



“A big dream of ours came true with the Rössli in Feutersoey”

TEXT: HANS-UELI TSCHANZ | PHOTOS: RAPHAEL FAUX

Since July 2019, Sabine Köll, Chef de Service, and Simon Richard, Chef de Cuisine, have managed the Restaurant Rössli in Feutersoey. They have both gained extensive experience in the restaurant industry: during a three-year stint at Bumann's Chesa Pirani in La Punt, Graubünden, among other places, but above all during their most recent posts at the Restaurant Chesery in Gstaad where they worked together for a decade. It is well known that Robert Speth's culinary skills there were awarded 18 GaultMillau points and one Michelin star until the permanent closure of the gourmet restaurant. Sabine and Simon can draw on a dense network from that period and are now already well known among aficionados of haute cuisine. They have breathed new life into the Restaurant Rössli Feutersoey. In the interview, they both emphasise how enormously they have benefited from their time with Robert and Susanne Speth and what a stroke of luck it was for them to take on the role of managers of the Restaurant Rössli on behalf of the owners, Daniel Matti and Marcel Bach.

Which career path led you to the Rössli Feutersoey?

SABINE I graduated from the school of tourism with the Abitur in Austria, and then I wanted to spend one season in Switzerland before travelling around the big wide world. I met Simon in Ticino. We moved to the Engadin together, before jointly applying to work under Robert Speth. We worked for ten years at the Restaurant Chesery and the golf club restaurant where I was the Chef de Service and Simon held the position of Chef de Cuisine.

SIMON I followed the traditional path: three years of training, then from Grindelwald via Thun and Leukerbad to Davos and at some point also to Ticino, which is where I met Sabine. From there, we both moved on together via the Engadin to Gstaad

What was your role under Robert and Susanne Speth?

SABINE I started out as Chef de Rang, before being promoted to Deputy Chef de Service and finally Chef de Service. For eight years, I worked at the golf course restaurant in summer and at the Chesery in winter.

SIMON I cooked at the golf course restaurant for about three summers and at some stage the Speths asked me whether I would like to assume the role of Chef de Cuisine. And that is how things were for the last six years.





Simon, what especially impressed you in the kitchen working under Robert Speth?

One of the most impressive things was the credo: "NO is not in our vocabulary. We will do anything." So the greatest possible flexibility was called for. Having the willingness to always do and be able to do everything was both one of the greatest things and one of the greatest challenges where time was concerned. In addition, Robert Speth was definitely present all day long and at all times. He was the first to arrive and usually the last to leave. He was the quintessential boss. There were certain things that were the way they were and how they had always been. There was no upsetting the apple cart. It just always had to match his style. It was also possible to introduce your own ideas where side dishes were concerned. During the high season, there were between ten and twelve chefs in the kitchen.

Is it now the case that you have reached your dream destination at the Rössli Feutersoey?

SABINE & SIMON We have always said that we are not looking to be self-employed. However, should the opportunity arise, we will consider it. And that is the way things turned out in the end. It was a nice coincidence in every respect. During the decade we spent in the Saanenland, we had never before dined at the Rössli Feutersoey. Ultimately, it was a dream scenario for us

which then came to fruition. We were also very happy that the new owners, Marcel Bach and Daniel Matti, were prepared to make some investments. In addition to the kitchen, the buffet in the rustic dining room was also renovated before the hand-over. Just like the atmospheric Rösslistube, it also seats 25. In summertime, the idyllic, newly designed garden terrace surprises anyone who had already frequented the Rössli under the previous management.

Did you transfer from the Chesery to the Rössli without any transition period?

SABINE & SIMON No, in the winter of 2018/19, we were no longer employed in the Chesery. Sabine obtained a restaurant management licence – a welcome and important timeout and preparation for the challenge at the Rössli.

Have you been able to attract some of the regulars of the Chesery and the golf club restaurant?

The ten years at the Chesery and golf club restaurant certainly helped us. The Chesery has now closed for good and many regular diners are looking for a new "home". The former regulars of the Rössli and locals from the village of Feutersoey are gradually also coming to our restaurant, which we are very pleased about.

