

The Mandala Hotel– Restaurant Facil

Baking for a top-rated restaurant

“This is a completely new dimension in baking,” says Thomas Yoshida, head pastry chef at Restaurant Facil in Berlin’s Mitte district. When we visit him, we’re struck by the incredible range and quality of products that he and his team are baking. This is certainly unusual for a restaurant, even a 2-star restaurant like Restaurant Facil. But the restaurant, whose kitchen is run by chef Michael Kempf, wasn’t given two Michelin stars for nothing. And it was also not for nothing that Kempf was voted 2014/2015 Chef of the Year by the German gourmet magazine Feinschmecker.

Still, that wasn’t enough for this young team. In early 2015, they began baking more and more bread and small baked products in the pastry shop. “We spend about two hours a day on baking”, says Thomas Yoshida. The team uses a MIWE backcombi. Although designed for in-store baking, this oven combines a proofing chamber, stone baking oven and a hot-air baking oven all in one.

The team originally had only one goal in mind before they purchased the oven: They wanted to do more of their own baking. Thomas Yoshida: “Two factors were important to us: We wanted to have control over our quality and wanted to show our guests that we do our own baking.” One reason behind their decision is that the award-winning restaurant and the adjoining 5-star Mandala Hotel also need to compete for customers.

The restaurant and hotel have been at their prime location at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin’s new city centre since 1999. The area attracts many international visitors. Situated within a rooftop garden, the 2-star restaurant can accommodate 48 guests. The hotel has about 160 rooms offering the full range of comforts for business travellers and tourists. The entire business is privately run and operates in association with Design Hotels.

All this means that baking is twice as important for the business. Products are baked for the restaurant and also for the hotel’s breakfast guests. “We want to set ourselves apart from other hotels, which usually offer the same →



Thanks to its prime location at Berlin’s Potsdamer Platz, The Mandala Hotel attracts guests from both Germany and around the world.



With the MIWE aero, the team can produce precisely the results they want at precisely the right time.

variety of baked goods for breakfast”, says Thomas Yoshida. After hearing this, it’s no surprise to see the pastry chef take fresh spelt bread out of the oven. Next he shows us dough that is proofing in the cold storage room. It will soon be made into baguettes. Each morning, the “breakfast team” bakes fresh products in the pastry shop for 150 to 200 guests.

“That would never have been possible with our old oven, for space reasons alone”, recalls Thomas Yoshida. Up until a few months ago, the team had been using a small convection oven with a limited range of settings. Yoshida began shopping online for a new oven and contacted two oven manufacturers directly. “MIWE gave us the best advice and offered us the smartest solution.” As a basic requirement, the solution would have to make the most effective use of the available space. The MIWE backcombi meets this requirement better than any other oven on the market. Individual components can be combined here to meet specific needs. “For example, we also needed to have a hearth-type oven because it produces more attractive bread”, Yoshida explains. With the MIWE condo, he now has not only a hearth-type oven, he also has a stone baking oven thanks to the condo’s stone plates. This stone oven also bakes very precisely and evenly.

This is why the MIWE condo has been used in pastry shops for decades and is becoming an increasingly popular choice for in-store baking. The choice of a condo for this award-winning kitchen is a testament to the high standards



Thomas Yoshida (right) and his team.

of the chefs as well as the outstanding technology. But technology alone is not enough to bake good bread. We’re amazed by the high quality of the products that Thomas Yoshida and his team are baking. The pastry chef’s in-depth knowledge of sour dough, baking and bread is also impressive.

Thomas Yoshida acquired this knowledge “by reading a lot and attending courses.” For him this is as natural as making his own silicone moulds for his large selection of delicious pastries. Still, we’re pleasantly surprised to see that the chefs are using rye, spelt and wheat sour dough as well as French wheat flour for baguettes, and that Facil’s pastry shop is magically producing bread, small baked goods and other baked products with great attention to detail.

The restaurant’s promise of being an “oasis of culinary culture” holds true as we witness the creation of spelt bread using a heated mash consisting of sunflower seeds, spelt flakes and potatoes. The job of the mash is to add as much liquid as possible to the ingredients to make the final product extra moist and delicious and help it stay fresh longer.

