakoga kuhara. To je nešto sasvim normalno i svi kuhari to čine. Moja je namjera bila sve to na neki način kodificirati i pregledno svrstati. Pokazalo se da taj kreativni sustav u nas funkcionira odlično. Mogli bismo reći da je to za nas temelj i pod navodnicima najlakši način stvaranja.

Već ste spomenuli da je evolucija iznimno važna za ono što radite. No u kojoj je mjeri El Bulli u posljednjih dvadeset godina bio i revolucija?

Nimalo. Nikada ne govorimo o revoluciji, jer o prošlosti nikada ne govorimo u negativnom smislu, već naprotiv, isključivo vrlo pozitivno.

Revolucija je za vas uvijek nešto negativno?

Ne, ne mora biti, iako ona često ruši sve ono što joj je prethodilo, bilo to dobro ili loše. U tome smislu naš rad nije bio revolucija. Druga je stvar što je rezultat naše evolucije bio

nouvelle cuisine and this was quite mimetic, a copy of some French role models. You could see a creative spirit was already present, but clearly to a much lesser extent than today.

You were quite familiar with the principles of nouvelle cuisine at the time. How much help did you get from the famous series of the Parisian publisher Robert Laffont, presenting the leading chefs of the movement?

*Very much. I had *La cuisine c'est beaucoup plus que des recettes* by Alain Chapel, *La cuisine du marché* by Paul Bocuse, *La grande cuisine minceur* by Michela Guérarda, the Troigros brothers book... At the time, high cuisine was exclusively French and there was no need to look any further.*

How would you describe yourself in 1987 when you became head chef at El Bulli and met Jacques Maximin?

I was very young, 25 or 26, and was beginning to think of my work more seriously, although still at some subconscious level. I began to look for my way and form my own ideas. Little by little, I began with attempts to transfer the nouvelle cuisine principle to the Spanish cuisine. Actually, at first to the Catalan cuisine, and then to the rest of Spain.

When was the first time you seriously began to think about how the usual textures of some ingredient could be altered?

This happened much later. First we began to work on modernizing the Spanish cuisine and there was no talk of alternating the textures. That came much later. We didn't begin with this before 1991 and 1992. This is where you see what's most important for El Bulli – constant development. We develop year after year.

The idea of alternating the texture of ingredients resulted in a big leap in development of modern gastronomy. How did you come up with it?

To be honest, textures have always been changed. I wasn't the one to invent it. For example, when you prepare strawberry soup, the texture changes completely. What I do is create new textures and this is something completely different. However, it is a general misapprehension that we changes textures in all dishes. This is not the case at all, there are plenty of dishes where we don't affect the texture of the ingredients at all.

Do you believe the table of associations from 1990 the foundation of the style you developed in the 1990s?

Combining ingredients and flavors is an integral part of any cook's work. This is something quite normal and all cooks do it. My intention was to codify all this and classify it in an organized manner. It turned out this creative system worked excellently here. We could say this was a foundation for us and sort of the easiest way of creating.

You have already mentioned that evolution is very important for what you do. To what extent was El Bulli a revolution over the past twenty years?

It was not a revolution at all. We never speak of revolution because we never speak of the past negatively, on the contrary, only very positively.



revolucionaran. No ne zato što smo mi za time težili. To je vrlo zanimljiva činjenica. *Nouvelle cuisine* bila je mnogo okrutnija prema svojim prethodnicima.

Jeste li tijekom te evolucije bili svjesni da gradite nešto iznimno važno za budućnost gastronomije?

Kada smo započinjali raditi te stvari, nismo toga bili svjesni. Na kraju vrijeme uvijek kaže svoje, pa sada možemo potvrditi da se radilo o važnim koracima. Ali devedesetih to nismo mogli reći. Netko je mogao misliti da se radi samo o modi. Neki su nas mogli smatrati neautentičnima. No danas mogu ustvrditi da je riječ o pokretu koji je vrlo utjecajan u cijelom svijetu.

Što vas je usmjerilo da 1993. počnete razmišljati o konceptima i tehnikama, a ne o kreiranju novih jela, dakle onome što nazivate Elaboraciones?

Vrlo jednostavno. Uobičajeno je bilo kreirati jela, i to je normalno. Ali mi smo rekli ne, mi želimo kreirati tehnike i koncepte koji će stvoriti prostor za kreiranje mnogih novih jela. To je potpuna promjena paradigme u kuhanju i vrlo vjerojatno najvažnija činjenica vezana za El Bulli.

Kako je nastala vaša kulinarska filozofija koja podrazumijeva posluživanje malih porcija, traženje novih namirnica, rad s teksturama i temperaturama, dekonstrukciju, svijest da i najobičnija namirnica ima veliki potencijal, kao i to da je element iznenađenja iznimno važan u svakome jelu?

Najvažnije je istaknuti da je novi izričaj stvoren između 1994. i 1997, a potom je uslijedio razvoj tog izričaja. Hrana je jezik, način komunikacije i sporazumijevanja. Njome nekome nešto govorite, izražavate se. Kao što svaki narod ima svoju kuhinju, koja je dio njegove kulture, tako je i s našim izričajem. Ja kreativnošću pridonosim izričaju ekipe s kojom radim.

Jesu li zimski prekidi u radu El Bullija, a zatim Talaia Mar te potom Taller za vas osigurali samostanske uvjete za kreativni razvoj i koliko je to bilo presudno za evoluciju vaše kuhinje?

Nije riječ o samostanskim uvjetima rada, nego o tome da je za stvaranje potrebno vrijeme. To je vrlo jednostavno i tu nema tajni. Jednostavno, da bi se moglo stvarati, potrebno je vrijeme. I naravno da to

Has revolution always been something negative to you?

No, not necessarily, although it often destroys everything that preceded it, whether good or bad. In this context, our work was no revolution. It is a different matter that the result of our revolution was revolutionary. Not because I aspired toward this. This is a very interesting fact. Nouvelle cuisine was much crueler to its predecessors.

Were you aware during this evolution that you were building something of great importance for the future of gastronomy?

When we began to do these things, we were not aware of it. Time ultimately always tells, so we can now confirm they were important steps. But in the 1990s, we could not say that. Somebody could have thought it was just fashion. Some could have thought we were unauthentic. But now I can say this is a movement with great influence across the world.

What made you begin to think about concepts and techniques in 1993, rather than creating new dishes, about what you refer to as Elaboraciones?

It's very simple. It was usual to create dishes and that's normal. But we said no, we want to create techniques and concepts that will make room for creation of many new dishes. This is a complete change of paradigm in cooking and most likely the most important fact concerning El Bulli.

How did you develop your culinary philosophy, implying serving of small portions, looking for new ingredients, working with textures, deconstruction, the awareness that even the most common ingredient has huge potential, as well as the element of surprise essential to each dish?

The most important thing to underline is that the new expression was created between 1994 and 1997, followed by development of this expression. Food is a language, a way of communication and understanding. It is as if you are telling somebody something with it, expressing yourself. Like every nation has its cuisines as part of its culture, the same applies to our expression. By using my creativity, I contribute to the expression of the team I am working with.





2M ŠPAGETA OD PARMEZANA (2003)



DINJA S PRŠUTOM (2005)

nije bilo prvi put da netko razmišlja na taj način. Zašto? Zato što je svaki sljedeći put sve teže stvarati. Naime, iz dana u dan stvara se nešto novo, pa preostaje sve manje prostora za kreativnost. Potrebno je uložiti više vremena, više ljudi, više opreme... Fundacija El Bulli logičan je slijed takva razmišljanja.

Je li vam osim vremena za kreativan rad bio potreban i mir?

Gledajte, u početku smo zatvarali na šest mjeseci zato što zimi ovamo nitko nije dolazio. Nije bilo gostiju. Na moru smo i zimi, jednostavno, nema nikoga. Poslije je ta okolnost prerasla u mogućnost za stvaranje. No nikakav poseban mir nije potreban. Uvijek postoji vrijeme za mir i vrijeme za aktivnost.

