
FINAL REPORT

FUNDAZIUN UCCELIN

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Introduction

The first time I heard about Fundaziun Uccelin I was 21 years old. At the time I was working in a restaurant at my hometown called “Rosas & Xocolates” when this new guy from Guadalajara came in. He was working at service, not in the kitchen, so we barely spoke with each other, but he was very nice and funny. I remembered this specific time; I was working because I was saving money to go to Spain, and he heard about that and asked me if I knew Fundaziun Uccelin.

Moises told me all about it, but I didn't fill the requirements in that moment, and I was very focused on my goal to go to Spain, so I just listened and wrote down the name. He quit the job, I went to Spain, and I never saw him again. But we did follow each other on Instagram.

In 2018 while I was in Spain I saw that Moises got the Scholarship. I was very happy for him, and I thought: maybe I can do the same. I checked the requirements again and realized that I was still missing some things, so I waited until the time was right and I applied in September 2021.

I got a rejection letter, sort of; I was told that the scholarship was given to someone else, but the board liked my application very much, so decided to make an exception and give me the opportunity to apply again in March 2022, so I did.

I was very nervous and would check my email every day during April to see if I had anything in my mailbox. Until April 14th (I remember it all too well), I woke up at 6:30am for work and checked my email as I stretched myself, and there it was! the acceptance letter. I couldn't believe it.

I got the scholarship from Fundaziun Uccelin, a Swiss scholarship. This was way beyond my expectations, and in that moment, my fear started. Will I be good enough?

A whole new country, a language that I don't speak, kitchens that I don't know etc., but I like to be the kind of person that encourages others to get out of their comfort zone to see how far they can go, and in order to do that, I had to do it myself.

Also, as I mentioned on my motivation letter, I enjoy sharing my love and passion for food and I want to push my boundaries and test my limits in new challenges.

So, this is my Uccelin Journey.



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Black&Blaze

Coffe roasting Company

09/11/2023

My first day as an Uccelin began at Black&Blaze, I am not an expert in coffee but I always love learning about it, so I was very excited to begin the program with this producer.

The day started with Roni picking me up at his apartment, it was very kind of him letting me stay there while I was in Zurich. We went to The Coffee Roasting Company and on the way, he showed me a little bit of Zurich.

We got there, and the first thing we did was: Making coffee for ourselves to drink, of course. That was the first thing I learned, how to make filtered coffee.



So here are the steps:

You will need: Water, freshly ground coffee, a filter, a pour over brewer and a mug.

- First, you need to have nice and light roasted coffee
- You must grind the coffee a little bit coarser, than for an espresso for example.
- You will need 500grs of water for 30grs of coffee (this might change according to each person).
- It is important to wash the filter first, in case it has white dye. You just have to put it under the waterjet and that's it.
- You will heat the water to 95°C (if you don't have a thermometer, let it boil and then let the water rest for 2 minutes) then put 50grs of the hot water into the coffee and leave it there for 30 seconds, after that pour the rest of the water and let it filter, and voila! You will have a good cup of coffee.

After that, Roni showed me around and taught me my first task, that it was to vacuum the coffee into the coffee roaster.

And how does the coffee roaster work?

- After you vacuum the coffee, it goes into the hopper, the coffee stays there until the oven gets to the temperature that you want.
- Then you open de hopper so the coffee goes into the oven (always make sure you closed after doing that) and it will stay there depending of the recipe for each kind of coffee.



Still inside the oven, when the temperature goes about 190°-195°C we should be able to hear the coffee popping and that it is called First Crack (FC), it's when the maillard reaction happens, and after the FC it's when the coffee takes all his attributes and that it is called developing time.

- After the coffee is done, it goes into the cooler. As the name says, it will cool the coffee, stopping it from getting more roasted than what is necessary.
- Then, it goes into the destoner machine, so we make sure the coffee is completely clean.
- And last but not least, pack it in the packing machine and we seal every bag.
- After the coffee is packed, you must wait 2 weeks until you can prepare it; because when roasting coffee, gases are formed inside the bean, and it has to degas in order for the personality of the coffee to develop.

It is important to know that every recipe for roasting will change according to what we are looking for, type of coffee, what kind of taste we want to achieve (fruity, chocolate etc.), the size of the coffee and the atmospheric conditions where the coffee is being roasted.

