

Smørrebrød

Open Faced Sandwich

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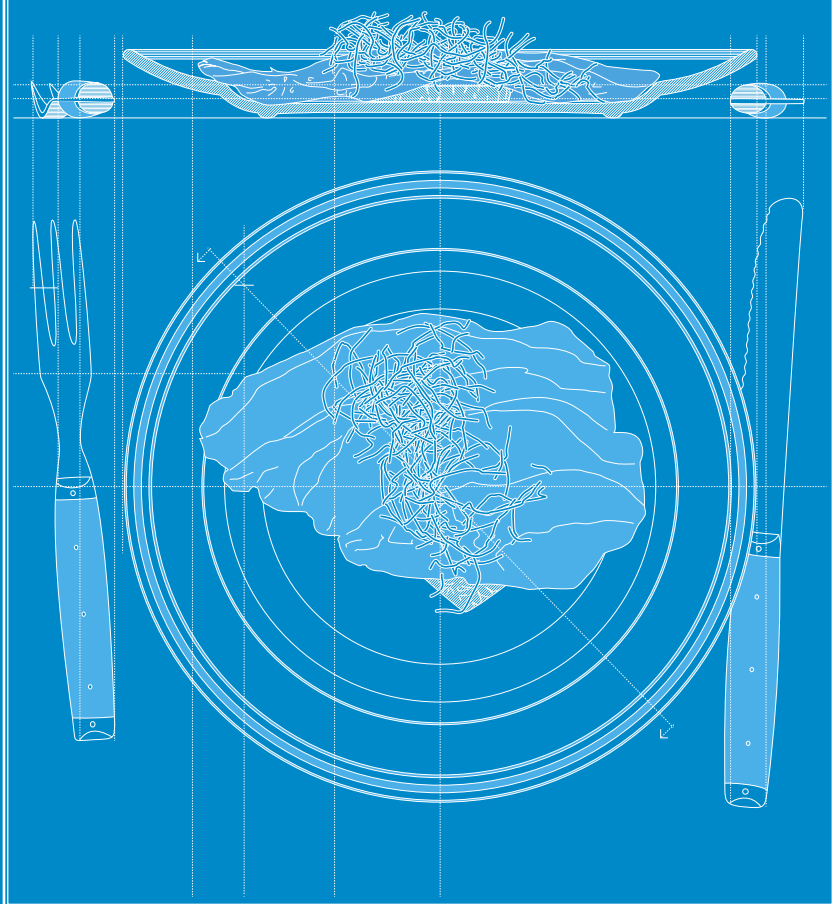
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SMØRREBRØD



Smørrebrød

Open Faced Sandwich

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Introduction

This little book is dedicated to students and teachers at the Gastronomic University of Bra, whom in the early summer of 2012 are visiting Center for Food Science, Design & Experience at Aalborg University, where a number of courses in Food+Design is held.

We have chosen to serve a "stjernesnud" to start of the days that we are going to spend together. By this overwhelming piece of "smørrebrød" we want to introduce the Danish cuisine before we are moving on to lectures, workshops and field trips to eminent food manufacturers and dining places in the Northern Jutland.

It is with great pleasure that we have been giving permission to print some of the architect Mogens Brandt Poulsen's beautiful hand drawings of "smørrebrød". An incredibly elegant inspiration and introduction to this very special segment of the Danish food culture we know as "smørrebrød" – or if one tries to translate; "open sandwich".

The Danish food culture includes, in our opinion, all kinds of food that is eaten in Denmark; and we have incredible food products in Denmark. From farmers, fishermen and food manufacturers a stream of products travels through fish and vegetable markets, meat packing districts, fresh product terminals and supermarkets to peoples' homes, restaurants, canteens etc. Here the products become dishes, which on the tables becomes meals. Most of them are everyday food, but some ends up as sublime culinary creations, and it is all these varied streams of food that express our food culture.

