



## press release

### Tante Fichte Speiselokal

The Tante Fichte Speiselokal is a neighborhood restaurant with gourmet standards that opened in March 2021 on Fichtestraße in Kreuzberg. Together with restaurant manager Viktoria Kniely and head chef Dominik Matokanovic, owner Michael Köhle presents a very personal kitchen that combines the best regional products with influences from Croatian cuisine. But of course, in Tante Fichte's restaurant, it's not just about food, wine is also a key topic - the majority of the roughly 650 items come from Germany, Austria and France, but there are also wines from the rest of Europe and new world represented. In order to showcase this diversity, the restaurant also has a small wine bar and a wonderful terrace in addition to the main dining room. At small tables in front of the terrace or inside at the wine bar, mainly wines by the glass are served and small snacks are offered under the motto "Tante Fichte on the sidewalk". A private dining room for up to 14 people in the back of the restaurant completes the offer. Stiff manners do not exist here - instead, you are welcome to laugh loudly and often, because enjoyment and joie de vivre are very important. And yet only trained professionals who have learned their craft from scratch operate in Tante Fichte's. The common goal for everyone involved is clear: to create a comfortable place where everyone can relax and enjoy. If you prefer to experience this in your own four walls, you can order down-to-earth favorite dishes in the Tante Fichte online shop, which are prepared with a lots of love.

### Kitchen

Dominik Matokanovic, who was born in Westphalia, has been responsible for the kitchen since the restaurant opened. And at Tante Fichte, he presents dishes with character, based on the classic French techniques of his training and combining the best regional products with influences from Croatia. Of course, this is no coincidence as the family of chef Dominik Matokanovic is originally come from Croatia. From countless vacations, Matokanovic knows above all the traditional village cuisine of the East, which is strongly influenced by Austria and Hungary. And it shaped him so much that individual components of this kitchen flow into his creations today. At the same time, Dominik prefers to use the products that are available to him from the area around Berlin - because this is where he calls home since 2016.

He prefers to buy vegetables from Peter Janoth in Brandenburg, meat from "Beefhunter" Nils Czaja, grains, eggs, milk and fruit from Ökohof Kuhhorst and fish from Fischhandlung Sattelberg-Pelikan. But Dominik has a special weakness for everything homemade: He basically makes bread and all other pastries, ice cream and sometimes cheese himself. Anything that can be pickled is also pickled: these are mainly blossoms, herbs and vegetables. Much of it comes from the Spreewald, where restaurant manager Viktoria Kniely goes foraging or visits our very own herb garden on her days off. Incidentally, the 32-year-old chef trained at the Bayerischer Hof in Munich. Further stations were the BMW world (Bobby Bräuer), the restaurant Le Deux (Johann Rappenglück and Fabrice Kieffer) as well as the Fischers Fritz (Christian Lohse) and the SAVU (Sauli Kempainen). Dominik has been in Tante Fichte's restaurant since March 2021 and presents his thoroughly personal cuisine there. Dominik wants to convey a feeling of home with his dishes - and for him, apart from Berlin, that is definitely Croatia.

### Wine

Michael Köhle and Viktoria Kniely are equally responsible for the selection of wines listed. The two experienced sommeliers maintain a very dynamic wine menu with around 650 items - most of the wines come from Western Europe, but there are also selected wines from Eastern Europe and the New World. Both have a special passion for Riesling and wines from France, mainly from the Loire and Burgundy. Treasures from the Domaines de la Romanée-Conti, Clos Rougeard and Vincent Girardin can therefore also be found on the map. In addition, Köhle and Kniely attach great

importance to a certain vintage depth and variety when selecting the wines. In order to achieve both, they like to work with a wide variety of retailers and wineries. Everything is allowed in Tante Fichte's restaurant, as long as it tastes good, is well-crafted and meets the quality standards of the two hosts. It can be down-to-earth or classic, tenacious or a wild. In the end, it is always the recognizable terroir that decides – because Köhle and Kniely want guests to be able to taste exactly who made the wine and where it is from. The Tante Fichte team also pays special attention to non-alcoholic beverages. And so, you will also find homemade herbal extracts, kombucha, kefir and more on the menu.