Roni said that there are two important things in order to have a good coffee roasting: First, to find a profile roasting that is liked. And second, manage that every batch is the same.

The whole process is very specific and requires a lot of concentration, you have timers to be looking at, specific instructions of what to do at a specific time so the coffee will always be the same.

I think that this is very important not only in the coffee roasting, but also in the kitchen, to be constant and precise in every recipe and plate that we cook every single time, so the costumers get what they are waiting for.

By the end of the day, Roni let me roast a batch of coffee by myself, he was beside me making sure everything was okay during the whole process and even put my name on it.

I learned a lot today and I fell in love a little bit more with coffee, I really enjoyed this stage, I had a good time and Roni was super kind the whole time and so patient to explain everything he was doing. Such an incredible experience.



Coffee Roasting Machine



The Destoner





SchmückToGo.

11/11/2023

My day started early in the morning, at 7:30 in SchmückToGo: that is where Black&Blaze coffee is sold. Natalie was there to welcome me, she was so happy and kind and I felt very comfortable with her.

And the day started of course, with a cup of coffee for ourselves. I had one before coming out of the apartment, but I'm still having bad nights because of the JetLag and I really love coffee so, it was the perfect way to begin.

She showed me around, she explained to me what she normally does, and how to make coffee. She told me a couple of times that what she does is not "rocket science" but it actually is.

The way Natalie talks about coffee is really captivating, I really love hearing people talk when they are passionate about what they're saying, and Natalie was indeed passionate about coffee.



Today SchmückToGo sold a lot of cappuccinos and I got to practice a lot how to make them. The secret is in the milk: don't foam it too much, otherwise when you pour it into the cup, it will be like a splash and if it lacks foam, it won't have the consistence of a cappuccino.

So, how do we get it right? First, we have to make sure our milk is cold. That's because the solubility of air in milk is greater at low temperatures, then you want the steam wand right on top of the milk with the tip half under the surface, holding the stainless-steel milk jug with a little bit of inclination towards yourself, and when you have the right amount of foam, you take the steam wand right in the middle of the milk till it is hot enough.

Then, tap the milk jug against the table to remove the big bubbles, and gently swirl the milk to make it homogeneous. After that, pour the milk into our espresso, hold the cup slightly tilted towards to the milk jug, and pour the milk gently from a slight height; as it pours, go down until the milk jug and the cup touches and then straighten the cup, et voila! You will have a nice cappuccino.

We made quite a lot like that and even tried to do latte art. I had such a great morning with Natalie and all the customers were kind.



Introduction

14/11/2022



My introduction was a week later from when I started the program, because of the logistic of the flights, my very first day at Zurich was November 8th, I arrived in the evening and lucky for me, Anthea went to pick me up at the airport. I was very relieving when she told me that she will pick me up.

Migration took their time with me, so I got off the airport a little bit late than I was supposed to, Anthea took me to Roni's apartment and that's when my Uccelin journey began.

I went to Furstenau a week later to have my meeting with Anthea at Schloss Schauenstein, like always Anthea was super nice, kind and friendly, making sure everything was okay and that I understood everything.

She showed me around, explaining what was what and gave me my Uccelin Uniforms for the next stages.

The Schloss Schauenstein is a very beautiful place, the kitchens, room, gardens and the place to be for the staff was very nice, I must have said that what I liked the most was the lockers, I

don't think I have been before in a place where there is a locker for almost everyone.

They even have this little roasting coffee place, where every so often someone from Black and Blaze comes to roast coffee for the Schloss Schauenstein.

It's a very impressive place, Anucha Jittanupong that is an Uccelin before me said something like "this is the dream place of every chef to work" and I totally agree with him.





Weingut Donatsch.

Wednesday, November 16th

My day at Weingut Donatsch started at 2:00pm; because of the time of the year, I only visited the vineyard on one day. Martin told me that normally Uccelins stay longer than that, but there wasn't too much to do at the moment.

Martin greeted me with a big smile and gave me a tour through the vineyards. Weingut Donatsch is located in Malans, a Swiss commune in the canton of Grisons, located in the Landquart district where the weather conditions are great for making wine.

The highest point of the vineyard is 700 meters above sea level, there's where their Pinot Blanc grows, intended for sparkling wine. And the lowest is 500 meters above sea level, where completer is grown.



