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Contemporary imperial flair at Elstar The Garden and The Farrier: Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection presents its restaurant team

Vienna, May/June 2024 – With the official F&B opening, General Manager Jürgen Fleischhacker announces the restaurant and bar team of the newly opened Imperial Riding School Hotel in Vienna's Ungargasse. **Sandro Balogh**, Executive Chef and **Claudia Chiarella Abecasis**, Sous-Chef (both most recently at Steigenberger Herrenhof Vienna), **Felix Fischer** (most recently at SO/ Vienna) Director of F&B, **Fanny Majohr** (most recently at Felix Suiten Leipzig) Restaurant Manager, **Erika Stein** (most recently at Zugspitze Resort) and **Alex Mansutti** (most recently at Grand Hotel Wien) as Pâtisserie Chefs, and **Piotr Krejza** (most recently at Klyo) Bar Manager, will form the core team of the restaurant Elstar, Elstar The Garden and The Farrier bar at the first Autograph Collection hotel in Austria. *"We have found a team of personalities for this historically and aesthetically unique location who possess not only creativity and expertise but also sound practical experience in order to realise our dining concept in the restaurant and banquet area for several hundred guests at a time,"* says Jürgen Fleischhacker. While **Elstar** reinterprets the city's culinary heritage with Eastern and contemporary influences, **The Farrier** lends itself as an inspiring space for the hours in between as both a coffeehouse and a classic cocktail bar. The former orchard, which was planted by Emperor Franz Joseph I and can be found behind the magnificent original façade of the former military riding school, now features an inviting **garden terrace and bar** for barbecues and drinks with plenty of space for weddings and private parties.

www.imperialridingschool.com



Sandro Balogh (49), Executive Chef

The Vienna native is heading up the restaurant team as Executive Chef at the newly opened Imperial Riding School in Vienna. The professionally trained master chef and apprentice trainer can look back on many years of experience as a restaurateur (Vikerl's Lokal), in the hotel industry (Steigenberger Herrenhof Vienna, NH Vienna Airport Conference Center, Bayerischer Hof Munich, Zur Tenne Kitzbühel, Radisson Blu Palais Vienna, Le Méridien and Hilton Vienna Plaza, among others) and in premium dining venues (Tian, Holy Moly am Badeschiff and Le Club at Bürgenstock Hotel & Resort Lake Lucerne, just to name a few). Balogh's responsibilities at the former military riding school, restyled by London-based design studio Goddard Littlefair, include the culinary design of the F&B outlets Elstar, Elstar The Garden, The Farrier and Cameo as well as the banquet and outdoor area for hotel guests, business clients and local patrons.



Claudia Chiarella Abecasis (31), Sous-Chef

Claudia Chiarella Abecasis was born in Lima, Peru, and completed her training as a chef in 2019 in Münster, Germany. She started out at several locations in Germany and Peru before hiring on at the NH Vienna Airport Conference Center in 2020 and taking on her most recent position as Junior Sous-Chef at the Steigenberger Hotel Herrenhof in 2022. As the new Sous-Chef of the Imperial Riding School, the 31-year-old serves as second in command to Executive Chef Sandro Balogh and acts as a liaison to the kitchen team. She also co-created several of the signature dishes.

Felix Fischer (39), Director of Food & Beverage

The experienced tourism and hotel manager has been in charge of the management and administration of all food and beverage operations (restaurant Elstar, Elstar The Garden, The Farrier, Cameo, and one of the largest banquet areas in central Vienna) at the newly opened Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection, since the pre-opening phase. The multi-talented host with an MBA in Innovation and Experience Design for Tourism from Modul University Vienna started his career at the Hilton Vienna Danube before moving on to positions at Fairmont (Dubai, Canada), Meliá Vienna, Hotel G'schlössl Murtal and Steirerschlössl (both near Spielberg), and most recently at SO/ Vienna as Director of Food & Beverage. In the former imperial military riding school in Ungargasse, the 39-year-old will, among other things, plan and be responsible for the commercial success of the F&B department and, together with the F&B team that he helped establish, will develop concepts, menus and customised offers for the various guest groups.

Fanny Majohr (34), Restaurant Manager

The new Restaurant Manager at the Imperial Riding School (restaurant Elstar, Elstar The Garden, The Farrier) is a trained restaurant and hotel professional as well as a state-certified business administrator for the hotel and catering industry and has completed various courses in areas such as MICE management, leadership and bartending. She started her career in the F&B industry while still in training, already working for the Marriott Group in Leipzig from 2017 to 2019. Most recently employed as Restaurant Manager with a focus on banqueting at the Felix Suiten am Augustusplatz in Leipzig, the 34-year-old is now leading the service team at the newly opened hotel, where she will help to shape the guest experience in all of the F&B outlets.