Kako je izgledala tehnologija stvaranja novih jela na temelju konceptata i tehnika?

Tu dolazimo na jednu od velikih laži o El Bulliju. U El Bulliju nikada nije bilo tehnologije u stvaranju. Mikrovalna pećnica mnogo je kompliciranija od sifona. Mnogi u svijetu su, nažalost, na temelju nekoliko fotografija zaključili da je riječ o tehnologiji. Kada bi barem postojala tehnologija s pomoću koje bi se mogle raditi sjajne stvari! No zasad je takve tehnologije vrlo malo. Mi smo stvorili novi koncept, ali ga vjerojatno nismo dovoljno dobro objasnili.

Volite li raditi sheme novih jela, crtati na papiru...?

Ne baš. Ne crtamo sve, ali uglavnom sve bilježimo, pisano i fotografski. Ovisno o godini i o prilikama.

Je li to uvijek timski rad?

Da, ali u početku smo to uglavnom radili moj brat Albert i ja.

Godina 1997. u vašoj karijeri obično se naziva godinom provokacije. Jeste li svjesno zakoračili na nepoznati teritorij?

Prije bih rekao da smo do 1994. drukčije gledali na kuhanje i da se naše shvaćanje kuhinje kretalo u okvirima nečega što smo tada opisivali kao vrlo dobro i vrlo ukusno. No od 1994. počeli smo težiti za određenim iskustvima i doživljajima koji su uključivali i neke nove elemente, poput provokacije i duhovitosti, različite pristupe koji se prije nisu rabili u kreiranju jela. Počeli smo drukčije promišljati hranu. Upravo je to jedna od najvažnijih osobina El Bullija. Ranije to nije postojalo. Ili, bolje rečeno, dotad nije bilo konceptualizirano.

Did the winter breaks at El Bulli and then Talaia Mar and then Taller provide you with monastic conditions for creative development and how crucial was this for the evolution of your cooking?

It is not about monastic working conditions, but the fact that creation takes time. This is very simple and there is no secret about it. Simply, to be able to create, you need time. Of course, this was not the first time somebody has thought this way. Why? Because later it gets more and more difficult to create every time. Namely, something new is created day after day, so there is less and less room for creativity. It takes more time, more people, more equipment... The El Bulli Foundation is a logical consequence of such thinking.

In addition to time, did you require peace for creative work?

Look, in the beginning we closed for six months because nobody came here in winter. There were no guests. We are at the seaside in winter as well and there is simply no one here. Later this circumstance became an opportunity for creation. But I do not require any extra peace. There is always a time for peace and a time for activity.

What was the technology of creating new dishes based on concepts and techniques like?

Now we come across one of the big lies about El Bulli. There was never any technology in creation at El Bulli. A microwave oven is much more complicate than a siphon. Unfortunately, many people concluded it was technology based on a few photographs. If only we had technology to do great things! However, there is presently very little of such technology. We created a new concept, but probably didn't explain it well enough.

Do you like to do schemes of new dishes, draw on paper...?

Not really. We don't draw everything, but we mostly record everything, in writing and photographically. Depending on the year and the circumstances.

Is it always teamwork?

Yes, but in the beginning it was mostly my brother Albert and I.

Nije važno tko je prvi nešto napravio, već tko je nešto konceptualizirao. Na primjer, tko je izmislio mini suknju? Mary Quant? Ne, već su stari Rimljani nosili vrlo kratke suknje. Što je dakle učinila Mary Quant? Konceptualizirala je minicu.

Na koji ste način pokušavali provocirati?

Mnogo je načina na koje se može provocirati. Ovisi o osobi koju želite isprovocirati. U početku smo to radili na jedan, a potom i na mnoge druge načine. Na primjer, može se provocirati i poezijom, jer mnogi koji dolaze u El Bulli ne očekuju poetična jela. Očekuju jela s većom dozom tehnologije, primjerice. Ovisi.

Recimo, vaše jelo od morske vlasulje, sirova mozga kunića, kamenica i cala-modina (vrsta južnoazijskoga citrusa, op.a.) neki opisuju kao ogavno, a vaš biograf Coleman Andrews, koji je u El Bulliju jeo mnogo puta, vrlo neugodnim i kakofoničnim?

Ne, ne, ne. On je bio jedini kojemu se jelo nije svidjelo. (Ne posve točno, jer Coleman opisuje kako mu je jedan od stažista u kuhinji ispričao da je veliki sansebastijanski chef Juan Mari Arzak, jedan od Adrijinih najboljih prijatelja i čest gost El Bullija, nakon što je jedne večeri kušao to jelo, bijesno otišao u kuhinju i Ferrana pitao je li normalan, op.a.)

Je li to možda bila provokacija?

Ma ne. Provokacija za koga? Pa bilo je još ljudi koje to jelo uopće nije provociralo. Ovisi i o kulturi. Na primjer, za jednog Amerikanca mozak kunića jako je provokativan, dok za Španjolca nije. A problem je i s djecom, jer mnogima je kunić kućni ljubimac, poput psa. Kako biste vi reagirali na pseći mozak? U Hong Kongu to je sasvim normalno jelo, ali za Amerikanca, koliko god bio otvoren novim idejama, to je potpuno suludo. Ne postoji čudna hrana, samo čudni ljudi. Hrana je uvijek hrana.

Zašto toliko često, čak i u jednome meniju, rabite sirovi mozak i uši kunića?

A zašto ne bih?

Je li to provokacija?

Ne, nije to provokacija. Radimo s tim namirnicama jer se inače baš ne rabe. Čovjek može bez problema pojesti uho odojka, ali ako čuje da mu se nudi uho kunića, sablažnjava se.

The year 1997 is mostly referred to as the year provocation in your career. Did you knowingly step onto unknown territory?

I would rather say that we looked at cooking differently until 1994 and that our perception of cooking was within the boundaries of something we described as very good and very tasty. However, since 1994 we began to aspire to certain experiences including some new elements, such provocation and wit, different approaches that had not been used before in creation of dishes. We began to consider food in a different way. This is one of the most important qualities of El Bulli. This had not existed before. Or rather, it had not been conceptualized before. It is not important who did something first, but who conceptualized it. For example, who invented the mini skirt? Mary Quant? No, the ancient Romans wore very short skirts. So what did Mary Quant do? She conceptualized the mini skirt.

How did you try to provoke?

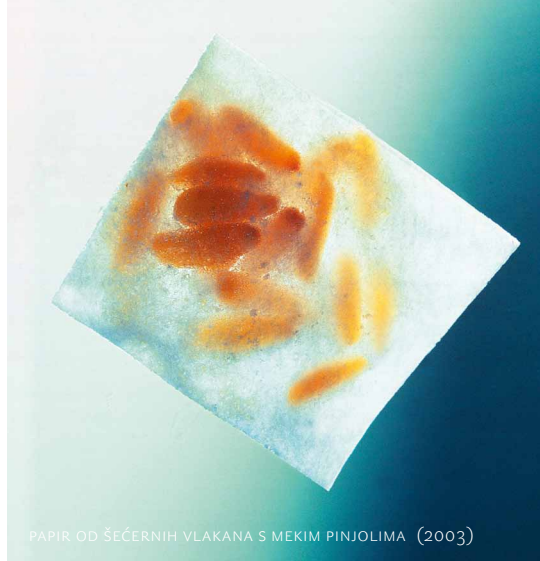
There are many ways to provoke. It depends on the person you want to provoke. At first we did it one way and then in many other ways. For example, you can provoke with poetry because many people who visit El Bulli do not expect poetic food. They expect dishes with a higher dose of technology, for example. It depends.

For example, your dish made of sea anemone, raw rabbit brain, oysters and cala-modina (a type of South Asian citrus, authors comment) is described by some as repugnant, while your biographer Coleman Andrews, who has eaten many times at El Bulli, finds it very unpleasant and cacophonous?