Martin explained that this very special type of grape is unique of the region and the name "*completer*" comes from "*completorium*", the last prayer of the evening in the Christian faith, because they traditionally drink a glass of wine. This grape was almost lost but the family Donatsch took the job of preserving it with the mass selection, which is basically choosing the best grapes in the harvest to plant them later, and thus obtain the desired variety and/or quality.

Martin also explained what happens in the vineyard in winter: when all the leaves have finally fallen, it's the time when the pruning starts; that's basically cutting almost all vine branches, leaving two (one from each side), which will then go down to the rope they have, making it appear horizontal and, that way, in every "eye" of the vine branches, another one will grow vertically.



They also let sheep into the vineyard; this has several purposes: to eat the grass, the manure of the sheep serves as fertilizer and as they go walking, they cover the possible tunnels of mice that there might be.

The life of the vine can last several years, but the new vid takes 3 years to give grapes, that's why you have to plan very well if you want to change the type of grape or just try a new one. The world of wine requires a lot of strategic planning, investment and patience.

After the whole tour where Martin showed me all spaces, the barricades, the wine cellar, the personal wine collection, etc. we had a little wine tasting. And I learned that with just one type of grape, like Pinot Noir, you can make a lot of variations.

Weingut Donatsch has 3 Styles of wine: Tradition, where they use old barrels for the wine; Passion, that is a mix of old and new barrels; and Unique, that one only uses new barrels. This of course, makes a difference in the taste of the wine even if it is the same type of grape. During the wine tasting, I got the chance to taste the 3 styles in Pinot Noir. It was a great and very interesting experience. I must say that I am so much grateful to Martin and to all the producers to take the time to explain me everything they do.





John Baker

From 17/11/2022 to 19/11/2022



A normal day at a bakery starts very early in the morning or very late at night, that depends on how you see it. Back in my hometown, one of my best friends used to work at a bakery, so I wasn't surprised when they told me that I would start at 2am in the morning. I do have to say, that the first day was kind of hard because I wasn't used to that schedule, so I asked what time they normally go to bed and Stefan told me 5:00pm, so that's what I did too.

I spent my 3 days at the bakery mostly with Stefan, even at lunch time. The first thing we did was to paint the croissants and the Butterzopf and start to bake all the bread from the day before.

And while that is being done, we started shaping the multiple doughs from the day before for the next day. We shaped a lot of different sorts of bread, such as: Weissbrot, Olivenbrot, Früchtebrötli, Ruchbrot, baguette and lots of croissants and Pain au chocolat.

Some bread wasn't that hard to shape but of course it has a technique and there were others that were a little bit more complicated like the Butterzopf; it took me a while



to understand the movement of the hands and to finally get it. Everyone was trying to explain to me how to do it, but for some reason, when you think about the way you have to move your hands, it becomes more complicated. At some point, they just told me "Just move both hands at the same time, it's easier" and it was! It came to me in that moment, and then, when I tried to think what the movement I was doing was, it stopped going well. I think you just need to feel it, but then it was time for the 6-Strang-Zopf...



In the bakery, just like in pastry and in kitchens, you must work a day in advance: the things that you do today are for tomorrow, and the bread that you're baking now is from yesterday. It requires a lot of organization and I love organization, it makes me feel in control.



There are a lot of differences between Europe and Mexico, because of course we are very different, and I'm not saying that every kitchen in Mexico is the same but you do find chefs and cooks with no organization at all; I mean, in the end everything goes well, it's just that I feel more comfortable with this kind of work and what I like even more, is to learn from this kind of kitchens/bakeries.

Another difference is of course the bread, we do have Croissants, pain au chocolat and others, but we do not have Butterzopf and Grittibänz; that is a brioche with the shape of a man that is typical to eat for San Nicola. It is very interesting to learn about the gastronomy and the culture here.

Time flew for me in the bakery when I realized the day was already done and my original 2 days' stage were two, I was going to stay one more day in Zurich so I asked Lukas If I could go one more day and he said yes.

My last day was also super-fast, I felt I had a better performance; everyone was super kind and there were two persons there who spoke Spanish so that was cool to hear.





Olearia San Giorgio

From 20-11-2022 to 25-11-2022

How can I start to describe my experience in Olearia San Giorgio? From the very beginning to the very end, everything was well planned and organized. I arrived at Regio di Calabria very late at night and Roberto Fazari and Claudio Coletta were already there waiting for me to get me to the hotel. I couldn't get anything to eat during my layover in Rome, but Roberto took me to the hotel and was kind enough to get me something to eat; at that time nothing was open, and the hotel restaurant surely would be closed.