Erika Stein, Pâtisserie Chef

Of Argentinian and French descent, pâtissière Erika Stein (29) holds a master's degree in culinary arts (Buenos Aires), a Diplôme de Pâtisserie from the renowned Institut Le Cordon Bleu (Diplôme de Pâtisserie, Madrid) and has completed several specialised training courses. At the new Imperial Riding School, she is responsible for the creative development of signature desserts and sweet and savoury dishes at the restaurant Elstar, Elstar The Garden, The Farrier bar and the Cameo shop concept. She has previously worked as Chef de Partie at Zugspitze Resort (Tyrol), Casa Manjar (Madrid) and Four Seasons (Madrid), with further experience in the United States, Spain, Australia and Argentina.

Alex Mansutti, Pâtisserie Chef

Born in San Daniele del Friuli in northern Italy, Alex Mansutti trained as a pastry chef in Brescia and can look back on many years of professional experience at his family's ice cream production business (Villach, Graz) and as Pastry Chef at the k.u.k. Hofzuckerbäckerei Demel, Do&Co in the Haas Haus, and most recently at Restaurant 1870 at the Grand Hotel Wien. In his new position as Pâtisserie Chef at the Imperial Riding School, the 31-year-old is responsible for creating all sweet dishes and for managing the pâtisserie team together with Erika Stein.



Piotr Krejza, Bar Manager

With over 15 years of bartending experience, Piotr Krejza, born in Białystok, Poland, is in charge of the newly opened daytime and cocktail bar The Farrier at the Imperial Riding School Hotel, where he will be responsible for the creation of signature drinks and managing the bar team. The 41-year-old team player studied tourism and foreign languages and graduated from the International Bartenders and Sommelier School (MSBiS) in Warsaw before completing a hospitality training programme at The City and Guild of London Institute. He started his career at the Regency Hotel before embarking on the high seas (*Spirit of Chartwell*) and moving to Vienna in 2012, initially working as Bar Manager at Do&Co’s Onyx Bar in the Haas Haus and most recently at Klyo.

>> Background information & image downloads >>

Background Information

Elstar, Elstar The Garden | The Farrier | Cameo

Elstar | Open Daily: Lunch 12 noon – 5:00 p.m., Dinner 5:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (Garden 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)

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The Farrier | Open Daily 5:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m. (kitchen open until 11:00 p.m.)

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Cameo | Open Daily 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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ELSTAR THE GARDEN

A contemporary interpretation of imperial Viennese cuisine, an idyllic garden, and a distinctive atmosphere that blends historical elegance with unconventional charm: as a tribute to the orchard planted here by Emperor Franz Joseph I and named after the Elstar apple variety, the opening menu of the new restaurant at the Imperial Riding School Hotel combines Vienna’s culinary heritage with Eastern and modern influences. The result is a contemporary imperial cuisine with predominantly locally sourced ingredients. Inspired by the rich history of the location, Executive Chef **Sandro Balogh** drew a circle around Vienna extending to the Hungarian border in order to reinterpret the classics of the region together with Peruvian Sous-Chef **Claudia Chiarella Abecasis**. Directly adjacent to the 140-seat restaurant, managed by Director of F&B **Felix Fischer** and styled by London design studio **Goddard Littlefair** with elegant equestrian accents, is the idyllic 2,000 m² garden with outdoor terrace and bar, where guests can enjoy summer barbecues, picnics and a variety of festive events as well as winter markets beneath the Old Lady, one of Vienna’s oldest trees.

Year-round fixtures on the opening menu include the Elstar’s Garden Salad (vegan, with apple & pear, mushrooms, nuts, mixed chards and carrot dressing) as well as Szegedin Goulash from Mangalitsa Pork Cheeks (with pointed cabbage, Bohemian dumplings and pork cracklings), complemented seasonally by savoury Hortobágyi Palacsinta (vegan, with beluga lentils, leaf cabbage and chijaukay seitan) or Roasted Green Asparagus (vegan, with strawberry sofrito, pistachio hummus and fennel crunch). To top it all off, the pâtisserie team led by **Erika Stein** and **Alex Mansutti** will entice you with tempting sweets including their signature dessert, a layered caramelised apple strudel with vanilla cream and Marchfeld strawberries.

In addition to a business lunch, the Elstar Restaurant & Garden Sharing Menu features a sharing concept with four or five courses (for two or more people), with advice and recommendations provided by Restaurant Manager **Fanny Majohr** and her service team. The beverage menu includes a Wiener Dirndl Spritzer as an aperitif or a plum eau-de-vie from the Hans Reisetbauer distillery as well as a selection of mainly Austrian but also French, Italian and Spanish white and red wines.