Through the research and development activities originated at Food+Design, we concentrate our focus to strengthen the Danish food culture. We focus on how the Danish food culture is created through the interaction of products, tools, recipes, processes, rules, laws, assets, traditions, imaginations, knowledge, skills etc. Our climate, history, religion, aesthetic, morale, politics, economy, power relations, technology, knowledge and education shape the Danish food culture. In this tremendous "puzzle" of dishes, regional as national, we find the unique Danish "smørrebrød" which we put a special focus on here.

The origin of the "smørrebrød" is historically departing from the demand of eating outside your home. Even in ancient time it was necessary for shepherds, farmers and hunters, who in the middle of the day could be far from their settlement, to supplement their two main daily meals with a bite of bread, consisting of "madder", which can be designated by the contemporary word "smørrebrød".

Especially Danish, is the decorated and high-piled "festive-smørrebrød", which was developed by the ending of the 18th century. This is one of the only things

from the Danish cuisine, which is known outside of the countries borders. In the 1880's small "smørrebrøds"-restaurants launched in Copenhagen, and the oldest known menu-card containing "smørrebrød" is from the restaurant Nimb in Tivoli from 1883. Different classical varieties of "smørrebrød" even have names: "Sun over Gudhjem", which is rye bread, smoked herring, chive or onions topped with a raw egg yolk. Another one, "The veterinary's midnight snack", is a piece of rye bread with liver paté, a slice of salted meat, onion rings topped with a slice of meat sapic. Then of course there is the "stjernesnud". A "stjernesnud" or a piece of "stjernesnud" is a fish dish on bread. A special piece of "smørrebrød" with several kinds of fish and/or shellfish, often arranged on white bread, a little salad, some slices of tomato, breaded plaice fillet, steamed plaice fillet, shrimps and caviar. "Tout Paris" (all of Paris) as the dish also is called originally, was a light fish dish containing eel, halibut, lobster and cod in puff paste.

In Denmark we often define "smørrebrød" as bread, buttered with butter, fat or margarine and/or covered with one or several types of cold cuts, which makes up a meal or a part of one. One of them who made Danish "smørrebrød" famous around the world was wine merchant and restaurateur Oskar Davidsen who became famous for his "smørrebrøds menu" which contained 178 kinds of "smørrebrød", a list that measured 1,4 meters in total length. The tradition is ongoing in the family, where the 5th generation of Oskar Davidsen is in charge of the lunch restaurant. The restaurant today is named after his mother Ida Davidsen, whom still rules the kitchen, and who you can read about in this little book.

But let us have a look on the word culture, because originally it has something to do with food. It is derived from the Latin word: "cultura", which include cultivation of crops and breeding pets. This meaning was transferred to the earlier European languages and is still in use today. The French anthropologist, ethnologist and philosopher Claude Lévi-Strauss' analysis of simple relationships is not at least a demonstration of how people often thinks in food categories and how people in different cultures thinks differently with the same food categories.

Is it possible to make "smørrebrød" scientific? It is a characteristic that some languages contain series of onomatopoeically words to express the texture of food, the smell, the taste and consistency. These words are extremely important to the understanding of food. Lévi-Strauss define from his observations a diachronic contra a synchronic conceptual explanation around the, often complex, parts of the foods composition for the meal. In structuralism and semiotic, diachronic is the study of structural alterations over time, and synchronic is the study of a structure on a given historical time. In European food traditions from the 17th, 18th and the early 19th century are these conceptions highly represented. Haute Cuisine is primarily a kitchen of representation. Focus was not on the subtlety

of the taste, but on a show-off presentation based on quantity, rareness and presentation. The meals were in turn soups, entrées, roast dishes and desserts. It was not as much the quantity in the number of dishes that astonished, but the placement of the dishes. There was no hesitation by serving a pâté as an entremets and sweet dishes as an entrée.

The meals, in a Lévi-Strauss terminology, are thereby both diachronic and synchronic. That means, you had more dishes, diachronic, but these dishes contained many smaller elements, side dishes, which were served and consumed simultaneously, synchronic.

The synchronic element has almost disappeared through time, but it still exists in some places like in Russia. Here you do not only serve an amount of cold dishes simultaneously, but also all drinks: dry wine, sweet wine, beer and vodka, cognac and champagne. All is consumed more or less simultaneously.