The next day, first thing in the morning Claudio was outside the hotel to take me to Olearia San Giorgio. It's closed on Mondays, but we went there to have an overlook of how everything should work. When we got there, I met Laia; Laia is a girl who was doing a sort of internship there because her family is also dedicated to the production of olive oil. I have to say that it was very fun and rewarding to have someone to share the experience with; also, she is from Barcelona, so having someone to talk to in native language is always good.



We eventually headed to the olive plantations; I had never seen an olive tree before, so for me it was very extraordinary. Then Laia explained that it was the same for her, because in Barcelona the trees are not like that, they are smaller and quite different, so the collection process is very different too.

In ancient times, the Greeks, Romans and Phoenicians used Southern Italy to make oil that would produce light; that is why the trees are so big and different from the others. Also, they preserve an olive that is typical of the region, the *ottobratica* olive. This is smaller than the rest but with high quality, so from this olive they will obtain and produce only extra virgin olive oil.



The process of the Olive oil begins with the harvest:

With the normal olive trees, the harvest can be done by hand; but in this case, it's quite different, handpicking is not an option. So they have this machines that take each branch of the olive, one by one. These are previously pruned in such a way that this can happen, and the machine shakes the tree, so the olives fall into nets and are collected. Laia also explained that they do something like that in Spain, but the machines are different and most times the tree breaks. These machines though, were created in such a way that will not be harmful to the plant. The vibration is calibrated to make not only the olives fall, but it also helps the tree to have better results for the following year; especially because, as we said before, the trees come from long time ago; the oldest is about 600 years old, so it is very important to take care of the trees. And this whole process happens when the olive is between green and purple.



After that, the workers (that are only woman, because they have the believe to empower women) take the nets and collect the olives and put them into boxes; then, these are loaded into trucks to take them to the oil press. The olives should become oil in no more than 24 hours, so the quality remains.

Once in the 'almazara', the leaves are separated from the olives, and will be used to produce light, the olives will be washed and prepared for the breaking.

The granulating process must be in low temperatures and not taking much time so that the contact of the oil with air and light is as brief as possible; this also helps to obtain a good natural green color. The paste of pulp and olive pits is stirred to reduce its volume and to separate the vegetation water from the oil. Then we pass to the centrifugation process, always keeping an eye on the temperatures. The oil is filtrated with two cotton layers and is stored in tanks with argon (Argon is an inert shielding gas used as a protective atmosphere used for several industrial processes), and at the end, the oil is bottled (also with argon), sealed and labeled for sale.

Okay, so what happens with the rest of the olives? The olive pit is used as fuel in the boiler, the pomace of olives will be used to generate energy and the water will be used to irrigate the olive crops. In that way, every single thing will be used and there will be no waste.



After that whole process is done, the work maintains the quality standards always high, so we went to the laboratory “Centro Analisis Biochimiche Sas” that is the only official laboratory in Calabria for the analysis of edible oils by the Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry Policies. In here, the oil is examined to ensure that it can be called: olive oil, virgin olive oil or extra virgin olive oil.



Once the olive oil is out for sale, (yes, you can read the labels in order to know which one it is and how good they are, but you also need to know how to figure out yourself) we had Antonio Giuseppe Lauro (consultant in the olive oil sector, as an expert in sensory analysis) explain to us how to taste extra virgin olive oil.



For the tasting:

Olfactory phase: in here you can tell from the very beginning if it's going to be good or not. If it doesn't smell slightly fruity, it will not be worth to taste; also, you can identify if it has defects, if it is rancid etc.

First, it is important to warm up a little bit the extra virgin olive oil; this you will do with your hands, moving from left to right in one hand the refractory where the oil is located and covering it with the other hand, so when you uncover it, you will feel all the smells.



Taste phase: you take a little bit of the oil and put in your mouth, then take a deep breath with your mouth so the air will expand the oil and also make the flavor stronger, in this phase you will be able to feel bitter, spicy, green, fruity and dried fruits and how strong the flavor of each one is.

Of course, tasting extra virgin olive oil or any product requires experience, but it was an honor to have an expert explaining everything, to be able to have an idea in the future of how the product should be.

