



## Food Lovers

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### “Cooking is my whole life”

Maciej Majewski, the chef of Sofitel Warsaw Victoria, is talking about his career, passions and inspirations.

#### 1. From your perspective, what are the chef's roles and mission?

My profession is not only cooking but also managing people, inspiring them and discovering their own potential. In Sofitel Warsaw Victoria the structure of our kitchen and cuisine is vast. It is divided into banquet cuisine, cold cuisine and the cuisine of Le Victoria Brasserie Moderne. It is my duty to properly match my team members' predispositions and talents to each area. I believe that effective management involves cooperation, which is possible thanks to good selection of staff.

#### 2. What does cooking mean to you?

Cooking is my whole life, part of myself is in it and I treat it like art. I believe the most important issue, is cooking with heart. Success in my work is dependent on commitment. My profession gives unlimited opportunities and requires constant learning.

#### 3. What are your inspirations when you are preparing a menu and then the meals?

I am up to date with the most recent culinary trends worldwide. I follow current trade publications and press, I collect cook-books and I just love watching cooking programs. My inspirations are often mere products. A good example of it may be a starter coming from our most recent menu, composed of only beetroots. The starter includes yellow and red beetroots served in different forms such as jelly, mousse, paper or spaghetti.

I have gone through the period of my fascination with Asian cuisine, fusion or molecular cuisine. Right now, my focus is what we create within Le Victoria Brasserie Moderne cuisine, which means Polish and French dishes.



#### 4. You had the opportunity to get your own training, and recently cook together with Olivier Nasti, awarded with two Michelin stars. How important was this experience to you?

This used to be a vital and interesting experience. I had the chance to visit his restaurant in France for five days in the last year.

Organization of work at the Michelin star level is very interesting. Division of various sections, the way of delegating tasks to particular people or the techniques applied by the cooks. What was amazing was the availability of miscellaneous and fresh products, i.e. seafood, venison, partridges, rabbits or pheasants. Apart from that, I noticed a huge involvement on the part of the people working there and the enormity of effort they put into performing assigned activities and tasks.

The most interesting item from Olivier Nasti's menu is certainly an egg boiled at 64 degrees. The way of preparing it involves the procedure in which you put a yolk on spinach puree, then you spill on it sliced ham, croutons and mushrooms, and afterwards you pour a Dutch sauce and lemon juice. On its top you put coating of egg whites as specially prepared on a teflon frying pan, which is served with fried spinach, langoustine and langoustine sauce. The egg is a simple base product, however it is served in a very innovative and interesting ways.

#### 5. What is your opinion on the way of serving a meal? Is it as important as taste ?

The meal taste and its arrangement on a plate must be cohesive. If the main meal ingredient is lamb meat, then the additions such as vegetables or sauce must enhance this meat's taste. It is important that the person eating the dish should know that he or she is trying

lamb, and that the remaining ingredients make only an additional composition intended for enriching the main product. I like it very much that using of seasonable products is getting more and more popular. The menu in Le Victoria Brasserie Moderne is based on seasonability, therefore in the wintertime we use topinambour and collard greens, in early spring it is spring vegetables or green peas and asparagus in May.

**6. Has your job in Orbis Hotel Group given you any specific kind of experience?**

For sure, I have to both value and give my respect to the people with whom I have worked. My superiors were able to notice my performance and work done, and motivated me towards constant advancement. Right now, having memories of the beginnings of my career, I am trying to value involvement of other people. I started at Ibis hotel chain, then I moved to Novotel and now I have the opportunity to be working for Sofitel Warsaw Victoria, which has been my dream forever.

I also have younger colleagues around, whom I invited to cook together with Olivier Nasti. These were Łukasz Wieczorek, who had won Accor Professions Challenge, Mateusz Wojnisz, the chef of Ibis Kraków Stare Miasto and Przemek Wo niak the chef of Novotel Centrum Gda sk. I am doing my best in order that not only cooks working in Sofitel hotels can have their chance to spend time in Victoria Brasserie Moderne but also have the opportunity to find new inspirations.

As I had mentioned before, I was lucky to have worked with the people who developed their interest in me and filled me with motivation to work. I was sent to a variety of training workshops in different hotels, thanks to which I was able to constantly develop my skills. For example, during my employment at Novotel, I had the opportunity to spend a period of time in Grand Amsterdam Hotel. The most important is invest in young people, organize training for them and search for talents.



**7. What are your plans for the future?**

These are definitely connected with working in the kitchen, to which I am committed in 100% and where I wish to spend most of my time. My main objective and challenge is to make Le Victoria Brasserie Moderne perceived not only in terms of a hotel restaurant. What's vital, we are getting more and more recognizable on the market. We are making a never-ending efforts so that our offer meets expectations of not only the hotel guests but of all our external guests, too.

**8. Is there any advice you would give to the cooks who are just starting their careers? What priorities should they set for themselves to be successful the way you have been?**

First of all, they must be consistent. They must keep in mind that you will face both success and failure. Our profession means hard work, to which one must be fully committed and approach it with dedication and passion. The most important issue is investing in your employees and taking care of their development. I much appreciate the whole team and I hope the associates with whom I have the chance to cooperate will be climbing the career ladder within our hotel group.

Maciej Majewski, the chef of Sofitel Warsaw Victoria, joined Orbis hotel chain 15 years ago. At first he was employed in Ibis Poznań in August 2000, as the cook. After about three months he was promoted to the position of chef. Afterwards, about one year later he was appointed a chef in Ibis Hotel Czestochowa, where he was working for the period of two years and a half. The next stage in his career growth was managing of the kitchen staff in Novotel Kraków Centrum, where he spent another 7 years. For the last 4 years he has been the chef in Sofitel Warsaw Victoria.