Here I would like to state, that the Danish "smørrebrød" has a synchronic and a diachronic part, but separated. Ida Davidsen has among many others created the piece of "smørrebrød": "The firemans midnight snack", where vegetables, meat and salad all meet at one time. Also the piece "The female cook's midnight snack". Both pieces are represented in the book "Om smørrebrød jeg ved" from 1998. "The female cook's midnight snack" is, with its diachronic composition: sausage, cheese, vegetables and jam, at the same time the side dishes synchronisms. Such details are important, because they indicate the philosophy of life that characterizes a culture.

In this little book we have asked outstanding Danish personalities, who is occupied with "smørrebrød", to give a peek into this world of Danish food culture. And with a little help from chef Klausen in Hune we have chosen to serve and conceptualize a "Stjernesud".

Buon appetito!

Anna Marie Fisker



foto: Mathias Sønderskov Nielsen

Ida Davidsen

No one has done so much to preserve the Danish "smørrebrød" and the tradition connected to this very precious gastronomical piece of Danish culinary history. The house of Davidsen was founded in 1888 by Ida Davidsen's great-grand-father. She became "smørrebrødsjomfru" already at the age of 15. The restaurant with a list of 178 different types of "smørrebrød" is in fact one of Copenhagen's most famous restaurants, being visited by ministers, queens, kings and movie stars. Several types of "smørrebrød" are named after famous Danish people like crown prince Frederik, former minister of foreign affairs Uffe Ellemann Jensen and world famous comedian Victor Borge. Ida Davidsen is still going strong, although daily manager of the restaurant is her son Oscar Davidsen.

Ida Davidsen believes that "smørrebrød" has something to give international gastronomy and she has proudly represented Danish traditional cuisine on several international occasions, for example when ministers have visited colleagues and the royal house of Denmark have been to foreign countries.

Ida Davidsen is also a strong believer – "it is important to take "smørrebrød" seriously – I have been worried by the loss of knowledge and handicrafts about "smørrebrød". It seems to me that the education for "smørrebrødsjomfru" needs a review. Everybody wants to become a chef today – it has higher status, but "smørrebrødsjomfrus" are keepers of a very precious, Danish tradition", she says. In 1998 she published the cookbook Om "smørrebrød"et jeg ved (about "smørrebrød" I know) with a collection of recipes from the restaurant.

Ida Davidsen urge us to focus on good bread. Rye bread is the foundation of good "smørrebrød" and although it actually in physical size plays a minor role in "smørrebrød", you need the sour taste and the structure and texture of the rye bread to play with meats, seafood or toppings. The colour of green is also very important according to Ida Davidsen. Salad, cucumber or herbs is good for both taste and also for the aesthetics of "smørrebrød". It brings nature into the dish and green is good for the soul, she says.

Making "smørrebrød" is also preserving some of the methods that the Nordic countries have been using for thousands of years – methods like smoking, pickling and salting to conserve food. The very strong flavors you get from these methods, demand strong toppings, but also knowledge of counter balance. Seasons and vegetables is more important than most Danes would imagine. "smørrebrød" is famous to most Danes for an excess of meat, but Ida Davidsen is actually keener on vegetables for "smørrebrød". Presentation is also very important. "We serve our "smørrebrød" on white plates to present the "smørrebrød" in the best possible way – "smørrebrød" has a lot of different colors and must be and look fresh as most "smørrebrød" are being served cold.



foto: Bjørn Jakobsen

Adam Aamann

Adam Aamann has not revolutionized "smørrebrød", but he has single handed renewed the tradition and put "smørrebrød" in the same league or group as traditional French bistro food and Italian trattoria food.

Sometime during the 20th century, excess took over. Economic growth in the 50's and 60's upon rationing during the 2nd World War had the influence in food that nothing was too much. "smørrebrød" in its modern version was created during this period and excess was part of the aesthetic expression.