## Setting

Many Berliners and visitors are familiar with Kreuzberg's Fichtestraße thanks to the city's oldest gas tank, which is located directly opposite the restaurant. The street itself is a calm residential street with cobblestones and many well-kept old buildings. Tante Fichte restaurant is also located in one of exactly those. In the basement of number 31, Michael Köhle, Viktoria Kniely and Dominik Matokanovic welcome their guests. The inviting dining room impresses with a stylish interior: white-painted brick walls, beautiful arches and wallpaper by Graham Brown convey calm and relaxation. Selected works of art by Nelson Jamal and Michail Fanghaenel set skillful accents in combination with the accent chandeliers from Massifcentral. Comfortable chairs and tables made of solid oak, specially made for the restaurant, in combination with crockery from Hering Berlin, MiteraGi and other smaller manufacturers as well as glasses from Zalto and Josephinenhütte, convey a high-quality feel-good atmosphere. Here you can sit well and for a long time without being distracted by too much design and other frills. The wine bar can accommodate up to six guests. Ideal for enjoying a good glass of wine or two and a snack in the early evening or late at night. A maximum of 14 guests can sit together in the private dining room and enjoy together at the solid wooden table from the Bauholz Möbelmanufaktur FraaiBerlin. The team at Tante Fichte's restaurant has developed special group offers for this. In summer, the terrace, which is framed by hedges, invites you to spend relaxing evenings under the awning.

## Team

Tante Fichte restaurant is three well known personalities from the German gastronomic world: Michael Köhle, Viktoria Kniely and Dominik Matokanovic.

**Owner** Michael Köhle opened the restaurant in March 2021. The 36-year-old from Southern Germany grew up at Lake Constance, where his family runs a hotel and restaurant in the second generation. As the eldest of three boys, he spent time in the kitchen, at the bar or in the guest rooms as part of his everyday life. The hotel was his home – the passion for his job was practically innated. So, after graduating from high school, he went to hotel school for a year. He completed his (very traditional) apprenticeship as restaurant specialist at the privately run Colombi Hotel in Freiburg – a five-star Leading Hotel of the World. He later went to Speisemeisterei restaurant in Stuttgart, where he met the sommèlier Magdalena Brandstätter and dealt more intensively with the subject of wine. From there he moved to Hotel Bareiss, where sommèlier Jürgen Fendt also took him under his wing and Köhle gradually climbed the career ladder. At The Ritz-Carlton, Berlin, he was responsible for the wine lists of all the restaurants and bars for the first time as head sommèlier. He also worked as a sommèlier and deputy restaurant manager at the Berlin restaurant Hugos, where he spent a total of five years. In 2014, the leap into self-employment followed and the founding of the restaurant Herz & Niere in Fichtestraße in Kreuzberg together with a business partner. After the restaurant closed at the end of 2020, Köhle opened the Tante Fichte Speiselokal in March 2021 in the same place. In addition to his duties as the owner, he is particularly involved with the subjects of wine and being the host.

**Restaurant manager** Viktoria Kniely has been with Michael Köhle for more than ten years. The two restaurateurs met in the Berlin restaurant Hugos, where Kniely worked as chef de rang and commis sommèlier. The native Austrian, who studied tourism at the tourism school in Bad Gleichenberg, previously worked in the luxurious Hotel Almhof Schneider and in the Restorante Colon on Mallorca. As restaurant manager, she accompanied the Herz & Niere Restaurant right from the start. As the host at Tante Fichte's restaurant, Kniely takes care of all areas of the guest room and the topic of wine. The 32-year-old also has another passion: in her free time, Kniely goes to Spreewald whenever possible to collect

herbs and spices. What doesn't grow wild, she grows in a small urban farm at her home. And so almost every week she brings sprouts, wild herbs, mushrooms and other seasonal treasures to Tante Fichte's restaurant, where Dominik Matokanovic ferments, pickles or directly processes the precious treasures.

**Chef** Dominik Matokanovic has already had an impressive career at the age of 32: Matokanovic completed his training at the Bayerischer Hof in Munich. From there we went to see Bobby Breuer in BMW World, where Matokanovic "started from scratch again". Because Breuer recognized the talent of the young up-and-coming chef, but also saw weaknesses that they left behind in various years together. Matokanovic then used his newly gained experience in the Munich restaurant Le Deux with Johann Rappenglück and Fabrice Kieffer. From Munich he went to Berlin in 2016 - a decision made from his heart, because the capital had long been his first adopted home. Once there, Matokanovic was hired by Christian Lohse at Fischers Fritz and finally by Sauli Kempainen at SAVU. Since March 2021, Matokanovic has been head chef at Tante Fichte's restaurant.