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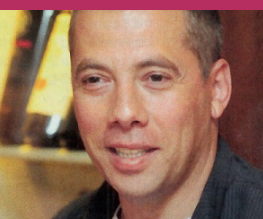
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*Adaptable to any culinary level, as well as being scalable from snack size to a main course, salads are a favourite with health and pleasure conscious guests. Major trends? High quality, strictly fresh ingredients, cross-over recipes and customising.*



Photo: Nat. Bio Fine Food



## ■ ■ ■ page 44

*Hong Kong born Alan Yau, creator of ground-breaking dining concepts from Wagamama to Michelin-rated Hakkasan or Yauatcha, all featuring food from the Far East, reveals the sources of his inspiration and intuition.*

## front cover ■ ■ ■

*Great food is being served at Atlantis, The Palm in Dubai: the 1,539-room, ocean-themed resort boasts 17 different restaurants, bars and lounges, including four celebrity restaurants (see page 58 onwards).*

Photo: Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai

## page 36 ■ ■ ■

*Today, there are over 4,000 restaurants in Moscow: an extremely young and explosively expanding market, dominated by chains – the majority of them created and run by local entrepreneurs.*



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guests, with the emphasis definitely on company events with or without event companies, rather than small, private parties. The repertoire has to cover everything: gala evenings, company events, and communications-based informal get-togethers and fair catering.

Depending on the size of the event, Catering's Best works on an order value of between €45 and 1,000 per person, so it is hard to give an illustration of an average bill. Extreme flexibility is the order of the day when it comes to lead time – it can be months but is sometimes only a week. The peak months for business are identifiable with a fair degree of accuracy. May, June and October are good. September, November and December are extremely busy months. The rest of the year is quiet to middling.

What is the decisive factor resulting from the impact of the hotel brand? Catering's Best believes its success comes from focusing on individuality and custom-made solutions as well as highlighting the synergies between the hotel parent company and the catering subsidiary, in other words between the 5-star luxury hotel brand and the catering brand. Horn would like to push the radiation effect of this, an effect which has long been neg-

# Hotel Background

**Exceptional events in unusual locations are their forte. Subsidiary company, Catering's Best by InterContinental, which claims to be Germany's biggest hotel caterer, exploits the synergy of a powerful catering brand and an internationally renowned, 5-star luxury hotel chain. A balancing act between an autonomous and a joint brand presence.**

[www.cateringsbest.de](http://www.cateringsbest.de)

"We don't just sell food and drink, we feel responsible for the general ambience in the room," Martina Horn emphasizes. As Regional Director of Catering Sales Germany, Ms Horn has held the reins of Catering's Best by InterContinental since 2006 and has consistently driven forward development in four areas of expertise:

- Food
- Location
- Decoration
- Service.

With nine locations, five in Germany plus Vienna, Prague, Budapest and most recently Warsaw, Catering's Best now has a Europe-wide presence. Martina Horn is supported by the creative force of a 25-strong organisational team plus 40 cooks, 110 service staff and lots of subcontracted personnel. The company brings twelve years of experience to bear – the formula was established in 1996 as an independent branch of InterConti Frankfurt/Main, with two employees. Events range in size from 5 to 5,000

lected or deliberately played down as a marketing tool and decisive competitive USP: "Unfortunately, for many industry players, the term hotel catering is almost a swear word – we are aiming to prove the opposite. As caterers to InterContinental Hotels, we would be stupid not to exploit the image of the InterConti brand. At the same time, we present ourselves as a separate brand with our own logo and customers see this as positive!" Naturally, the synergies extend far beyond the image effect. "Access to existing HR, material and equipment resources, the logistical platform and expertise of one of the world's most influential hotel brands creates major advantages in terms of competitive differentiation." At the same time, the catering company's orders ensure optimal utilization of hotel kitchens, which is an advantage, particularly in what are slack periods for the hotel trade, a business which is subject in any case to



*„The challenge for us is to create a harmonious mix of individuality and customer influence,” Martina Horn, Regional Director of Catering Sales Germany, outlines her expectations.*

seasonal fluctuations. The kitchens are now experienced in coping with this dual usage: “it has worked out well.”

Emotion is an important and decisive key word when it comes to customer satisfaction and even enthusiasm. “We are already halfway to winning an order if we get a handle on the client’s emotions and can look ‘into his soul’ at the very beginning of an event presentation.” Horn outlines the initial step in the awarding of or pitching for an order: “Having a team presence, decorations and ambience”.

So as to pull out all the stops, in terms of expertise, at a preliminary stage, Martina Horn generally travels with a large presentation team. She has four people to support her: a local catering manager, a chef de cuisine, a service manager and an operations manager. The team provides a yardstick for overall performance particularly where major company clients are concerned.

Although, for big events, the company has to work with subcontracted service staff, the consistent maxim in the kitchen is ‘InterConti staff only’. Their professional slogan is ‘in the know’ or put more simply, knowing your way around the hotel, logistics and practices, etc. This is a non-negotiable prerequisite for optimal working and high performance, which is why Catering’s Best only works out of eight InterConti hotels, where everything is professionally structured.

The company is well-known for its choice of ‘wow-factor’ event venues, venues which are as unusual as possible, like abandoned factory buildings, the empty 21st floor of an office building with fantastic views, historic buildings, museums, zoos, etc. Location scouts constantly look for new sites, although they never use rooms at the InterConti-Hotels for events. “To avoid internal competition, hotel ballrooms are reserved for the hotel’s own events.”

As far as decoration is concerned, the following applies:

