



A culinary experience of a lifetime

Once a humble coaching inn, *The Posthotel Alexander Herrmann* in the small Franconian spa town of Wirsberg has blossomed over its past 150 years.

The historic black and white half-timbered building, in the heart of the beautiful Frankenwald Nature Park, is now a luxury four-star boutique hotel attracting visitors from across the world.

Its main draw is not where it is, but what it is - and that is home to AURA.

This is the exceptional two Michelin star fine dining restaurant of Alexander Herrmann (one of Germany's most popular television chefs) and Tobias Bätz.

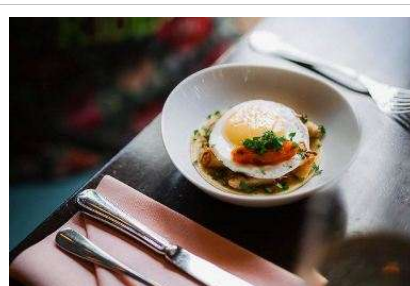
This talented and inspired duo have topped the list of Germany's 100 Best Chefs for their creative technique and distinctive connection to regional cuisine.

The Posthotel has been in the Herrmann family since 1869, with each generation developing the tavern in their own style while not losing sight of tradition.

However, what has remained constant over the decades is the Herrmann family philosophy of putting people - guests, staff, suppliers - at the heart of everything they do.

<https://www.romantikhotels.com/en/hotels/herrmanns-romantik-posthotel/>

Ann Mealor
Managing Editor
AllWays traveller





Alexander Herrmann

Everything is pitch-perfect at Alexander's Posthotel

We made the hour or so journey from Nuremberg to Wirsberg in a silver Porsche, driven by Sebastian, one of the chefs and a member of the #AH Dreamteam.

By Ann Mealor

On arrival, our welcome couldn't have been more perfect.

Two glasses of delightfully crisp, chilled champagne were waiting for us in reception along with bowls of what looked like thick cut chips.

They were actually deliciously soft Franconian dumplings that had been deep fried.

They came piping hot and were served with a small boule of jet-black caviar and a creamy dip. What a way to start our culinary journey.

As we sat, sipped and ate, we took in the startling hotel interior with its wooden beamed, black ceiling; navy blue walls and carpet, bright yet focused lighting and vibrant modern art.

And a huge film style poster of Alexander and Tobias dressed to thrill James Bond style, an interesting blend of genres.





Our Room

The Posthotel has 40 individually designed rooms all with one thing in common.

Each is a *Power Sleeping Room* promising 'a new sleep experience' developed by Professor Dr. Gunther W. Amann-Jennson.

His concept includes the use of natural materials such as Swiss pine wood, temperature-regulating organic sheep's wool and a bed in an inclined position (developed with NASA scientists) to activate the body's detoxification processes.

A natural SAMINA bed can be found in each room as well as a selection of SAMINA pillows, so whether you sleep on your back or side you will find one to suit you. I had a choice of four and can confirm I slept very well.

Our room was large and spacious with a walk-in wardrobe, dressing gowns, slippers, complimentary mini bar, fridge, tea and a nespresso coffee machine.

Decorated in purples, blacks, blues and creams, we had a balcony overlooking the village, the ideal place to sit and relax with a glass of wine.

I always enjoy using high-quality skin care products and so I was pleased to see a full-size regional cardamom tonka hand and body cleanser and body balm from Jean & Len in the bathroom.

Future Lab Anima



After a quick shower, we headed downstairs at 5.30pm to start our evening experience with a tour of *Future Lab Anima*.

Anima means 'soul'.

This is where Alexander, Tobias and their team experiment with food taste and textures from a variety of regional produce to create the distinctive depth of flavour and complex cuisine they are known for.

Fruit, vegetables, nuts, herbs etc from local farmers and carefully chosen suppliers are preserved as soon as they reach their peak so they can form part of dishes throughout the year.

Traditional techniques such as pickling, fermenting, salting, smoking and drying are used as well as other methods gathered from around the globe to bring out the maximum flavour of local ingredients.

This process is combined with the latest innovations in food technology to concentrate flavour.