No, no, no. He was the only one who didn't like the dish. (Not quite true because Coleman described how one of the interns in the kitchen that the great San Sebastian chef Juan Mari Arzak, one of Adrià's best friends and a frequent guest at El Bulli, furiously stormed into the kitchen after trying this dish one evening and asked Ferran if he was insane, author's comment)

Was this perhaps a provocation?

Oh, no. Provocation for whom? There were other people who were not provoked by this dish at all. It also depends on the culture. For example, rabbit brain



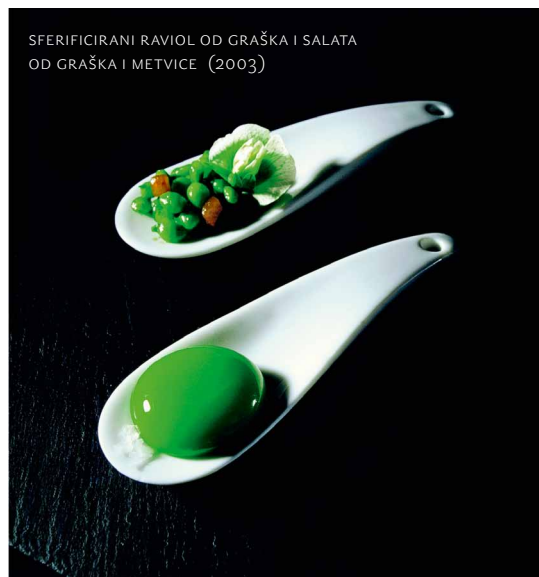
PAPIR OD ŠEĆERNIH VLAKANA S MEKIM PINJOLIMA (2003)



MUMIJA TRILJE S ČILIJEM (2003)



KARAMEL OD BUČINOVA ULJA (2005)



SPHERIFICIRANI RAVIOL OD GRAŠKA I SALATA OD GRAŠKA I METVICE (2003)



NITRO-CAPIRINHA S KONCENTRATOM ESTRAGONA (2004)

I odojak je tabu za mnoge ljude, a u mnogim kulturama svijeta posve normalno jelo?

Da, da. Ja na primjer ne jedem štakore.

Zašto ne?

Meni su štakori tabu i mislim da bi mi pozlilo. U Amazoni sam kušao meso jednog manjeg glodavca i to mi je bila granica. Ne bih kušao štakora ili bilo kakva glodavca te veličine.

U nekim dijelovima Dalmacije, posebno na otoku Braču, poslastica su puhovi, također manji glodavci. Zvuči li vam to čudno?

Ne, ne zvuči. Ali ne znam bih li ih jeo, morao bih ih prvo vidjeti, ne znam. Zapravo, kada govorimo o kreativnosti, ovakvi razgovori nemaju smisla. Kulturološke činjenice ne smiju izmanipulirati kreativnost. Naravno da može biti nekih stvari koje su nekome tabu. Ja ne bih pojeo štakora, ali bih žirafu možda i kušao.

Za majčino mlijeko kažu da ima umami okus, ali je tabu?

Da, i to je tabu. Ali svaki je tabu kulturološko pitanje, a ne stvarno.

Mnoga vaša jela referiraju se na katalonsku pučku tradiciju, poput mumije trilje s čilijem (pržena kost trilje u aromatiziranoj vati, op.a.), koja zapravo podsjeća na činjenicu da su nekad siromašni ribari prodavali filete, a jeli pržene riblje kosti i glavu. Volite se igrati kulturološkim kontekstom jela?

Da, da, svakako. Samo kultura nije jednostavan pojam. Ovisi o čemu govorimo, o geografskom, političkom ili kojem drugom segmentu kulture. Tu je bila riječ o geografiji i tradiciji. Netko je to shvatio, netko ne...

is very provocative to an American and not for a Spaniard. And there is also the problem with children because many keep a rabbit as a pet, like a dog. How would you react to dog brain? In Hong Kong, this is quite a normal dish, but to an America, however open to new ideas, this is completely insane. There is no strange food, only strange people. Food is always food.

Why do you use raw rabbit brain and ears so often, even within a single menu? Why not?

Is it provocation?

No, it's not provocation. We work with these ingredients because they are not used so often. A man can eat a suckling pig's ear with no problem, but is appalled when offered a rabbit ear.

Suckling pig is also a taboo for many people and a completely normal dish in many cultures around the world?

Yes, yes. For example, I don't eat rats.

Why not?

Rats are a taboo to me and I think I would be sick. In Amazonia, I tasted the meat of a smaller rodent and that was my limit. I wouldn't try a rat or any rodent of that size.

In some parts of Dalmatia, especially on the island of Brač, dormouse, also a smaller rodent, is considered a delicacy.

Does that sound strange?

No, it doesn't. But I don't know if I would eat it, I'd have to see it first, I don't know. Actually, when speaking of creativity, discussions like this make no sense. Cultural facts must not manipulate creativity. Of course there may be some things that are a taboo to someone. I wouldn't eat a rat, but I might try a giraffe.

They say breast milk has umami taste, but it is a taboo?

Yes, it is a taboo too. But every taboo is a cultural issue, not a real one.

Many of your dishes refer to the Catalan folk tradition, like the goatfish mummy with chili (fried goatfish bone in aromatized cotton, author's comment), that actually reminds us of the fact that poor fishermen used to sell fillets and eat fried



JUHA S ABECEDOM (2004)



Svojevremeno, 1998, imali ste ideju proširiti koncept Benazuza (projekt lanca luksuznih hotela, op.a.) i na ostale mediteranske lokacije, uključujući i Mallorcu i Hrvatsku. Jeste li od toga odustali jer vam se hotelski posao učinio odveć riskantnim?

Da, da. Sva sreća da nismo napravili hotel El Bulli. Time sam preduhitrio sve ono što se moglo dogoditi u ovoj krizi. U Europi je iznimno teško napraviti i održavati luksuzni hotel. Zašto? Zato što je radna snaga vrlo skupa i nemoguće je opstati na taj način. Zato većina luksuznih hotela i nije ovdje nego u dalekim krajevima.

Zašto ste u obzir uzeli Hrvatsku?

Razmatrao sam tu ideju jer su mi predložili Brijune. No bilo je mnogo problema, zato što je riječ o nacionalnom parku.

Je li vam taj projekt bio zanimljiv i kao sredstvo za širenje vaše kulinarske filozofije?

Ne samo to. Mene zanimaju hoteli kao takvi, a ne samo hrana u njima. Volim duh hotela. Dakle, nije riječ samo o kulinarškoj filozofiji, već o životnoj filozofiji. Na primjer, danas ima mnogo hotela koji su dosadni, a ja mislim da je u redu da bude i zabavnijih prostora. Trenutno u hotelima odlazak na ručak ili večeru slični odlasku u samostan. Mislim da sve treba biti malo opuštenije.

Je li točno da u ožujku 2012. ponovno otvarate Hotel Benazuza u Seville i zašto?

Da, to je točno. Zato što vlasnik tako želi. Prijatelji smo i želim mu pomoći. Ali u Europi je danas zaista iznimno teško voditi hotele smještene izvan grada, posebice kada je riječ o luksuznim hotelima. Takav koncept poslovanja doista je vrlo težak. U manjim luksuznim hotelima mnogo je problema, osobito kada govorimo o omjeru broja zaposlenih i broja soba.

Mnogi mladi hrvatski chefovi prate vaš rad. Što biste im preporučili, u kojem smjeru da razmišljaju?

Kao prvo, mladi se chef uvijek mora ugledati u različite uzore, a potom odlučiti koji ga od tih uzora čini najsretnijim. Kao drugo, mora se raspitati kod ljudi s više iskustva o tome koji bi mu posao mogao najviše odgovarati. Jer, dok je čovjek mlad, misli da je sve lako, a zapravo nije tako. Primjerice, deset je puta teže voditi restoran izvan grada nego restoran u gradu. To je nešto što čovjek jednostavno treba znati. Jednako tako valja imati na umu da danas više nema toliko ljudi koji idu na poslovne ručkove. Dakle, mladim chefovima koji žele pokrenuti posao savjetujem da za savjet pitaju starije.