We also went to the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria, where I didn't only see Hercules and The Bronzes of Riace but also got to know a little bit more of the history of the Olives. On the right you can see me with a storage jar which chemical analysis showed was used to contain olive oil.



After all that great experience I have the pleasure to share kitchen with Francesco Figliomeni and his son Domenico Figliomeni at their restaurant "La Vecchia Botte". They were kind enough to let me spend the night with them during the service while I was also sitting in their table eating and of course to let me use their kitchen to make something for all the team of Olearia San Giorgio.

The dinner was hosted by them, and I got the chance to make a Mexican dessert called Flan, with a dressing made of extra virgin olive oil infused with vanilla and a touch of *fleur de sel* flavored with lemon. Everyone ordered a second helping so I'm guessing they liked it.





But not everything was extra virgin olive oil, we also went to Ioppolo Salumi Artigianali, where Enzo Ioppolo took time to explain to me all the steps and productions that they do in their company, that as Olearia San Giorgio is a family company; everyone working there is family, which I found amazing because you know for sure that the products are made with love and with extreme care.

He showed me where the meat comes in, the process of every product, the curing chamber and he introduced to me the 'Nduja, which is a typical sausage of Italian cuisine from the Calabria region, very spicy, made with pork and spices. The Ioppolo brothers make this product keeping the tradition of their ancestors.



And last but not least, we went to a bergamot production, where we got to see how they transform the bergamots into juice, candy and essential oil.



Osteria Francescana

From 28-11-2022 to 23-12-2022



My first day and week at Osteria Francescana was in the Laboratory or production that is kind of the same thing; the first person that I got to meet was Alex, he is another intern that arrived 3 days before me. We both went together to the lab and, since this experience has been wonderful but also all by myself, it was very nice to have somebody with whom I can relate and talk about the things that I'm going through.

In the Lab we worked with Elena, Ettore and Choi, it was such an interesting combination because the 3 of them are so different but very nice to work with; the lab is where the main production is done: like the stocks, some sauces, cleaning fish, make the portions of other productions etc. It's a very interesting part of the kitchen because you get to see all the bases for the dishes, how and why they do it. It is also in the lab where the staff meal is done, and I have to say that I have never eaten so well in a restaurant as part of the staff as I have been eating in Osteria Francescana, and I really think that is very important because when you take care of your staff you create a good environment, and the staff meal is for sure a way to do that.

Osteria has been a dream to me since I started in the kitchen, so being there felt almost unreal. When they sent me the PDF with the general information of the restaurant, they said that it was important to learn a little bit of Italian before going, because of course the restaurant is in Italy, and yes, I have had some problems for not understanding the language; but also I have found it extraordinary how diverse the restaurant is, there are people from all over the world, English is for sure the second language that is spoken in the kitchen.



Like any kitchen, you will find a lot of different personalities, and in order to learn from each person, it is important to know how to capture the information depending on who you're working with and ask, always ask about everything.



Things happen so fast sometimes that it is hard to keep track. When I realized, the first week was already gone; I was supposed to be two weeks in the laboratory but at the very last moment that changed: some people got sick so my whole schedule changed, it was actually cool because I got to spend a little more time in the others areas.

I was able to be in almost all areas of the kitchen; I must say that I have my favorite ones of course and not because of the area but because of the person who was running it; the way people teach is very important.

I have always wanted to be in the pastry area and for some reason, something always happens and I have to be in another area; which is good too because I got to learn a lot of things, and even if I was only able to be there for two days, I really enjoyed it and I got to see the famous dish “oops I dropped the lemon pie”.



All great kitchens have good organizations, it is the basis for a great operation and for having all workers giving their best performance. Of course, Osteria was not the exception, but what really makes it stand out is the story told behind every dish.

It is well known that a plate will taste better just because of the story behind it: where the product came from, why it was chosen (some childhood memories maybe), why it was cooked like that and why it is presented in that way; but when the story goes a little further, it becomes magical.

Osteria's menu this season plays a little bit the guests (just like Massimo usually does), some of the dishes are:

- A choux filled with fish cream; yes, a savory choux, because that's what the whole menu is about, to have things the other way around.
- You will also taste the panettone with lentils and pancetta; that, I must say, was amazing: so soft, fluffy and a great balance of sweet and savory.