This approach forms the basis of all the creative cuisine served in AURA

Alexander likes to make use of the whole fruit, vegetable or animal, which is a challenge his team relishes

With cherries for example, it's not just the juicy fruit that's of interest, but it's the flavour that can be extracted from the stone, the blossom and even the small stem.

This drive to push boundaries and create something different is what makes the food here so special.

Alexander and Tobias have a close connection to the Franconia region, but they don't let their loyalty constrain their innovative and pioneering approach to gourmet cuisine and searching for the right producers.



Joshi Osswald

Their motto is *LimitlessHOME* and long term *Dedicated Food Scout* and Head of Anima Joshi Osswald is the one who sources distinctive products.

Joshi also maintains the important relationship with *The Posthotel's* 80 plus producers, including hazelnuts from FrankenGeNuss (see below).



There is real partnership here as Alexander and Tobias see their culinary journey beginning with the farmers.

They want to be part of the food process from the start - planting, raising, slaughtering and ripening - all the way to the table.

The passion, enthusiasm and commitment of all involved is plain to see.

The Future Lab is stacked with kilner jars and currently stores around 150 different foodstuffs, worth close to €345,000.

Nearly 80 per cent of the products that eventually reach guests' plates in AURA contain elements from this 'treasure trove'.

In 2025, the AURA restaurant was awarded a Green Michelin Star for its sustainable and innovative gastronomy and its regional focus.



Dining at Aura



Having sampled Alexander Herrmann's cuisine at an event in London, I knew dining at AURA was going to be a memorable occasion and something very special. I was right.

The restaurant is chic and elegant with edgy graffiti style artwork contrasting sharply with the more traditional elements of high-end dining such as starched white linen tablecloths and napkins, silver cutlery and polished crystal wine glasses.

This mix of styles is reflected in the cuisine, which is creative and experimental but based on solid, time approved methods.

Tables are large and well-spaced with plenty of room for the chefs and waiters to move among the guests. Lighting is subtle and dining chairs extremely comfortable.

We were shown to our table at 6pm prompt as everyone is seated at the same time. The lights go on and the evening begins.

Anja, Director of Gastronomy warmly welcomed us at our table.

We met her and some of the other chefs earlier on our behind-the-scenes tour of the kitchen.

The seven course tasting menu with wine pairings was about to start, although with all the delectable extras that kept coming it turned out to be 11 or 12 (I lost count).

These included the special signature dish, the Franconian Slate Truffle with KRUG Champagne.

Ashley was having the pescatarian version, with the vegetables from Anima lab replicating the meat courses, so that both of us would have similar taste experiences.

Exciting things were to come.



Tobias Bätz



First to the table was a small bowl of the Franconian version of Tom Kha Gai a spicy Asian soup; heritage Franconian beetroot aged and dried with Japanese koji and a wafer-thin ham and cheese waffle.

All were delightful as was the Franconian sparkling wine that accompanied them.

This was followed by two types of flavour packed aged caviar - Russian and Franconian; black pudding made entirely from vegetables, a quenelle of pureed green pea and young garlic on a bed of egg white cream and petite ratatouille tartlets.

On the table was also crusty, rustic sour dough bread with smooth, salted butter in the shape of a Buddha. I loved this little touch and the play on *budda*, the Franconian dialect word for butter.

Then followed course after course of small plates of perfection:

- sturgeon grown in large natural ponds filled with spring water and matured for 10 days in a salt aging chamber
- meaty lion's mane mushroom marinated in bread miso with an intensely flavoured goulash jus fried and grown with passion by biologist David Lenssen
- saddle of tender venison with zesty lemon balm tempura and caramelised Bavarian cabbage with a standout bitter orange sauce
- shaved, velvety Mountain Joram cheese aged the traditional way in 200-year-old vaulted cellars, served with sweet apricot miso and marinated mirabelles.

For desserts came two types of plump black cherries pickled in cherry pit vinegar and red wine prettily topped with a koji crisp and flavour packed salted cherry blossom.

It looked like a forest fairy toadstool nestled in the dish.