Što se tiče kuhanja, koji omjer tradicije i modernizma im savjetujete?

U kuhinji mogu raditi što god požele. Neka pripremaju hranu s kojom će biti sretni. Nemojte misliti da to kažem olako. To je zaista bit.

Posljednjih dvadesetak godina drže vas najutjecajnijim chefom na svijetu. Što vama osobno znači biti najbolji chef na svijetu?

Prije četiri godine nisam o tome razmišljao. Bilo je onih koji su smatrali da mi negativno utječemo na mlade kuhare. No,

fish bones and heads. Do you like to toy with the cultural context of dishes?

Yes, yes, certainly. It's just that culture is not a simple term. It depends on what we're talking about, the geographic, political or another segment of culture. This was a matter of geography and tradition. Some understood it and some did not...

Back in 1998, you had the idea of expanding the Benazuza (a luxury hotel chain project, authors comment) concept to other Mediterranean locations, including Mallorca and Croatia. Did you give it up because the hotel business seemed too risky?

Yes, yes. Fortunately, we did not make the El Bulli Hotel. I thus prevented all that could have happened in this crisis. It is very difficult to make and maintain a luxury hotel in Europe. Why? Because the labor is very expensive and it is impossible to survive that way. This is why most luxury hotels are not here, but in far countries.

Was this project also interesting as a means of spreading your culinary philosophy?

It's not just that. I am interested in hotels as such, not just the food in them. I like the spirit of a hotel. It is therefore not merely about the culinary philosophy, but the life philosophy. For example, we have many boring hotels today, but I think it's OK to have more amusing areas as well. Going for lunch or dinner to a hotel currently seems like going to a monastery. I think it should all be a bit more relaxed.

Is it true that you are reopening Hotel Benazuza in Seville in March of 2012 and why?

Yes. That's true. Because the owner wants to do so. We are friends and I want to help him. But it's very difficult to operate a hotel located outside the city today in Europe, especially when it comes to luxury hotels. Such business concept is really very difficult. There are plenty of problems in smaller hotels, especially with respect to the proportion between the number of employees and the number of rooms.

Many young chefs follow your work. What would you recommend them, how to think?

First of all, a young chef must always look up to different role models and then decide which role model makes him happiest. Secondly, he must inquire with people having more experience about what job would be the best for him. Because, when a man is young, he thinks everything is easy and that is not so. For example, it is ten times more difficult to run a restaurant outside the city than a city restaurant. This is something you simply must know. Also, one should keep in mind that there are not so many people having business lunches anymore. Therefore, I would recommend young chefs who want to start a business to ask their elders for advice.

As for cooking, what proportion between tradition and modernism would you recommend?

They can do whatever they want in the kitchen. Let them prepare food that will make them happy. Don't think I am saying this lightly. This really is the essence.

budući da je danas naš pozitivni utjecaj stvarna činjenica i nešto što se može mjeriti, on je sada i široko prepoznat. Većina trenutno vodećih svjetskih kuhara prošla je kroz El Bulli. I to je lijepo. Lijepo za sve nas koji smo dio El Bullija. A El Bulli nije samo Ferrán Adrià, već duh sam za sebe. A činimo ga svi mi zajedno – dvije tisuće ljudi koji su ovdje dosad radili i stotinjak tisuća ljudi koji su ovdje jeli. Dobro je da će se ta ideja nastaviti putem Fundacije El Bulli.

Je li San Pellegrina lista Restaurant Magazinea pomogla utjecaju tog duha?

Ta je lista dobra s te strane što *Michelin* više nema monopol. Želio bih da se pojavi još nekoliko takvih nagrada, robnih marki koje bi konkurirale jedna drugoj. Kao što u filmskoj industriji postoji *Oscar*, *Cannes*, *Berlinale*... Bilo bi dobro da se broj s dva popne na pet takvih autoriteta.

Što mislite o Michelinu?

Michelin je jako ozbiljna marka. No kao i svi mi, morat će se prilagođavati budućnosti. A budućnost je internet, osobito za vodiče restoranima. Potrebno je biti vrlo aktivan. Klasificirati nešto za sljedećih godinu dana danas više nema smisla. Znamo da danas mnogi imaju blogove u kojima ljudi, za razliku od vodiča, u detalje komentiraju restorane i hranu. *Financial Times* objavio je članak koji govori upravo o tome. Zaključak je taj da će sami sebe morati iznova osmisliti. Kao vi i ja, i svi mi. No *Michelin* je i dalje ozbiljan vodič. Doduše, nepravedan kao i svaki drugi.

Vaša kuhinja ima mnogo poklonika, ali i kritičara. Kako najčešće odgovarate na kritike da vaša jela nisu prirodna? Hvala Bogu, sada više neću morati odgovarati na njih. Nastupilo je novo razdoblje i sada više ne želim gubiti vrijeme na takva pitanja. Mislim da smo svijetu već pokazali sve što je trebalo pokazati. Jednostavno je nemoguće i dalje tvrditi da najutjecajniji restoran u posljednjih dvadeset godina truje ljude. Shizofrenija više nema smisla. Uostalom, vrijeme ionako o svemu presudi.

S obzirom na iskustvo Documente 12 iz 2007. (Adrià je bio pozvan da sudjeluje na prestižnoj umjetničkoj izložbi u njemačkom Kasselu, op.a.), držite li hranu jednim od oblika umjetnosti i može li to ona uopće biti?

O tome već postoji knjiga, a snimljen je i dokumentarni film. Za mene je najvažniji dijalog između kuhinje i umjetnosti, ta dva kreativna svijeta, odnosno svijeta koja mogu biti kreativna i koja upravo sada započinju razgovor. No mislim da nije dobro pitanje je li kuhanje umjetnost. U 2011. to nema smisla, jer se svijet promijenio. To pitanje nema smisla.

Vaša nova fundacija sa suradnicima iz cijeloga svijeta vjerojatno će još godinama postavljati nove izazove kuhinji budućnosti. Što za vas znači njezin slogan Sloboda stvaranja?

Naziv *Sloboda stvaranja* izmijenjeni je stari moto, koji je glasio *Stvaranje nije kopiranje*. Dakle 1986. moto je bio *Stvaranje nije kopiranje*, a 2014. bit će *Sloboda stvaranja*. A oba su metafore. Što to znači? To znači da je san svakoga kreativca sloboda. I što više slobode, to bolje.

Over the past twenty years, you have been considered to be the most influential chef in the world? What does being the best chef in the world mean to you personally?

Four years ago I never thought about it. There were people who thought we had a negative influence on young chefs. But as our positive influence is an actual fact today and something measurable, it is now widely recognized. Most presently leading chefs in the world have visited El Bulli. And this is really nice. Nice for all of us who are part of El Bulli. And El Bulli is not just Ferran Adrià, it is a spirit for itself. And we all form it – two thousand people who have worked here and around a hundred thousand people who have eaten here. It's a good thing this idea will continue through the El Bulli Foundation.

Did Restaurant Magazine's San Pellegrino list help the influence of this spirit?

This list is good inasmuch as Michelin no longer has a monopoly. I would like it if there were a few more such awards, brands competing against each other. Just like in the film industry, where we have the Oscar, Cannes, Berlinale... It would be good if the number rose from two to five such authorities.

What do you think about Michelin?

Michelin is a very serious brand. However, it will have to adapt to the future just like the rest of us. And future is the internet, especially for restaurant guides. You need to be very active. Classifying something for the next year no longer makes sense. We know that there are many blogs today where people, unlike guides, comment on restaurants and food in detail. The Financial Times published an article dealing with this exactly. The conclusion is that you need to reorganize yourself. Like you and me and all of us. However, Michelin is still a serious guide. Unfair, though, like any other.

Your cuisine has many followers, but many critics as well. How do you most often respond to criticism that your dishes are not natural?

Thank God, I will no longer have to respond. A new era has begun and I no longer want to waste time on such questions. I think we've shown the world all that needed to be shown. It is simply impossible to continue to claim that the most influential restaurant in the world is poisoning people. The schizophrenia no longer makes sense. After all, time will always tell.