SABINE KÖLL UND SIMON RICHARD

D

«Mit dem Rössli in Feutersoey ist für uns ein grosser Traum in Erfüllung gegangen»

Seit Juli 2019 führen Sabine Köll, Chef de Service, und Simon Richard, Chef de Cuisine, das Restaurant Rössli in Feutersoey. Beide verfügen mittlerweile über eine grosse Erfahrung im Gastronomiebereich, unter anderem während drei Jahren in Bumanns Chesa Pirani im bündnerischen La Punt, aber vor allem zuletzt während zehn gemeinsamen Jahren im Restaurant Chesery in Gstaad. Dort wurde bekanntlich die Kochkunst von Robert Speth bis zur endgültigen Schliessung des Gourmetlokals mit 18 GaultMillau-Punkten und einem Michelin-Stern ausgezeichnet. Sabine und Simon nehmen aus dieser

Zeit ein dichtes Netzwerk mit und verfügen heute unter den Liebhabern der Top-Gastronomie bereits über einen hohen Bekanntheitsgrad. Mit Ihnen ist nun wieder Leben ins Restaurant Rössli Feutersoey eingekehrt. Im Gespräch betonen die beiden, wie enorm viel sie aus der Zeit mit Robert und Susanne Speth profitieren konnten und wie es für sie ein Glücksfall war, die Führung des Restaurants Rössli im Auftrag der Besitzer Daniel Matti und Marcel Bach übernehmen zu dürfen. Sabine und Simon sind sich einig: «Es war von links und rechts ein schöner Zufall.»



What is your culinary concept?

SIMON After ten years of working at the Chesery, we certainly adopted a lot of the procedures. However, it was always important to me to make one thing absolutely clear: we do not want to be "Le Petit Chesery". It goes without saying that there are many things which cannot be discarded. And diners who were regulars at the Chesery come up to me and say that there we always used to serve the fantastic sea bass, turbot or lobster, couldn't you also ... etc. This meant that we also quickly once again found ourselves in a situation which we didn't necessarily want to be in at the beginning. However, the Chesery era has now come to an end, which is why I don't have any problems with it. This is because it involves dishes which the people greatly appreciate. Moreover, thanks to my past at the Chesery, I was able to take advantage of my connections to ensure a smooth fish-buying process. We already knew each other from before, and the relevant suppliers continue to be generous and helpful, so that you get what you want, even though you don't generate the same turnover as before. It is clear that certain sizes are more difficult to get hold of and if you can buy them, they are all the more expensive. However, our credo remains the same: simply good! That is the reason why we have a super-small menu.

How well were you received by the Gstaad restaurant scene?

SABINE & SIMON Very well! We actively maintain good contacts, and we offer each other advice and support. This is done in an exemplary manner here in the Saanenland. Here, everyone is pleased if others are doing well and we all help each other out. Everyone says: "Thank God you're doing this." We offer each other mutual support so as to maintain the diverse range of dining establishments and in the diner's interests.

How do you deal with the pressure of bringing absolutely top-quality dishes to the table every single evening and lunchtime?

SIMON That is definitely the biggest challenge. First and foremost, it is about having a good team behind you. We are three chefs in the kitchen, including me. Ultimately, it is our professional attitude which guarantees that the service we offer diners is at a consistently high level – even though motivation levels vary.

SABINE KÖLL ET SIMON RICHARD

F

« Avec le Rössli de Feutursoey, c'est un rêve qui est devenu réalité »

Depuis juillet 2019, Sabine Köll, cheffe de service, et Simon Richard, chef de cuisine, sont à la tête du restaurant Rössli de Feutursoey. Tous deux bénéficient maintenant d'une solide expérience dans le domaine de la gastronomie, acquise entre autres durant les trois ans passés à la Bumanns Chesa Pirani, dans les Grisons, puis surtout pendant leurs dix ans de collaboration au restaurant Chesery de Gstaad. Il est de notoriété publique que, jusqu'à la fermeture définitive de cet établissement gastronomique, l'art culinaire de Robert Speth y a reçu dix-huit points au GaultMillau et une étoile Michelin.

De cette époque, Sabine et Simon héritent un solide réseau et jouissent, aujourd'hui déjà, d'une grande notoriété parmi les amateurs de haute gastronomie. Avec eux, le restaurant Rössli de Feutursoey a repris vie. Au cours de la conversation, tous deux soulignent combien ils purent profiter du temps passé aux côtés de Robert et Susanne Speth et quelle heureuse coïncidence ce fut de pouvoir reprendre la gestion du Rössli pour le compte de ses propriétaires, Daniel Matti et Marcel Bach. Sabine et Simon sont unanimes : « Ce fut de part et d'autre un heureux hasard. »