Then came the dramatic, deep red wine grapes, tart and sweet with liquorice chip and dark chocolate in red wine jus.

They looked and tasted fabulous. Finally tiny elderflower vinegar ice cream cones and silky domes of salty preserved kefir lime praline truffles.

What a feast and amongst all this was the inspired signature dish of *The Franconian Slate Truffle*, presented three ways: slate truffle cream filled with amber apricot miso; a slate truffle crisp sprinkled with blackcurrant dust and shaped like an oak leaf and slate truffle broth.

It was a privilege to enjoy this rare mushroom in such an inspired culinary way.

Partnered with the rich, earthy KRUG champagne, it was a menu highlight.

The wine pairings, all from Franconia apart from KRUG, enhanced the food perfectly.

Stand out for me was a 2016 Julius Echter Berg dry Silvaner, with the sturgeon and the 2022 sparkling Pear XO with the Mountain Cheese.

The sommelier explained the background to each wine, where it came from, the grapes used and why it went so well with that specific course.

Throughout the evening chefs as well as the serving staff waited on all the tables, describing each dish and the ingredients used.

All were highly knowledgeable and efficient, which is no surprise as the whole team tastes each new menu and is briefed in detail on its contents.

A small, pink card is placed on the table in front of every guest, with an image of the person involved in creating the dish, the ingredients used and their provenance.

It's a nice touch and builds up into a keepsake the diner can have as a memento of the evening, along with the stylish rose and gold menu.

This wasn't just a meal. It was an immersive culinary and dining experience. Every team member had a distinct role and each played their part masterfully. Passion, creativity and enthusiasm were clearly evident in all.

A truly memorable occasion



First Meal of the Day



Breakfast, or *First Meal of the Day* as Alexander likes to call it, is a leisurely, relaxed affair, served up until 12 noon in the hotel's more casual restaurant.

This is *Bistro oma & enkel* (Grandma & Grandson) named in memory of Alexander's grandmother).

It's almost a brunch and ideal if you have eaten well the night before and don't want an early start.

The typed menu forms part of the Posthotel's newsletter, so diners can read about what's happening at the hotel and in the local area between courses.

There is no buffet, everything is made to order and cooked with the same care and attention to detail as any other meal.

Guests can choose up to three dishes each along with tea, coffee and soft drinks.

Before we ordered, two bijou chocolate sized pieces of gingerbread arrived along with a glass of the most fully flavoured fresh orange juice I have ever had – a real citrus taste bud tinger.

Having dined so royally in AURA, we could only manage one breakfast course each.

This was the *Egg Hopper*; savoury pancakes, fried eggs, tomato chutney and coriander and the *Kimchi Baggers*; traditional Franconian potato pancakes with kimchi and a soft, mild quark cheese.



It was one of the tastiest and most innovative breakfasts we have eaten.

I would have loved to linger longer and sample more of the menu, but the Porsche was waiting to whisk us back to Nuremberg. So, until the next time...

More information :

<https://www.romantikhoteles.com/en/hotels/herrmanns-romantik-posthotel/>

The finest of produce throughout the region

Franconia is leading on sustainable, ethical and inclusive food culture

By Ashley Gibbins

Freakstotable

Alexander and Tobias are also key players in *freakstotable*, an organisation established to support those committed to 'a that combines knowledge, craft and pop culture'.

As such, *Freaks to Table* promotes ethical production methods, builds close working relationships between producers, suppliers while also raising awareness of regional products.

Each of its initiatives is focused on creating a sustainable world where high-quality food is accessible and valued a reality.

<https://www.freakstotable.com/>

You will not find better hazelnuts - anywhere

A producer typical of the Franconian commitment to quality is hazelnut producer *FrankenGeNuss* run by Martin Stiegler in Gonnersdorf near Cadolzburg.



Martin, who was named *German Farmer of the Year* in 2023, runs a 50-hectare organic family farm, with nine hectares of this focusing on the highest quality regional hazelnut production.

And although Martin heads up the operation, it is very much a whole family concern with father Fritz, mother Sieglinde and Martin's partner Svenja all playing key roles.

