



» MAD Symposium, Copenhagen

'A community of chefs, cooks and farmers with an appetite for knowledge'

August 2013

The MAD Symposium is an avant-garde food event that has been taking place in Copenhagen for the last three years. MAD, meaning food in Danish, describes itself as a grassroots celebration of flavour and good eating; an open and collaborative forum dedicated to presenting and discussing the past, present and future of all things food-related.

This August *Kevin Thornton*, chef proprietor of Dublin's Michelin starred Thornton's Restaurant, and one of our food team joined the MAD community for the two day carnival in their big red circus tent for their forum on Guts. The theme Guts was chosen to provoke the speakers and the audience of 600 to consider its 'myriad of meanings – literal and metaphorical – as well as its implications for both our professions and our lives.'

A Celebration of Flavour



MAD: An Inspiration

The symposium was opened by Dario Cecchini, an Italian butcher, cutting open a pig to the soundtrack of AC/DC and revealing its guts stating 'this is the stomach of the world'. The energy in the tent was palpable. This set the scene for what was to be a thought provoking and inspirational few days. It was edgy, gutsy and pure edutainment with something to be drawn from each of the twenty-four engaging and inspiring speakers; who included:

- **Dario Cecchini**

... who opened the symposium with unadulterated showmanship, passion and integrity. He informed the audience that butchers are the most delicate link in the food chain; they are the link of consciousness. <http://vimeo.com/74282454>

- **Christian Puglisi**

... former sous chef at Noma, who spoke with honesty, and a little humour, about his experience in setting up his now 1* Michelin restaurant Relae in a street formerly run by drug dealers. He would be an inspiration for anyone thinking of opening a restaurant, or who are struggling in their business, stripping everything back to basics. <http://vimeo.com/76321202>

- **Margot Henderson**

... spoke about the dichotomy of male and female chefs, and asked 'where are all the female chefs' and helped bring some balance to a largely male dominated environment. She expressed sympathy for a whole generation of young male chefs who had forgotten to cook like their grandmothers. She also argued against sous vide cookery stating that a duck leg 'confited' in a bag could have no flavour when compared to one confited in duck fat. <http://vimeo.com/80890011>

- **Daniel Klein**

... is the co-producer of *Perennial Plate*, the 2013 James Beard Award winning online weekly documentary series dedicated to socially responsible and adventurous eating. Daniel and his partner Mira travel the world exploring the wonders, complexities and stories behind the ever more connected global food system. He presented some of their work and gave some thought-provoking insights into human vulnerability. <http://vimeo.com/76686665>

- **David Kinch & Cynthia Sandberg**

... are a chef and a farmer working together in an exclusive partnership. Their message was about the benefits and rewards of chefs/restaurateurs working more collaboratively with growers. Closer to home in Donegal, Harry's Restaurant has been trailblazing the concept of growing your own ingredients with the partnership of restaurateur Donal Doherty and expert grower Dermot Carey. <http://vimeo.com/76034150>

A more comprehensive overview can be found on the following links:

<http://madfeed.co/post/59589477312/a-recap-the-big-top-has-been-dismantled-most#>

<http://eater.com/archives/2013/08/27/hangover-observations-from-the-2013-mad-symposium.php>

MAD Food - "A True Carnival of the Senses"

All the food served throughout the symposium was exceptional, especially given the numbers catered for, and not your typical mass catered event food. Then again, MAD is not your typical event. Breakfast and lunch was provided on both days, with dinner on the Monday evening.

Lunch on the first day was a taste of the Lebanon provided by Souk el Tayeb. On the second day it was the turn of Mission Chinese all the way from New York. The after-party dinner was cooked by the team at Swedish restaurant Bastard. They also had a MAD beer selection of five individual beers created by Mikkeller, to 'give a taste of MAD's own terroir'; each bottle had its own unique label reflective of the symposium and its characters. Fresh fruit was also available for afternoon breaks displayed in carved out tree trunks. In summary, MAD is a true carnival of the senses and should be on the agenda for anyone passionate about the future of food.

To request a more detailed overview please email: foodtourism@failteireland.ie