Considering the experience with Documenta 12 in 2007 (Adrià was invited to participate in a prestigious art exhibition in Kassel, Germany, author's comment), do you think of food as a form of art and can it be a form of art?

There is also a book about this and a documentary has been made. To me, the most important thing is the dialog between cuisine and art, these two creative worlds, or worlds that may be creative and are just starting a dialog. But I think it is not good to ask whether cooking is art. In 2011, it makes no sense because the world has changed. The question makes no sense.





Već ste spomenuli da su kroz kuhinju El Bullija prošli gotovo svi najvažniji mladi chefovi današnjice. Što je, prema vašem mišljenju, najvažnije što ste im prenijeli?

Prvo, strast prema onomu što rade. Drugo, dijeljenje iskustava s drugima. Treće, preuzimanje rizika. To je duh El Bullija.

Porastom uspjeha, El Bulli je postajao sve nedostupniji, a širenje kreativnosti otežavalo je redovit rad restorana. Može li se reći da je zatvaranje restorana zapravo posljednja faza njegove evolucije?

Radi se o prirodnom razvoju. Vidim da ste proučili povijest El Bullija. U pravu ste, nakon Tallera, radionice El Bullija, Fundacija je prirodni nastavak. Fundacija El Bulli fuzija je restorana El Bulli i radionice El Bulli, poput koktela. To je čudno, ali bilo je čudno i kada smo pokrenuli radionicu, jer tada ništa slično nije postojalo nigdje u svijetu. Ideja koja stoji iza Fundacije zapravo je duh El Bullija – osjećamo strast prema ovom poslu, dijelimo iskustva i preuzimamo rizik. Vidjet ćemo što će se dogoditi. Ipak, rekao bih da je to prije svega scenarij za nastavak i budući život El Bullija. I svi drugi restorani, osobito na ovoj razini, nakon nekog vremena moraju se promijeniti, jer se inače jednostavno ugase ili počnu propadati, što je još gore. Mislimo da će ovim projektom duh El Bullija postojati još mnogo godina.

Što će se dogoditi s Tallerom?

On će biti zgodno mjesto za popiti *gin&tonic*. Šalim se. Radionicu ćemo preseliti ovamo. Razmišljali smo o prodaji, ali smo poslije shvatili da je to povijesno mjesto, prva gastro-nomska radionica na svijetu. Koristit ćemo se njome za ugošćivanje posjetitelja, moći će se razgledavati poput muzeja, a poslužiti će nam i kao prostor za sastanke.

Taller je vrlo moderno ureden prostor. Zašto ste dopustili da prostor El Bullija, koji se nije bitno mijenjao od šezdesetih, ostane u tako velikom raskoraku s jelima koja se u njemu služe?

Kada smo prvi put razmišljali o preuređenju interijera, nismo to mogli učiniti zbog nedostatka novca. Poslije, kada je to fi-

Your new foundation with associates from all over the world will probably set new challenges to the cuisine of the future for years to come. What does its slogan Freedom of Creation mean to you?

Freedom of Creation is a changed old motto – Creating Is not Copying. Therefore, in 1986 the motto was Creating Is not Copying, and in 2014 it will be Freedom of Creation. Both are metaphors. What does this mean? This means freedom is the dream of each creative person. The more freedom, the better.

You already mentioned that almost all the most important young chefs today have worked in El Bulli's kitchen. In your opinion, what is the most important thing you conveyed to them?

First of all, the passion for what they do. Secondly, sharing your experience with other people. Thirdly, taking risk. This is the spirit of El Bulli.

As its success grew, El Bulli became more and more inaccessible and the expansion of creativity impeded the normal operation of the restaurant. Could we say that closing the restaurant is actually the last phase of its evolution?

This is natural growth. I see you have studied the history of El Bulli. You are right, after Taller, El Bulli's workshop, the Foundation is the natural sequence of events. The El Bulli Foundation is a fusion between the El Bulli restaurant and the El Bulli workshop, like a cocktail. This is strange, but it was also strange when we launched the workshop, because there was nothing similar anywhere in the world at the time. The idea behind the Foundation is actually the spirit of El Bulli – we feel a passion for this job, we share experience and take risk. We will see what will happen. Still, I would say this is primarily a scenario for the future life of El Bulli. All other restaurants, especially at this level, must change after some time because they simply go under or begin to deteriorate, which is even worse. I think this project will keep the spirit of El Bulli alive for many years to come.

What will happen with Taller?

It will be a nice place for drinking gin & tonic. I'm joking. We will move the workshop here. We thought about selling it, but we later realized it was a historical place, the first gastro workshop in the world. We will use it to receive visitors, there will be tours like in a museum, and it will also serve as a conference area.

Taller is a very modernly designed space. Why did you let the premises of El Bulli, which have not been significantly changed since the 1960s, to remain in such disproportion with the dishes served in it?

When we first thought about redesigning the interior, we didn't do it for lack of money. Later, when it became financially possible, I realized it wouldn't be good. We serve very special, avant-garde food and it seemed necessary to leave the guests at least some contact with the real world, so we didn't redesign the interior. I will give you a radical example. When you are given a medication in a hospital, you will have a different reac-

nancijski postalo moguće, shvatio sam da ne bi bilo dobro. Mi poslužujemo vrlo posebnu, avangardnu hranu i činilo mi se potrebnim da gostima ostavimo barem neki dodir sa stvarnim svijetom, pa stoga nismo preuredili interijer. Dat ću vam radikalniji primjer. Kada vam daju da popijete lijek u bolnici, drukčije ćete reagirati nego ako vam taj isti lijek daju, recimo, tu na plaži. Razumijete? To je ono što se ovdje događa. Sva ta čudna hrana na normalnom mjestu poput ovoga.

I to je svojevrsan element iznenađenja?

Da, tako je. Iznad svega bitno je provokaciju zadržati u određenim okvirima i ne prelaziti granicu, jer inače ljudi u toj provokaciji neće moći uživati.

Ima li ičega za čime žalite u svojoj dosadašnjoj karijeri i eri u El Bulliju?

O onome što ne možete promijeniti ne treba razmišljati. Nema smisla ako se ne može ništa učiniti. Čemu govoriti o tome? Iz prošlosti treba izvući pouke i to je sve.

Ne razmišljate uopće o prošlosti?

Da, razmišljam. Samo ne razmišljam o tome jesam li nešto učinio dobro ili loše, nego jednostavno o onome što se dogodilo.

Što namjeravate raditi kad zatvorite restoran sljedeći tjedan?

Kao i uvijek – putovati. U Kinu, Peru, Sjedinjene Države, Argentinu...

Poslovno ili privatno?

Oboje, naravno. Treba kombinirati. Svake godine radim slično. No razliku ću zapaziti tek u siječnju, kada bismo inače otvorili restoran. Umjesto toga započet ćemo s radovima na Fundaciji. No sada je situacija vrlo slična onomu što radimo svake godine.

Je li istina da živite vrlo jednostavno i da niste materijalist?

Jest. Živim jednostavno, imam mali automobil... Ne trebam mnogo. Ali obožavam putovanja. Volim hotele i volim hranu. Kada me netko pozove na svoj brod, rado se odazovem, ali nemam nikakvu namjeru kupiti vlastitu jahtu. Mogu je unajmiti, a povremeno to i činim.

Jeste li skromnost naslijedili od roditelja?

Da i ne. Petnaest godina s roditeljima sam živio vrlo skromno i navikao sam se na to. Za mene je to normalno.

Jednom ste rekli da ste profesionalno vrlo hladni i proračunati, ali privatno vrlo topli. Kako je moguće pomiriti te dvije potpuno različite strane osobnosti?

Jedna stvar je privatni život, a druga posao. Ovdje nas radi sedamdesetak i moramo razdvojiti jedno od drugoga.

Imate li veliki ego?

Ako i imam, već sam ga stotruko opravdao (smiješak).

Tvrdite da je čin jedenja vrlo kompleksan. Kako je to moguće u slučaju svakodnevne radnje?