Together, the Stiegler family produce the finest and most sustainably grown hazelnuts, which are supplied to hotels and restaurants, at local markets or through their onsite farm shop.

Ann and I were able to spend a couple of hours with Martin and to meet someone so committed to the land and the quality of his hazelnuts was a rewarding experience.

Cultivating tobacco, until the EU subsidy stopped on the crop, Fritz and Martin decided to switch to hazelnuts.

Martin had spent a year on a large hazelnut farm in the USA and returned home knowing his experience in the States could be put to good use.

Planting some 50 different varieties, to begin with, these have been honed down to a small number that come up to the quality standard Martin has set.



Innovative measures ensure a true organic product, with foraging hens between the hazelnut trees scratching away the weeds while delivering a daily supply of free-range eggs.

All of the farm's hazelnuts are cleaned, dried and cracked on site, with only the best selected by hand.

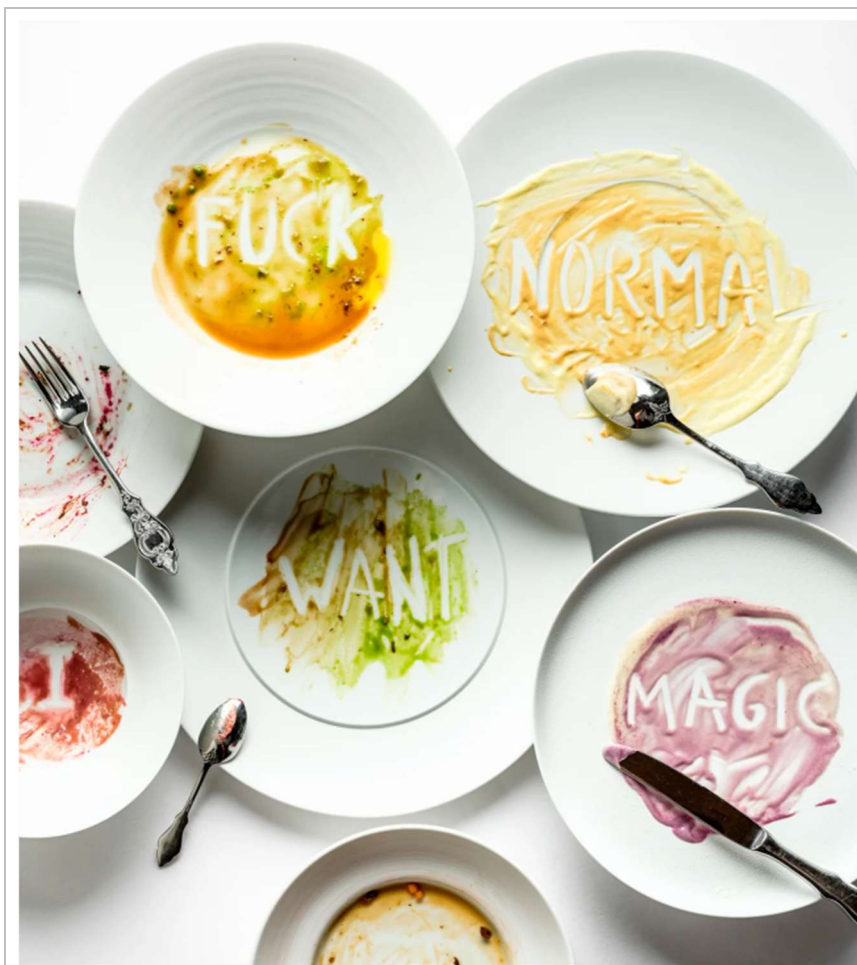
The family's efforts are well rewarded with the farm's premium hazelnuts appreciated by gourmet companies throughout Franconia, including the Posthotel Alexander Herrmann.

In addition, Martin offers hazelnut oil, palm oil-free hazelnut nougat spread and a delicious hazelnut ice cream.

More information :

<https://www.franken-genuss.com/>

AllWays leading to Herrmann's Romantik Posthotel



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AllWays traveller is the consumer travel magazine from the International Travel Writers, providing independent travellers with views of the world from Alliance travel journalists.

www.allwaystraveller.com



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The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

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