- The soup, how will I ever forget the soup? We had to cook it every day before going for lunch, so by the time we came back we could decorate the plate. It has so many elements that we were normally 3 people on it. The soup represented the pollution of the river Po (is the longest river in Italy, from Monviso to the Adriatic Sea near Venice), the soup arrives at the table with a piece of orange plastic which is removed by the waiter.



- A borlengo that wanted to be a risotto. The borlengo is a typical recipe from Modena, similar to crêpes but filled with a mixture of lard and aromatic herbs. So what they did is a typical risotto hydrated with parmesan water and flavored with lard that was previously infused with herbs, and on the very top of the risotto they put pork rinds, to add that crunch and also the lard flavor.

- As a pre-dessert you have a sweet pasta and at the very end, you have this 3 little “desserts?”: a foie gras with onion macaroon, chocolate herbs and a mini cannolo that wanted to be a carbonara.



- One of my favorites outside the tasting menu, was the foie gras covered with caramelized almonds and hazelnuts and filled with balsamic vinegar from Modena; and, if you are a fan of foie gras as myself, I would suggest sitting tight before you read the next part.

- So, you start doing what you normally do with foie gras: you clean it and cook it at a 63°C steamer or maybe at 83°C until the center of the biggest foie reaches 63°C. The next part was what I found different and when I first saw it, I was heartbroken: they pass the foie passapure and then do a terrine with that. It is only this way that they achieve that smooth buttery texture because they manage to remove all the mini veins that they could have.

The balsamic vinegar was reducing it in the rotary evaporator, what happens here? It is a machine that works under vacuum, with a water bath that controls the temperature and a rotator, as its name suggests; this allows to obtain a concentrated "juice" where the original flavor is preserved.



So, could you already imagine it?

The crunch of the almonds and hazelnuts, the smooth foie grass and center of concentrated balsamic vinegar.

Isn't it just delicious to read?





Refettorio Ambrosiano



As a bonus of my stage in Osteria Francescana, I decided to go to Milan to visit Refettorio Ambrosiano. One of the main reasons why I admire Massimo Bottura so much, is because of *Food for Soul*. I have always thought that you arrive at some point in your life where you should care about something and do something about it, especially when you have big platforms where people listen to you, like in his case.

I have been a volunteer in *Refettorio Merida* for 2 years and when I told them that I was going to be in Osteria they were super excited, and being so close to the first *Refettorio*, I knew I would want to visit. So, I packed my apron and asked them if it was possible for me to go. It was all very fast because my days off in Osteria were a little messy due to some people getting sick; I received the confirmation mail at night and by midnight I was buying the train ticket for the next day at 7:30am.

It was a rainy day, but I was super happy to get to see the organization in this *Refettorio*. It is funny because when I got there, they told me “oh we were expecting a boy”; this is the third time this has happened to me. Like I said before, the language can be a problem, but they were also super nice all the time and we managed to communicate, a little bit of English, a little bit of Spanish and a lot of hand signals.

They put me as a dishwasher and for a moment I forgot I was in Italy, I almost felt like a normal Tuesday at *Refettorio Merida*.

The organization is super different, starting with the facilities and of course the culture, which I think is what makes everything different; you can feel the different souls in each *Refettorio* which is also very magical.



At the end of the service, we had a staff meal like in *Refettorio Merida* so I got to talk a little bit with the volunteers there, they even gave me a Christmas present, it was a very good experience.



Schloss Schauenstein

From 28-12-2022 to 01-01-2023

During the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve, it was hard to find a place to be, because everything was closed or was about to close so I went to Schloss Schauenstein, which is Andreas Caminada's Restaurant; and even if it was going to be only a week, I was very excited and nervous to be there.



It's always funny how life works: I got there the first day and they asked me in what area I am used to be; I told them that normally I am everywhere, but I would like to be in pastry. At first, they said yes, but then the pastry chef didn't have so much to give me, so they sent me to another station. It's not that I don't like working in other stations, but I always want to learn some pastry. Anyway, it was kind of a good thing because the next day, one person of that station got sick, so they asked me to keep helping in that area.

So, yes it was a good thing that the day before I got to see a little bit of how they do the things so I could help them. I must say that it's not that complicated when the kitchen is so well organized and everyone at the Castle was so nice and willing to answer my questions.

What surprised me the most about this kitchen, was the way that they store their production; in any other kitchen, vacuum bags are used, and plastic containers are often thrown away, here they use glass jars.