Što želite time reći? Pa neku sliku možemo gledati svaki dan,

more than if you were given the medication here on the beach, for example. You understand? This is what's happening here. All this strange food in a normal place like this.

And this is a sort of an element of surprise?

Yes, that's correct. Above all, it is important to keep the provocation within certain boundaries and not cross it because people will otherwise not be able to enjoy the provocation.

Is there anything you regret in your career to date and the era in El Bulli?

You shouldn't think about things you can't change. There is no point if there is nothing you can do. Why talk about it? One should learn lessons from the past and that's all.

You do not think about the past at all?

Yes, I do. It's just that I do not think about whether I have done something good or bad, but simply about what happened.

What do you plan to do when you close the restaurant next week?

As always – travel. To China, Peru, United States, Argentina...

Business or pleasure?

Both, of course. One should combine them. I do it like that every year. But I will not see the difference before January, when we would normally open the restaurant. Instead, we will begin to work on the Foundation. But the situation is now very similar to what we do every year.

Is it true that you live a very simple life and are not a materialist?

Yes. I live a simple life, I have a small car... I don't need much. But I love to travel. I love hotels and I love food. When someone invites me to their boat, I gladly accept, but I have no intention of buying my own yacht. I can rent one, which I do occasionally.

Did you inherit your modesty from your parents?

Yes and no. I lived very modestly with my parents for fifteen years and became used to it. This is normal to me.

You once said you were very cold and calculated professionally and very warm privately. How is it possible to reconcile these two completely different sides of your personality?

Private life is one thing and business is another. There are seventy of us working here and we must separate one from the other.

Do you have a big ego?

Even if I do, I have justified it a hundred times over (smile).

You say the act of eating is very complex. How is this possible in case of daily routine?

What do you mean? We can look at a painting every day and it still may be a complex thing. When I say complex, I refer to the fact that this may be the only discipline where we use all five senses.



a ipak to može biti složena stvar. Kada kažem složeno, mislim na činjenicu da je to možda jedina disciplina u kojoj rabimo svih pet osjetila.

Je li bitno i to što ta osjetila treniramo svakodnevno?

Ne, to uopće nije bitno. Ja sam trenirao nogomet svaki dan, ali ipak nisam postao profesionalni nogometaš. Za one koji se bave kuhanjem, odnosno gastronomijom, vrlo je bitno da shvate da samim time što netko jede svaki dan ne znači da i znade jesti. Potrebno je imati određeni smisao za to. Možete, na primjer, svaki dan igrati golf, a i dalje igrati jako loše. S druge strane, ima onih koji igraju vrlo rijetko, ali su izvrsni. Meni je trebalo dosta dugo da to otkrijem. Po restoranima možete sresti mnogo gurmana, onih koji se obično nazivaju *foodiesima*, amatera koji često obilaze restorane. Čuo sam ih kako razgovaraju, vidio kako jedu i shvatio da ne razumiju baš ništa. Doduše, ne u El Bulliju. Kad ih vidim, pomislim, kako su čudni! Zato sam vam dao primjer nogometa, jer činjenica da se trenira svaki dan sama po sebi ne znači ništa.

Is it also important that we train these five senses every day?

No, this doesn't matter at all. I practiced football every day and still never became a professional footballer. For those in cooking, or gastronomy, it is very important to understand that the fact that someone eats every days does not mean they know how to eat. You need to have a certain gift for it. For example, you can play golf every day and still be a very bad player. On the other hand, there are people who play very rarely and are excellent. It took me a long time to discover this. You can see many gourmets in restaurants that we normally refer to as foodies, amateurs who visit restaurant a lot. I've heard them talking, seen them eat and realized they understand absolutely nothing. Not in El Bulli, though. When I see them, I think to myself how weird they are! This is why I gave you the example of football because the fact that you practice every day means nothing in itself.

As long as you are mentioning football, we know you played the sport as a young man and dreamed of having a career

Kad ste već spomenuli nogomet, poznato je da ste se kao mladić bavili tim sportom i sanjali o karijeri profesionalnog nogometaša. Mislite li da bi, primjenjujući istu filozofiju koju ste rabili u kreiranju kuhinje, postali jednako dobar nogometaš kakav ste chef?

Ne. To ne funkcionira po načelu spojenih posuda. U životu nema univerzalnih pravila.

Ne žalite što niste postali profesionalni nogometaš?

Ne, ne žalim.

Vjerujete li u sudbinu?

Ne, ne vjerujem u sudbinu, jer inače ne bi bilo toliko ljudi koji umiru od gladi. Ne vjerujem da je njihova sudbina da umru od gladi.

Kako ste se osjećali prošle godine kada je Noma, restoran vašeg učenika Renéa Redzepija, smijenila El Bulli na prvo mjestu San Pellegrinove liste?

Fantastično. Ali nije riječ samo o prvom, nego i drugom, i trećem, i četvrtom, i petom i šestom mjestu. Redzepi, Joan Roca, Massimo Bottura, Grant Achatz... svi su radili ovdje. To je fantastično.

Ponosni ste na to?

Ne ja, nego El Bulli.

U subotu, za šest dana, na posljednjoj večeri u El Bulliju ugostit ćete prijatelje, suradnike i neke od chefova kojima ste bili mentor. Kako će ta večer izgledati?

To neće biti zabava, nego *hommage* ljudima koji su stvorili El Bulli. Dolaze neki od njih kao predstavnici dvije tisuće ljudi koji su tu radili.

Hoće li biti kakvih iznenađenja?

Ja sam stručnjak u priređivanju iznenađenja.

Što ćete poslužiti te večeri?

Ništa posebno, dolaze obični ljudi, pa nećemo pripremati nikakvo specijalno jelo. Time će El Bulli jednostavno odati priznanje ljudima koji su ga stvorili. Bit će vrlo jednostavno. (Ne baš točno, jer je za pedeset uzvanika posluženo svih pedeset jela iz ovosezonskog repertoara, a zabava je, kako doznajemo od onih koji su na njoj bili, trajala do sitnih sati, op.a.)

Hoće li biti i malo nostalgije?

Što? Mislite na zadnji dan? Ma kakvi. Ne mogu biti sretniji. Ta zavidi nam čitav gastronomski svijet. Sada napokon imam dvije i pol godine za učenje, za putovanja, za novi početak... Kako bih zbog toga mogao biti tužan?

Za kraj, gdje se vidite za deset godina?

Tu. U Fundaciji. Upravo je u tome razlika. U restoranu El Bulli mogao bih ostati još 3-4 godine, ne više. U Fundaciji El Bulli ostat ću do kraja života. To će biti sasvim drukčiji posao. ■

as a professional player. Do you think that, if you applied the same philosophy you used in creating your cuisines, you would have become an equally good footballer as you are a chef?

No. This does not work on the principle of communicating vessels. There are no universal rules in life.

You do not regret not becoming a professional footballer?

No, I don't regret it.

Do you believe in destiny?

No, I don't believe in destiny because otherwise there would not be so many people starving to death. I don't believe their destiny is to starve to death.

How did you feel last year when Noma, the restaurant owned by you student René Redzepi, replaced El Bulli El Bulli in the top position of the San Pellegrino list?

Fantastic. But it's not merely about being number one, but also about being number two, three, four, five and six. Redzepi, Joan Roca, Massimo Bottura, Grant Achatz... they all worked here. This is fantastic.

Are you proud of this?

Not me, El Bulli is.

On Saturday, in six days, you will be host to your friends, associates and some of the chefs you have mentored at the last dinner in El Bulli. What will that evening be like?

This will not be a party, but an homage to the people who created El Bulli. Some of them come as representatives of the two thousand people who have worked here.

Will there be any surprises?

I am an expert in surprises.

What will you serve that evening?

Nothing special, ordinary people are coming so we won't prepare any special dish. El Bulli will simply pay respect to the people who created it. It will be very simple. (Not quite true, because fifty guests were served all fifty dishes from this season's repertoire and, according to some people who were there, the party went on until the early morning hours, author's comment)

Will there be a little nostalgia as well?

What? You mean the last day? No way. I couldn't be happier. The entire gastro world is envious of us. I now finally have two and a half years to study, travel, to make a new beginning... How could I be sad about this?

Finally, where do you see yourself in ten years?

Here. At the Foundation. This is exactly the difference. I could stay at the El Bulli restaurant for 3-4 more years, no more. I will remain at the El Bulli Foundation for the rest of my life. This will be a completely different job. ■

Pretpovijest El Bullija

Prije negoli je Ferran Adrià počeo raditi u El Bulliju 1984, restoran je već postojao puna dva desetljeća. Na parceli koju su kupili 1957. El Bulli su izgradili liječnik Hans Schilling i njegova supruga Marketta iz njemačkoga Gelsenkirchena. Iako nisu bili izrazito dobra imovinskog stanja, dosta su putovali, a dr. Schilling, inače strastveni gurman, planirao je njihove ture po Njemačkoj i Francuskoj prema adresama (tada rijetkih) restorana s *Michelinovim* zvjezdicama. Sredinom pedesetih počeli su posjećivati španjolsku sredozemnu obalu i tako jednoga ljeta slučajno nabasali na Calu Montjoi, idiličnu uvalu s prostranom plažom, u koju su se odmah zaljubili. Tamo su izgradili kuću, a nedugo potom i teren za minigolf, uz koji su za izletnike s plaže ponudili i mali bar, odnosno roštiljarnicu pod imenom Bar Alemany. U njemu su nudili jednostavna jela (*gazpacho*, riba i piletina sa žara), koje je uglavnom spravljala Marketta. Iako se par razišao, a Marketta ostala živjeti u Calu Montjoi, dr. Schilling nastavio je dolaziti 2–3 puta godišnje svojim bijelim Mercedesom i dovozio pun prtljajnik delikatesa. Oduvijek opčinjen finim restoranima, u partnerstvu s Markettom 1964. u Calu Montjoi otvorio je ambiciozniji restoran s profesionalnom ekipom i, prema dvama francuskim buldozima (francuski sleng *bulli*) koje je par posjedovao, nazvao ga Rotisserie Hazienda El Bulli. Mijenjajući često *chefove*, restoran je napokon 1976, za stolovanja alzaškog *chefa* Jeana-Louisa Neichela, osvojio prvu *Michelinovu* zvjezdicu te potom 1983. i drugu, u doba kada je kuhinju također vodio Francuz, Jean-Paul Vinay iz Lyona (tada najmlađi europski *chef* s dvjema zvjezdicama). Usprkos svemu, restoran je, zbog izdvojenosti, loše ceste i kratke sezone, i dalje imao problema s popunjavanjem svojih stolova, baš kao i tijekom prethodnih dvadeset godina, kada su obilazili izletnike na plaži i nudili im povoljan ručak (potpuni je paradoks da je na koncu rezervacija u El Bulliju postala najtraženija u svijetu). Sljedeće godine na mjesto kuhara zadužena za mesna jela stigao je 22-godišnji Adrià, a ostalo je povijest.

The Prehistory of El Bulli

Before Ferran Adrià began to work at El Bulli in 1984, the restaurant had existed for two full decades. On a plot they bought in 1957, physician Hans Schilling and his wife Marketta from Gelsenkirchen, Germany built El Bulli. Although not very wealthy, they traveled a lot and Dr. Schilling, a passionate gourmet, planned their tours across Germany and France according to the addresses of restaurants with Michelin stars (rare at the time). In mid-1950s, they began to visit the Spanish Mediterranean coast and one summer accidentally came across Cala Montjoi, an idyllic bay with a large beach, with which they fell in love instantly. They built a house there and soon afterwards a mini golf court, accompanied with a small bar/grill house named Bar Alemany for excursionists visiting the beach. They offered simple dishes there (*gazpacho*, grilled fish and chicken), mostly prepared by Marketta. Although the couple separated and Marketta remained in Cala Montjoi, Dr. Schilling continued to visit 2-3 times a year in his white Mercedes and brought a trunk full of delicacies. Always obsessed with fine restaurants, he became partners with Marketta in 1964 and opened a more ambitious restaurant with a professional crew in Cala Montjoi, naming it Rotisserie Hazienda El Bulli after the two French bulldogs (French slang: *bulli*) the couple had. After changing chefs often, in 1976 the restaurant was finally awarded its first Michelin star during the term of the Alsatian chef Jeana-Louisa Neichela, and then the second one in 1983 when the kitchen was also managed by a Frenchman, Jean-Paul Vinay of Lyon (the youngest European chef with two stars at the time). Despite all this, due its isolation, the short and bad road and a short season, the restaurant still had problems filling its tables, just like during the preceding twenty years when they went from one excursionist on the beach to another and offered them an affordable lunch (a complete paradox is that a reservation at El Bulli ultimately became the most wanted one in the world). Next year, the 22-year-old Adrià came to work as the chef in charge of meat dishes and the rest is history.

*Izjave poznatih svjetskih chefova
u povodu zatvaranja El Bullija
ekskluzivno za lce&piće:*

*Statement of world's renowned chefs
on the occasion of the closing of El
Bulli (exclusively for lce&piće):*



Massimo Bottura, Osteria Francescana (Modena):

Sjećam se toliko prekrasnih trenutaka koje sam doživio za stažiranja u El Bulliju, premda u to vrijeme nisam ni izbliza shvaćao u kako će velikoj mjeri Ferran utjecati na moj profesionalni život... Na gastrosusretima širom svijeta stalno se susrećem s ljudima koji su u posljednjih dvadeset godina radili u Ferranovoj kuhinji, i s njima se osjećam kao sa suborcima ili ljudima s kojima sam proživio neku dramatičnu životnu situaciju, osjećaj koji i oni jako dobro razumiju. Jednostavno, postoji nešto nestvarno i trajno što nas odmah povezuje i često sam pokušavao odgonetnuti što to točno jest. Stranac bi pomislio da su to insajderske tajne, naučene tehnike, recepti..., ali poput tajnih agenata, samo mi zapravo znamo kakvo je to iskustvo... Za rada u El Bulliju dijelio sam sobu s mladićem iz Rima, koji je cijelo ljeto proveo guleći krumpire i bio mi je strašno zavidan što sam ja imao prilike raditi na različitim radnim mjestima. Stalno me pitao, zapravo preklinjao, da mu nabavim recept za Ferranov sladoled od Parmigiana Reggiana. To je bio jedini razlog zbog kojeg je došao, i jedva je čekao da ga ponudi u svojoj sladoledarnici na Piazza Navona. Nikada nije nabavio taj recept, jer do konca ljeta nije prestao guliti krumpir. Ali i da jest, što bi mu taj recept donio?... Ferranova bit je u tome što se odmiče od apstraktnog doživljaja, postavlja si pitanje, zamišlja prizore..., baš poput slikara, arhitekta ili glazbenika. A onda na pitanje odgovara jelom, jestivim odgovorom. To je upravo ono što ga je razdvojilo od njegovih prethodnika i čime je doslovce izmijenio svijet kulinarstva. Oslobađao se unaprijed utvrđenih postavki, jedne po jedne, i nalazio odgovore na bezvremenska pitanja. Postavio je model koji se može primijeniti na mnoge stilove kuhanja, kulinarske i kulturne tradicije, kao i na različite osobnosti... U slučaju kuhinje Ferrana Adrije nije riječ o tajnama. Ferran je najvelikodušniji chef na svijetu. Na svim skupovima do u detalje otkriva sve o tehnikama i konceptima na kojima radi. Trajno dijeli svoju viziju sa svima koji ga okružuju... Na posljednjoj večeri u El Bulliju vladao je poseban duh, duh El Bullija, duh slobode koji svatko od nas tamo prisutnih svakodnevno interpretira u radu. Priznajem, na početku nas je privukla alkemija Ferranove kuhinje – nepoznate namirnice, inovativne tehnike na rubu znanosti, jela neobičnih tekstura i temperatura... Tko bi tomu odolio? Ali jedini čarobni trik kojemu nas je Ferran naučio bio je način kako rabiti vlastiti razum. Zaista, najveća od svih čarolija.

