

1st Richemont Sourdough Summit

Healthy & Tasty Bread with Sourdough

346 Experts from 13 countries met on 9 May 2019 for the 1st Richemont Sourdough Summit at the Swiss Museum of Transport Lucerne. It offered valuable suggestions and a useful exchange on all aspects of the topic.

SOURDOUGH IS TRENDY

As an introduction, Jorge Pastor, President of Richemont Club International and initiator of the event, described that the switch to short, direct leavening did not take place until the 20th century and that one now returns to the long leavening. "Bread is biotechnology, and that's what arouses the interest of science," he added. And so the lectures at the summit were mainly scientifically shaped.

Most of the speakers came from academic research. They placed high demands on the audience and on the six-lingual translation team with scientific studies and terminology. But the positive key messages were always understood: sourdough makes baked goods tasteful and durable and serves the health and prevention of various diseases.

However, this message needs to be conveyed much more to customers, who are often very interested in nutrition issues, and to be formulated in a more attractive way said Michael Kleinert from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences and Bernd Kütscher, Director of the Academy of German Bakers. The two of them together published the book "The Language of Bread", which gives practical guidance. Heinrich Beck from the South German company BeckaBeck showed in practice how this can be successfully achieved. It was recommended that instead of calling it sourdough, as in the Latin languages, to rather speak of mother dough or bread with a mild acidity.

SCIENCE EMPHASIZES THE BENEFITS

The scientific data backed up by many study results showed that the fermentation processes triggered by sourdough and long leavening further improve the already high quality of bakery products, prevent allergies and diseases, and reduce salt and sugar to improve tolerability and health. The addition of vegetables, vitamin D etc. to sourdough further emphasizes these benefits.

"Sourdough is the baker's soul. Give the bread a soul again" quoted Richemont Director Reto Fries at the end baker Martin Auer from Graz (A).

NETWORKING UND DOCUMENTATION

In addition to the many suggestions from the presentations, the coffee and food breaks of the all-day event were also valuable: Market stalls provided sourdough pastries from Belgium, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Luxembourg, Spain and Switzerland. Eight sponsors presented their samples and also offered sourdough pastries for testing, including gluten-free products that have reached a good taste level today. The exchange with experts from home and abroad about what they heard and their own experiences was as well very interesting.

Feedback from Participants

"Sourdough needs to get a lot more attention. Today's blogs are breaking news. Sourdough has fans all over the world. The lectures went partly very deep, thus you see the connections suddenly much better."
Josef Kreyenbühl, Lucerne

"I learned a lot. Sometimes it was too technical for a baker who has no scientific education. But it was very interesting and encouraged me on the path that I chose." Olivier Hofmann, Reconvilier BE

"It is impressive that research has proven how important sourdough is from a medical point of view. That motivates me to make even more sourdough bread in the future. This summit was a great success. As President of the Swiss Richemont Club, I am very proud of it." François Wolfisberg, Carouge GE

"Since we started our business over 30 years ago, we use sourdough. This leads to products that are more digestible for the body thanks to the long leavening. The summit reassures that we are on the right track."
René Fleischli, Niederglatt ZH

"We have been producing sourdough bread for generations. However, the positive properties must be used for marketing more strongly. The summit supports us and gives us courage." Franz Willi, Sempach LU

"Sourdough is definitely the topic we need to address. Although I did not get all the scientific fundamentals, they help explaining to the customer why sourdough is good." Patrick Bohnenblust, Berne

"We have learned a lot of technical things about the influence of the ingredients of a sourdough. This showed us that we are on the right track. And we now have arguments for why one should buy the bread at the bakery." Giuseppe Piffaretti, Mendrisio TI

"Most of all, I've learned that the different ways in which sourdough is leavened – e.g. with gluten-free flour, beans, flax seeds, etc. - can lead to a completely different taste. It is also interesting that with fermented foods many digestive problems can be solved." Daniel Hächler, Seengen AG

"I understand that our marketing is done poorly. Karl de Smet from the Sourdough Library in Belgium said that, as in other languages, we should talk about mother dough rather than sourdough, because that is more important to the customer. We absolutely have to jump on this sourdough train." Markus Paa, Sins AG

"I realized that we still know very little about sourdough and that the topic has a scientific depth. However, most of all the bread has to have a good taste so that we can sell it well." Ramona Bolliger, World Champion Bakery, Lucerne

"We have to focus more on sourdough. This is shown by the histamine intolerances. Just two days ago I had a customer with this problem. My conclusion is: wholemeal and long leavened doughs if possible. Sourdough makes for a good story." Franz Marty, Stein am Rhein SH

"All my life I have been searching for a species and found it today: the egg-laying wool milk pig. This is the sourdough. It has such a positive potential. We just have to implement it now." Reto Fries, Richemont Craft School, Lucerne