

Ljubomir Stanišić

Ljubomir Stanišić je kuvar, i to glavni kuvar, ali i mnogo više od toga... Večiti je tragač. Kaže se: Ko traži, naći će. A Ljubomir je celog svog života pronalazio sve ono za čim je tragao

Ljubomir Stanišić is a cook, a chef, but much more than that... He is an eternal seeker. They say that those who seek will find. And Ljubomir has been finding everything he's been searching for all his life

I cook, therefore I am



Ljubo's cuisine opened up to a growing audience, which favors taste

Does fortune favors the bold? Perhaps... It certainly took boldness to leave his country, Yugoslavia, at the age of 19, to leave his family and friends and step into the unknown, alone. But luck is also built – and, apparently, it takes a lot of work.

In January 2009, after abandoning the idea of moving to China or Angola, Ljubomir settled in Bairro Alto, in Lisbon, and with the help of three friends – Fausto and Carla Lopes and Nelson Santos – he opened the new restaurant 100 Maneiras. This restaurant in Rua do Teixeira was the first in the capital to serve a tasting menu at a democratic price. A small step for humanity, a small revolution in the city. Ljubo's cuisine opened up to a growing audience, which favors taste, discovery, experience, but has no need for pretension. And it was this combination of factors that, in September 2010, gave birth to Bistro 100 Maneiras.

In November 2019, restaurant 100 Maneiras was listed on 50 Best Discovery, by The World's 50 Best. It takes more than just good food. What keeps people coming back?

It was such an honor, especially considering the restaurant wasn't even one year old when it was included on the list! Honestly, I really think it's all about the concept behind 100 Maneiras – which can be translated to "100 ways" or "No manners". We always try to be ourselves, do our own thing, create the kind of experience that we would love to experience ourselves. And that means good food, of course, a lot of love on the plates, but also a great service, great wines and cocktails and a great ambience. Fine dining shouldn't be boring. You shouldn't pay a ton of money to be seated in silent for 4 or 5 hours, afraid to touch your phone, afraid to laugh too loud. We believe eating and sharing that experience must be something special, fun, enthusiastic. That is true in all my restaurants and, since we were building this restaurant from scratch, we had the chance to upgrade that concept and make it exactly the way we wanted it to be.

The tasting menu in the 100 Maneiras, which is called "The Story" traces your journey from a teenage refugee leaving war-torn Yugoslavia to a master of the Portuguese kitchen. Regarding the course of your life, what could be the new course in "The Story"?

I am more and more a man of the countryside. One of my favorite things in life is to be in my house, in the middle of Alentejo, eating and drinking what I grow, what I hunt... So if I had to develop a new course that represented my life right now, it would probably be something very earthy, very simple but de-licious products, cooked with love and care.



Rumour has it there are more than 365 different ways to cook cod in Por-tugal. Is "Codfish clothesline" still your vision of the essence of Portuguese cuisine and the way of life?

It's funny, when I first arrived to Portugal I actually couldn't stand the smell of dry cod. But living here, it's something you learn to appreciate. That dish, the codfish clothesline, was the only dish that never left the menu of the first 100 Maneiras in Lisbon – which was replaced by the new 100 Maneiras, only two doors away, in February 2019. It was made of little pieces of dehydrated fried codfish swimming bladder hanging on a small clothesline and served with two sauces: a coriander and a red bell pepper aioli – so green and red, like Portugal's flag. It was inspired by the many colorful clotheslines that you can find hanging from the windows of Lisbon, especially Bairro Alto, the area where 100 Maneiras was located. It was my way of saying thank you to this country and to this city, for welcoming me, for taking such good care of me, for adopting me as a son. We stopped serving it when we moved to the new restaurant because I felt we needed to evolve. But it was such an iconic dish – and delicious – that I'm now working with a Portuguese company to produce the codfish chips to be sold on supermarkets and on my online shop, that I just launched in August and ships internationally (www.ljubomirstanisic.pt).

Can food be considered art?

I think of food more as a handicraft and not so much as art. I see cooks as ar-tisans, working with their hands, building a new product from what the earth gives us.

Your trips, recipes, friends and stories were transformed into a books and TV show Papa-Quilómetros (Eating Kilometers). Is traveling proven road to happiness and personal-development?

I truly believe in that saying, that journeys are the only thing you can buy that makes you richer



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For me, yes, no doubt. I often say Papa Quilómetros was my master degree: first, the journey in Portugal and then our 8 month-long road trip through Europe, aboard a campervan. I had the chance to work with so many talented cooks, eat the most delicious food, drink amazing wines, meet dedicated producers... I truly believe in that saying, that journeys are the only thing you can buy that makes you richer. Well, journeys, food and wine.

Food memories are very powerful. They are more sensory than other memories in that they involve really all five senses, so the taste or smell of food bringing back memories not just of eating food itself but also of place. What is your favourite food memory?

That's a very hard questions. I have the fortune of having so many good food memories... I can't choose just one, but I'd say maybe eating the cow head my dad used to cook, the only recipe he left me and that's now part of "The Story" menu, at 100 Maneiras and having dinner with my wife in a beach in Alentejo, with a bottle of wine and some shellfish we caught in the sea.

Situated at the mouth of the River Tagus where it meets the Ocean, Lis-bon is the only European capital with Atlantic beaches. Do you think about Papa-Milhas Náuticas (Eating Nautical Miles)?

I actually have a skipper license, which allows me to cruise a boat. I guess the only thing missing is the boat. So, who knows? ■

Tekst/Text: Aleksandra Grahovac