Massimo Bottura, Osteria Francescana (Modena):

I remember so many wonderful moments I experienced during my internship at El Bulli, although I wasn't even close to realizing at the time how much Ferran would affect my professional life... At gastro encounters across the world, I constantly meet people who have worked in Ferran's kitchen over the past twenty years and when I'm with them I feel as if they were my fellow soldiers or people with whom I have experienced a dramatic situation in life a feeling they understand very well. There is simply something surreal and permanent that connects us immediately and I've often tried to discover what exactly that is. A stranger would think they were insider secrets, techniques learned, recipes... but. Like secret agents, only we know what this experience is like... While I worked at El Bulli, I shared my room with a young man from Rome who spent all summer peeling potatoes and was very envious of me because I had the opportunity to work different jobs. He kept asking me, actually begging me to get him a recipe for Ferran's Parmigiano Reggiano ice cream. This was the only reason why he came and he couldn't wait to offer it in his ice cream shop on Piazza Navona. He never got the recipe because he didn't stop peeling potatoes until the end of summer. But even if he did, what would that recipe bring him? The essence of Ferran is in the fact that he distances himself from the abstract experience, asks himself questions, imagines scenes ..., just like a painter, architect or musician. And then answers the questions with a dish, an edible answer. This is what separated him from his predecessors and helped him literally change the culinary world. He liberated himself from predetermined postulates, one by one, and found answers to timeless questions. He established a model applicable to many styles of cooking, culinary and cultural traditions and different personalities... In case of Ferran Adrià's cuisines, it is not about secrets. Ferran is the most generous chef in the world. At conventions, he reveals everything about his techniques and concepts he is working on in detail. He permanently shares his vision with everyone around him... At the last dinner at El Bulli, a special spirit prevailed, the spirit of El Bulli, the spirit of freedom that every one of us present interprets in our work every day. I admit, at first I was attracted by the alchemy of Ferran's cooking – unknown ingredients, innovative, borderline scientific techniques, dishes of unusual textures and temperatures... Who would resist it? But the only magic trick Ferran taught us is how to use own reason. Truly, the greatest of all magic.



Daniel Boulud (Daniel, New York):

Riječ je o važnom događaju za povijest gastronomije, jer je iza nas razdoblje od dvadesetak godina tijekom kojega se dogodilo više bitnih promjena negoli u dvije stotine godina prije toga. Vrhunski restorani nakon El Bullija jednostavno više ne mogu biti ono što su bili prije. El Bulli je zatvoren i to je poglavlje možda završeno, ali u jedno sam siguran – Ferran Adrià ne prestaje s radom. On nije od onih koji odustaju i uvjeren sam da će u budućnosti biti itekako mnogo zanimljivih i uzbudljivih stvari za koje će se on pobrinuti.

Daniel Boulud (Daniel, New York):

This an important event for the history of gastronomy because we have a period of twenty years behind us, during which more important changes occurred than in all two hundred years before that. After El Bulli, top restaurants simply cannot be what they used to be. El Bulli is closed and this chapter may be closed, but I am sure of one thing – Ferran Adrià will not stop working. He is not a quitter and I am convinced he will see to it that there are plenty of interesting things in future.

José Andrés (Minibar, Washington DC i Bazaar, Los Angeles):

Sigurno je posrijedi kraj jedne ere. Ja sam bio Ferranov prvi učenik i radio sam s njim od prvoga dana kada je preuzeo vođenje kuhinje El Bullija, a poslije postao njegov dobar prijatelj. Kad sam otišao u Sjedinjene Države i pokrenuo vlastite restorane, svih tih godina vraćao sam se svakoga ljeta u El Bulli i tamo radio, učio od novih saznanja do kojih su Ferran i njegova ekipa došli. Ali posljednjih desetak godina nisam se zadržavao predugo, jer sam shvatio da Ferranov rad odveć utječe na moj vlastiti stil... On je u razdoblju 1994–1997. postavio tako revolucionarne temelje, da je imao što razrađivati petnaestak godina. Silno je utjecao na svjetsku gastronomiju, ali i na ljude koji su s njim radili. Zato je svima nama koji smo, najviše zahvaljujući njegovu radu, postigli ozbiljne karijere okupljanje na posljednjoj večeri u El Bulliju bilo vrlo emocionalan doživljaj. Tamo sam došao s 23 godine, još vrlo mlad, i mislio sam da ću ubrzo raditi nešto sasvim drugo. No četvrt stoljeća poslije svakoga dana radim nešto bolje i zanimljivije, sve na temeljima koje sam naučio u El Bulliju... I kao fundacija El Bulli će jako utjecati na budućnost gastronomije, ali za nas, učenike tog restorana, on više nikada neće biti isti.

José Andrés (Minibar, Washington DC and Bazaar, Los Angeles):

This surely is the end of an era. I was Ferran's first student and worked with him from the first day he took over El Bulli's kitchen and later became his good friend. After I went to the United States and started my own restaurants, all these years I kept coming back to El Bulli and worked there, learning from new knowledge discovered by Ferran and his team. However, over the past ten years I didn't stay too long because I realized Ferran's work had too much influence on my own style... Between 1994 and 1997, he set up the revolutionary foundations to elaborate on for the next fifteen years or so. He had a tremendous influence on global gastronomy, but also on the people who worked with him. This is why the gathering for the last dinner at El Bulli was a very emotional experience to all of us who have achieved serious careers, mostly thanks to his work. I came there at the age of 23, still very young, and I thought I would soon be doing something completely different. However, a quarter of a century later, I do something better and more interesting, all thanks to the basics I learned at El Bulli... As a foundation, El Bulli will have a strong influence on the future of gastronomy, but to us, students of this restaurant, it will never be the same.





Grant Achatz, Alinea (Chicago):

Zatvaranje El Bullija za mene ne znači kraj jedne ere. Upravo suprotno. Značenje je El Bullija za suvremeno kuhanje golemo, ali ono što je jednako važno, a što ljudi često ne shvaćaju, jest da je utjecajem El Bullija na tolike *chefove* u svijetu zapravo trajno učvršćen pokret progresivnoga kuhanja. Temelji koje je postavio taj restoran poslužit će kao velika pomoć napretku kreativne kuhinje daleko u budućnost. El Bulli je za gastronomiju bio daleko najvažniji restoran nakon Escoffiera. Ne samo da je razvio mnoge nove kulinarske tehnike, nego je, što je mnogo važnije, nadahnuo mnoge suvremene *chefove* da se izraze i budu kreativni u kuhanju. Sama ta ideja pomaže napretku kulinarstva znatno više od primjera jednog restorana koji radi na takav način. Ne znam točno koji su planovi Ferranove Fundacije, ali ako to bude ono što ja očekujem, onda će ta institucija imati veći utjecaj negoli je imao El Bulli kao restoran. Sa svim resursima koji će biti na raspolaganju, bez stresa vođenja jednog od najboljih restorana svijeta, bit će moguće postići jako mnogo.

Grant Achatz, Alinea (Chicago):

To me, the closing of El Bulli does not mean the end of an era. Quite the opposite. El Bulli's significance for modern cooking is huge, but what is equally important, and what people often don't understand, is that El Bulli's influence on so many chefs around the world actually permanently established the progressive cooking movement. The foundations set by the restaurant will be of great help to the advance of creative cooking far into the future. El Bulli was by far the most important restaurant for gastronomy after Escoffier. Not only did it develop many new culinary techniques but, much more importantly, inspired many modern chefs to express themselves and be creative. The very idea helps the advancement of cooking much more than the example of a restaurant operating this way. I don't know the exact plans for Ferran's Foundation, but if it's what I expect, this institution will have a much larger impact than El Bulli as a restaurant. With all resources available, without the stress of running one of the best restaurants in the world, it will be able to accomplish a lot.