At first, when I opened the fridge and I saw all the glass jars, my first thought was "dangerous"; I mean, of course you must be more careful, but I think that it's totally worth it. The amount of plastic that you save by doing that, is really amazing.



Back in Italy, I remember that we were talking about the green stars, and how difficult it is for a Michelin restaurant to become sustainable; because of course, a lot of vacuum bags are used but after seeing this, it's clear to me that everything is possible if you really set it as a goal. Of course, vacuum bags are still used for some specific things, but the amount was incredibly reduced.

The techniques, the way they work, the dishes... everything is different in each kitchen, and it is very rewarding to be able to see all these differences.

I got to taste many dishes at Schloss Schauenstein and as expected, they were fantastic.

I spent New Year's Eve there and it was for sure the perfect way to end the year and to start the next one.





Stucki.
Basel, Switzerland.
From 03-01-2023 to 28-01-2023

Since I wanted to apply to the Uccelin program I read a little bit about Tanja Grandits, how their plates are and her philosophy in the kitchen; so when I got accepted, I took my time to read the other Uccelin programs that were online (the ones that were in English, of course), and everyone said the same about Stucki and the people that work there: that it was one of their best restaurant experiences and that people there were really nice.

In every kitchen that I have been, it has been very different; some are stricter, others are more easy-going, but never something like Stucki.

People there have fun while they're working, they keep the environment very lively and friendly. It's not that people are not friendly in other restaurants, but it's hard to explain; in Stucki it feels like when you are with your whole family and your cousins are having fun with each other and your uncle (Chef Marco) joins with a joke and then the whole family starts laughing; and all of that without stop being a 2 Michelin Star Restaurant.

I started my first week in the *Garde manger* station with Marlene (*the chef the partie*) and Xaver. I really enjoyed working with them; they were extremely friendly and gave me a good welcome. The days went incredibly fast: when I realized the first two weeks were already gone. I talked to Marco to see if I could change to pastry for the rest of my apprenticeship and he told me that there shouldn't be any problem, but he would speak with Chef Julian.

I arrived on Tuesday at 9:00am as usual, and during the morning, Xaver had an accident: he cut himself and he had to go the hospital, nothing serious thank god; but he was not going to be able to work for a week, so I stayed to help Marlene for another week, which was one of the best weeks, except for the fact that Xaver was not with us.

Next week, Xaver was going to be back, and I wanted to ask again for a change to pasty, but something happened during the weekend. Marlene hurt her knee, and she was not going to be able to work for quite a while, so I decided not to mention the pastry change and stay with Xaver during my last week.





Of course without Marlene, things were a little bit more stressing, but we had a good team: we were Xaver, Nicole, Yanick and me. We did what we already knew how to do, and we helped each other.

Last week went faster than the others because of all the things that we had to do, so we didn't even realize until it was already Saturday night, the last service for me.

I have learned a lot of things during this program, but what I think makes Stucki stand out (besides their beautiful plates based in colors and smells), is that they really have found a balance and they manage to keep it.





Conclusion:

As it was expected, this journey had a little bit of everything, just like any other good story and I can't believe It's almost done; time goes very fast.

I am very happy and thankful with Fundaziun Uccelin not only for making my dream of being part of the Uccelin Family (and all that that entails) come true, but it's also because of them that I got to fulfill other dreams: like traveling alone, the chance of visiting the *Reffetorio* Milan, which meant a lot to me, and I was also able to travel to Venice while I was in Osteria Francescana; something I have always wanted to do since I was a little girl. So thank you for making not only one but many of my dreams come true.

I take a lot from this experience: traveling around the world, working in different places, getting to know a lot of people, listening to a lot of passionate people talk about what they love, making connections with different persons and exchanging ideas with them and, of course, learning from the best has been unreal.

I have learned a lot during my time here, but the most invaluable lesson are all the different mindsets and ways of working from every different place that I visited; from my point of view, this will help me be the person that I want to become: the story telling from Osteria Francescana, the passion and love for the process of their product from every producer, the caring of the planet of Olearia San Giorgio; not forgetting to enjoy every second of your work from Stucki, to be constant, strict, persevering and disciplined; but also to be able to transmit that passion to others so it can be transformed into a string.

Uccelin Journey is almost done but what I learned from it will continue.