

summary

The connection between museums and gastronomy has risen to new levels all over the world in recent years. Museum catering has acquired ever greater importance and such provision to guests has been carried out in accordance with the institutions' standards of quality, while at the same time the cultural history of cuisine has also been given a place in exhibitions facilitating the exhibition of objects and documents in various respects. The present issue of *Museum-Café* explores this topic.

- ¶ Right now the challenge we are presented with is the minimal, albeit acceptable standards of restaurants and cafés typically maintained by museums in Hungary, but there are examples of places that present standards acceptable in museums anywhere in the world. Included among these are the new restaurant and café of the renovated Museum of Fine Arts, as well as the bistro (P'Art) on the ground floor of the Ludwig Museum, which both cater to the highest expectations. Most of the world's most prestigious museums have kitchens run by Michelin-star chefs, thus museums appear on international top lists of restaurants, making these places worth visiting not only for the artefacts they hold but also to dine in. All of this contributes to visitors spending more time in the museums.
- ¶ Eating and drinking was a favourite subject of Netherlandish painting in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. These depictions often showed different types of people as caricatures stuffing themselves and swilling down drink, making the attitudes of the newly formed middle class of the time into a subject of derision. The topics were equally inspired by biblical scenes (the seven deadly sins, including gluttony), by profane things, proverbs and cautionary tales about certain types of people.
- ¶ One of this issue's articles is devoted to the cuisine and dining by the aristocrats of the nineteenth century for which recollections or detailed descriptions have survived. These documents primarily discuss life in Hungarian aristocratic society that can be regarded as luxurious by any yardstick, and although it was a privilege to participate in such, at the same time it was somewhat lacking in foreign eyes, and this was especially so in comparison to the hospitality of British or French castles. The descriptions provide an accurate picture of the

furnishings of the dining halls, the courses that were served, the wealth of service sets as well as the etiquette both before and after eating.

- ¶ This issue takes a look at three brands, each discussed in a separate article, which played an important role in the history of the development of Hungary's middle class, and which supplied Hungarian and international markets for several dynasties. One of them was built by the Zwack family: the global brand of Unicum. This is the only example of a company that is still in operation today, since one of the family members, Péter Zwack, who fled communist Hungary, returned after several decades and was able to buy back the nationalised factory where the world famous drinks are now made according to the recipes kept secret by the family. All of this is evoked by an exciting museum and a guided tour through Budapest. The stories of the sparkling wine producer, Törley, and that of the beer-brewing Dreher family now belong to the past, but the factories they established are still operating in the original buildings. The history of the Törleys and the Drehers are commemorated by the visitor centres set up on the premises of the plants, since both of these are popular brands worthy of being preserved for posterity.
- ¶ Tibor Déry was an important figure in 20th-century Hungarian literature: after being in Lajos Kassák's early Avant-garde circle, he played a leading role in the country's literary scene. He was given a prison sentence in his old age for his participation in the revolution of 1956. After being released, he entered into a compromise with the political powers but was a respected and highly esteemed artist who was at the centre of social life at the time. Based on the memoirs of his former landlady, it can be reconstructed what guests the Déry family entertained in their Buda villa, and what lunch and dinner was served on these occasions. The visitors included top political leaders as well as many prominent figures of contemporary literature, theatre and fine art. These guests were served at a high standard befitting their ranks and were often able to enjoy dishes the ingredients of which were not readily available in Hungary in those days.
- ¶ Gastronomy is also linked to several areas of museum science too, such as archaeology, ethnography and local history, aspects that we all included in our selection of subjects in this issue. We talk about historical gastronomy when, based on research, a dish is prepared at a specific location (e.g. in a castle) according to the traditions of the given period, using authentic tools and ingredients, serving the purpose of entertainment and being a family event but also that of popular science. In such cases a historical period is reconstructed with the participation of experts, while the public is also interactively involved. Obviously, a significant part of artefacts in ethnographic collections are connected to

cuisine in one way or another. In open-air museums visitors have the opportunity to not only view these objects in displays but to see them in their original contexts: in places and in ways they were used. Characteristic gastronomical elements of the different regions of Hungary are presented in the houses built in the Hungarian Open-air Museum Szentendre, and on special occasions meals are actually made with these implements, thus visitors can see not only how but also what people of these regions ate and drank decades or centuries ago.

- ¶ Another article brings alive a suburban district of Budapest through some of its signature restaurants. The owners and operators of these hospitality facilities come from prominent families of the district, and since these places were centres of social life in the olden days, exploring them also provides a tiny cross-section of social history. One of these restaurants is even associated with an important political figure, since János Kádár, who presided over Hungary from 1956 to 1988: he worked here as a busboy.
- ¶ In another article we evoke the figure of Frigyes Glück, who was the founder and manager of Hungary's first modern hospitality organisation. He himself ran a restaurant, and besides this he was a foremost collector of the early 20th century: he took a keen interest in relics linked to the hospitality business but was also a lover of Italian art.
- ¶ Two of this issue's interviews are linked to gastronomy. First, we talked with Noémi Saly, a historian working at the Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism, who, being a researcher of Budapest's local history and coffee houses, is a proud owner of the title "fiancée of Budapest". In her latest project she mounted an exhibition and published a book to celebrate the centenary of the Hotel Gellért and Gellért Thermal Bath. In the other interview a non-conventional approach is taken to the subject of gastronomy: two young curators, Emese Mucsi and Judit Szalipszki speak about the relation between contemporary fine art and gastronomy. They both do research and organise exhibitions where artworks are often edible and explain terms such as eat-art and concept catering.
- ¶ Our book review includes Noémi Saly's volume titled *Gellért 100*, from which readers can find out that the kitchen of the historic hotel was once run by the prominent Gundel Restaurant, allowing guests to enjoy luxury foods here, tallying with the generally prestigious spirit of the hotel and bath. The book written by ethnographer Krisztina Sedelmayr reviews the modernisation of middle-class households in the 1930s and discusses, among others, how women began to work around this time and thus had less time to spend on keeping house, which contributed in no small way to the improvement of household devices and changes that took place in cooking and serving food.

múzeumcafé 71

2019/3. május-június

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Lapterv, tipográfia: Pintér József

Fotó: Szesztay Csanád

Korrektor: Szendrői Árpád

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Nyomdai munkák: EPC Nyomda, Budaörs

Felelős vezető: Mészáros László

ISSN szám: HU ISSN 1789-3291

Lapnyilvántartási engedély száma:

163/0588-1/2007

Terjesztés: A Lapker Zrt. országos hálózatán

keresztül a Relay és az Inmedio kiemelt

üzleteiben

További árusítóhelyek: Szépművészeti Múzeum

– Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Magyar Nemzeti

Múzeum, Ludwig Múzeum – Kortárs Művészeti

Múzeum, Néprajzi Múzeum, Magyar

Kereskedelmi és Vendéglátóipari Múzeum,

Múcsarnok, Magyar Fotográfusok Háza/Mai

Manó Ház, Fővárosi Állat- és Növénykert,

Ferenczy Múzeumi Centrum (Szentendre),

Művészetek Palotája, Kieselbach Galéria,

Kogart, Írók Boltja, Rózsavölgyi Zeneműbolt,

Kódex Könyváruház, Fuga Budapesti

Építészeti Központ

Kedvezményes előfizetési díj

2019. évre lapszámonként 990 Ft,

az elofizetes@muzeumcafe.hu

e-mail címen.

Lapunk a terjesztési hálózaton belül

1390 Ft áron vásárolható meg.

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