Reservations are now being accepted at elstar@imperialridingschool-vienna.com or at [Imperial Riding School | Restaurants — Eat & Drink](#).

Open daily: Lunch 12 noon – 5:00 p.m., Dinner 5:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. (Garden 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)

THE FARRIER

A stylish and yet unpretentious bar in the former riding hall, which transitions from a coffeehouse during the day to a cocktail bar in the evening: that's The Farrier, named after the traditional occupation of a horseshoeing blacksmith. Here, Bar Manager **Piotr Krejza** oversees a laid-back setting for aperitifs, nightcaps and everything in between. The focus in the afternoons is on specialty coffees and teas, hot chocolate and sweet pastries, followed later on by fruity signature drinks such as the Fresh and Cloudy (ginger lemongrass infused vodka, elderberry, apple juice, lemon) or the Pferdebändiger, literally "Horse Tamer" (Reisetbauer gin, grapefruit juice, Ramazzotti Rosato, peach). The choices also include non-alcoholic cocktails and a selection of Austrian and international wines as well as Austrian and Czech beers – accompanied by bar food such as homemade sourdough lángos with a choice of salsiccia & shallots, pastrami & cabbage, or mushrooms & mountain cheese. Guests looking to combine their drinks with a meal can choose between The Farrier's Beef Burger with apple and onion chutney, bacon and mountain cheese or the vegan Green Equerry Burger with a sweet potato and lentil patty, oyster mushrooms, snow peas and lemon curd. Open daily 5:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m. (kitchen open until 11:00 p.m.)

CAMEO

A small yet elegant shop with something for everyone, tourists and locals alike: Cameo offers sweet and savoury delicacies as well as small gifts and a hand-picked assortment for your time on the road or to bring home. Named after cameo appearances in film and TV, this little take-away, located on the way to the S-Bahn station, recalls the building's brief role as one of Vienna's largest cinemas. Open daily 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Further information:

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Picture gallery



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Executive Chef Sandro Balogh with Sous-Chef Claudia Chiarella Abecasis

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Sandro Balogh, Executive Chef
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Claudia Chiarella Abecasis, Sous-Chef
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Piotr Krejza, Bar Manager
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Executive Chef Sandro Balogh with Sous-Chef Claudia Chiarella
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Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection

In the new Imperial Riding School Hotel, the historical elegance of the former imperial and royal Military Riding School is just as obvious as the courage to be creative. Steeped in history, the hotel allows the past to live on with great charm in a modern design concept and uses inspiring flair to create a new lightness. Private and business guests are offered premium comfort, top facilities and first-class service in the heart of Vienna's third district. 342 rooms and a varied gastronomic offering with regional and international specialities, as well as a pool, wellness area and hotel garden, make your stay a unique experience. The Imperial Riding School is the first [Autograph Collection](#) hotel in Austria and is therefore part of the [Marriott International](#) brand. The main owners are [Northwood Investors](#) and the hotel is operated by co-owner [Event Hotels. Imperial Riding School](#)

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Autograph Collection Hotels advocates for the original, championing the individuality of each of its over 290 independent hotels located in the most desirable destinations across 50 countries and territories. Each hotel is a product of passion, inspired by a clear vision, soul, and story that makes it individual and special: *Exactly Like Nothing Else*. Hand-selected for their inherent craft and distinct perspectives on design and hospitality, Autograph Collection properties offer rich immersive moments that leave a lasting imprint. For more information, please visit www.autographhotels.com, and explore on social via [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) to be inspired by immersive moments that are

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About Event Hotels

Event Hotels, headquartered in Cologne, operates 60 business and city hotels at over 40 locations in Europe under the names of well-known international hotel brands. The motto: Hospitality at heart. Event hotels are the leading white label hotel operator in Europe, and as such not only manage the operational business of its hotels, but also take an investment stake in real estate and operation together with partners, work out potential for sustainable growth and thus shape the landscape of hotels and hospitality. [www.eventhotels.com](#)

About Northwood

Northwood Investors LLC (“Northwood”) is a vertically integrated real estate investment advisor that was founded in 2006 by John Z. Kukral, former President and CEO of Blackstone Real Estate. Northwood is headquartered in Denver, Colorado and has 14 offices across the U.S. and Europe. Northwood seeks to acquire well-located real estate through tactical sourcing and subsequently maximize its value through hands-on value creation at the asset level. Northwood’s team of more than 260 dedicated real estate professionals possess expertise in acquisitions and asset management, providing the firm a competitive advantage to source investments and create high-quality real estate projects. Northwood’s experience is evidenced by the team’s \$20 billion of real estate acquisitions since inception. Link to website: [Northwood Investors](#)

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