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KONFEKT
KOMPAKT

Sharp Dressing — Drinking — Dining — Travel — Design

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Sweet talk: — We start this edition with passionate words on pâtisserie from our style director, followed by some fresh tips and thoughts on living well – from a wine to expand your palate and a tasty pasta recipe to the right jacket for the season.



Opinion

Marcela Palek

I adore cakes, tarts and pastries (which is handy as I'm style director of *Konfekt*, a name that means confectionery in German and certainly focuses on the sweeter things in life). That said, the high sugar content of these baked beauties makes me think twice and I often feel a pang of frustration gazing lovingly into the well-dressed window of a pâtisserie, knowing the excessive sweetness is not to my taste.

My grandfather passed on his desire for delicious desserts to me: particularly a penchant for poppy-seed fillings. Before he moved to Prague (for the love of my grandmother), he trained as a confectioner in Vienna. It's how I honed an in-depth knowledge of

Austrian and Czech baked goods at an early age:
from *Buchteln* buns with poppy seeds to *powidl* (plum jam) to
cheese curd and sultanas, buttercream tarts and, of course,
strudel. Especially apple strudel.

My grandfather's own *Apfelstrudel* is, or was, the best. I could still recognise it immediately among many today: juicy, aromatic and not too sweet. It probably had to do with the scarcity of ingredients at the time when he was perfecting it in the 1930s and 1940s. Sugar and butter were precious and rare but his elegant cakes were deliciously light and fragrant. He compensated for the rationed ingredients – often used too generously today – with rich decoration. My grandfather deftly used all manner of nozzles to elevate fine patterns on flat cakes: squiggle after squiggle in white flourishes or a delicate pink flicker. It was amazing how everything always came out perfectly and his cocoa butter-cream cake was a little masterpiece.

Baking is not my thing – why would it be? – I just waited for my grandfather to visit. Nevertheless, I still own his *Recipe Book 1927 – 1948*, written in black ink, now faded grey. I have never baked from it. I would probably be disappointed if I did, I'm sure such baking needs a lot of feeling and practice. Leafing through his book, however, is like looking through a photo album, no, even more poignant perhaps. I can still recall the smell of the Clara cigarettes (a Czech brand that looked like Camels) that my grandfather smoked on his balcony after work. Those holidays in the mountains with my grandfather play like a movie in my mind. Each day he baked for us while I was at ski school. *Kolatschen*, a cake with poppy seeds or *powidl*, I remember them as if I had eaten them yesterday. "Who needs sugary pastries from the shop window?" I think to myself. My grandfather's faded recipe book is so much sweeter.

3.

Wine of the week / Chandra Kurt

Wine horizons

**reader: I want to widen my wine repertoire a touch. Where in Europe should I look
ld you recommend a bottle or two to help me start?**

Chandra Kurt: Let's begin with reds and the region that's helped me to discover a lot of fascinating new wines: Etna in Sicily. In recent years its high-altitude, volcanic soil has attracted several outstanding wine producers – despite the dangers of running a business on Europe's highest active volcano. I think now is the moment to stock up on some of the results and especially those wines made from the indigenous nerello mascalese: a dark-skinned grape with plenty of fruit, punch and acidity.

So here goes: Passopisciaro (made on terraces 1,000m above the town of the same name) from Andrea Franchetti's Villa Franchetti on Etna's northern slope is an excellent producer to start with, which offers a range of prices for any buyer. Meanwhile, Idda Etna Rosso is a collaboration by veteran wine-maker Angelo Gaja and banker-turned-vintner Alberto Graci, which shows what can be produced here. Last, try Tenuta Tascante Contrada Rampante Etna Rosso by Tasca d'Almerita for its complexity and rich aroma.

The bottom line: Passopisciaro Passorosso Etna DOC 2018



"Passopisciaro, 2018"

Passorosso, Etna Rosso DOC

Aged in wooden barrels this ruby-hued red is made from nerello mascalese grapes. Like any decent dinner party, it's elegant, harmonious and just a little fruity.