The spelt bread loaves are baked in bread pans. After about 45 minutes in the stove oven, the bread loaves are taken out of the pans and baked for several more minutes in a convection oven. “We do this to give it a crispy crust”, says Yoshida. He now knows exactly which oven system will deliver the best results for a particular product. Yoshida bakes rolls and baguettes in a MIWE aero convec-

tion oven. We've already seen the dough for these products in the cold storage room. Yoshida gently tips the dough out of the pan and carefully pokes it. "We don't want to destroy the fermentation structure", he explains and gently rolls the dough into a baguette shape. The dough pieces are then placed on trays and placed in the proofing chamber for a short time. The proofing chamber contains eight 60 x 40 cm trays.

The team bakes a wide variety of small baked products for breakfast customers. "We made a conscious decision not to use traditional bakery machinery for these products", says Yoshida. Instead, he uses special moulds to show that things are being done by hand here. By combining these techniques with regional ingredients, Yoshida has developed a unique range of baked products for breakfast customers.

The pastry team also bakes a wide range of products for the restaurant. For example, guests are treated to a few pieces of crispbread when they first arrive at the restaurant. The crispbread is made by mixing rye flour, sea salt and water and spreading the dough thinly on silicon mats. The dough is garnished with fennel pollen before it goes into a MIWE aero oven.

"We can control the baking process very precisely because we can regulate the fan speed", says Thomas Yoshida, explaining this improvement over his old oven. Such details are standard features of the MIWE aero. This feature is also useful for baking "financiers," small biscuits made of ground almonds, egg white and sugar.

Yoshida also bakes macarons, a traditional French confec-

tion. They go into the MIWE aero for 13 minutes at 140 °C with the fan on level 1 for very slow air flow. "We get amazing results with this oven", says the master pastry chef. Thanks to the gentle air conduction, the macarons have time to develop while baking. This also ensures even baking.

The baking program for macarons and the baking programs for other products are stored in the oven controls. Using a fixed program control, Yoshida can directly select the most important baking programs via pictograms. Less frequently used baking programs can be retrieved by pressing just a few buttons. The temperature, fan speed as well as the steam quantity can be defined for each baking program in several steps.

"Hygiene in and around the oven is also very important to us", says Thomas Yoshida. This was very apparent in his kitchen. The saying 'You have to break an egg to make an omelet' doesn't seem to apply to this award-winning kitchen. Extremely high standards of cleanliness are maintained even during peak hours. Dirty tools and bowls go right to the dishwashing area. Work surfaces are always clean.

The baking oven is also spick and span. The exterior of the MIWE backcombi is easy to clean thanks to its stainless steel construction. The interior oven panes in the hearth-type baking oven would normally present a problem. This is not the case with the MIWE condo. "The panes can be easily flipped back for cleaning", explains head pastry chef Yoshida. They don't even have to be removed, which would increase the risk of breaking the glass.

The proofing chamber is just as easy to keep clean. →



The deck oven delivers a whole new level of quality.



The hotel's bread selection is a hit not only at breakfast time.

Wherever flour dust, moisture and heat gather, undesirable micro-organisms are never far away. "We can easily remove the baking tray supports and wash them in the dishwasher", says one of Yoshida's colleagues. The proofing chamber itself is also easy to clean thanks to its rounded corners.

The MIWE aero is actually even easier to clean. "It cleans itself every night at 1 am", says Thomas Yoshida with a smile. The MIWE cleaning control 3.0 automatically cleans the baking chamber at predefined times. In designing the cleaning system, MIWE developers focused not only on its effectiveness, but also on efficiency factors such as energy, water and cleaning agent consumption. "Even small details like the crumb drawer on the MIWE aero make a big difference in helping us to keep the oven clean at all times", says Thomas Yoshida, pleasantly surprised by all the amazing little features of the oven.

The guests at the hotel don't notice any of this. What they do notice is the unique quality of the baked goods on the breakfast menu and the delicious treats that come from the award-winning kitchen. MIWE is happy that award-winning chef Michael Kempf as well as head pastry chef Thomas



Restaurant Facil has an open and transparent look and truly feels like an "oasis of culinary culture."
Photo: Company

Yoshida and his team have chosen the highest quality products for baking.

A brief overview of The Mandala Hotel GmbH

The Mandala Hotel GmbH 5-Star Superior Hotel

Managing Directors: Lutz Hesse & Christian Andresen
Potsdamer Strasse 3
10785 Berlin, German

Rooms: 160

Restaurant Facil

Seats: 48

Head chef: Michael Kempf

Awards:
2 Michelin stars
18 Gault Millau points
4 F's from Feinschmecker magazine