Adam Aamann opened his take-away and lunch restaurant in 2006 and even made a cookbook which turned some heads at that time. "smørrebrød" suffered from industrial meat, spreads and badly made bread, but Adam Aamann urged the reader and the consumer to look at each part of the piece of "smørrebrød" and prepare it by hand or to find top quality suppliers. He also dissected each part of the "smørrebrød" to look at sensory relevance.

During the time of excess in the 50's and 60's several quite odd toppings were invented, like orange on pork or huge amounts of mayonnaise on top of meat or egg. Adam Aamann actually discovered, that some of the odd toppings in lightly changed versions could have sensory relevance, and he integrated these parts in his aesthetical quite renewed versions of "smørrebrød". "Denmark is a country originally based on agricultural success on export markets. You can say that we have a tendency for excess, because we have been used to poor conditions. Traditional "smørrebrød" is what I call a meet tsunami, and I wanted to change that", says Adam Aamann.

In architecture and design Denmark is famous for functionalism and versions of what the architects call the Nordic line or style. Simplicity is a key word and excess is banned. This phenomenon was not the guideline for "smørrebrød", but Adam Aamann wanted to combine these two elements, the simple fine aesthetics of the Nordic countries and locally based base materials and handicrafts in "smørrebrød". In this perspective "smørrebrød" becomes a very central part of the global focus on New Nordic Cuisine. "I could easily have used coriander or mangoes or high-tech methods involving molecular gastronomy, but I believe, that the Danish nature has its own highly aromatic herbs and vegetables, and I wanted to show that good old-fashioned chefs knowledge was the best way to prepare honest "smørrebrød", says Adam Aamann.

He ends with central point: it is called "smørrebrød", not Danish Open or open-faced sandwich... dammit, it's Danish, so please call it "smørrebrød"!"



foto: Claes Bec-Poulsen

Mogens Brandt

The architect falls in love with "smørrebrød". Mogens Brandt Poulsen is an architect and was employed at the School of Architecture in Århus in 1972. He has been there for many years and has managed several exhibitions containing drawings and sketches and especially managed exhibitions on architecture.

Mogens Brandt Poulsen is one of Denmark's leading experts in measurement. He has managed the measuring of 11 Icelandic historical churches. One of the standard subjects in the Danish education to become an architect is measuring – the ability to make a precise drawing of a building stating the measures of length, height and breadth is in fact a speciality of Danish architects. Historical buildings bound for renovation and reconstruction is being measured in every possible way and the visual expression, the drawing with fonts, lines and measures has its own aesthetics.

Usually the measurement is considered a small piece of artwork in itself. That is why Mogens Brandt Poulsen suggested, that a resigning local manager of the school's canteen should have a measurement of Danish "smørrebrød", a piece with shrimps. And when the fuzz about such a ridiculous suggestion had calmed, everybody thought about it and understood, that it could be a good idea and very special gift. Now Mogens Brandt Poulsen was forced to solve his own challenge. The result speaks for itself. And since 1975, the year of the first drawing, Mogens Brandt Poulsen has done 15 small artworks on "smørrebrød". The drawings represent visual and skilled repetitions of some of the most Danish gastronomy there is. Dyrlægens Natmad ("the veterinary's midnight snack"), a piece with eggs and caviar and salted beef with horseraddich is one of the classics Mogens Brandt Poulsen has measured.

He says about the project: "it is a very Danish method, a tool used on a very Danish dish. You could say, that "smørrebrød" is a small piece of artwork in itself, but it has to follow tradition, to use the traditional toppings and method of cooking. I find it very interesting that "smørrebrød" has its own set aesthetics, I am not allowed to destroy a originality – it's all about modifying elements gently and especially about craftsmanship... a craftsmanship threatened by extinction. That attracts my interest", says Mogens Brandt Poulsen. He is convinced that "smørrebrød" can stand being measured, and that the drawing is full of meaning and beauty.

The project actually has aspects of national interest, of conserving an almost lost craftsmanship. It might even show the chefs and "smørrebrødsjomfruer" what beauty there is in "smørrebrød", and give them inspiration for reinventing and interpreting "smørrebrød" in the future.

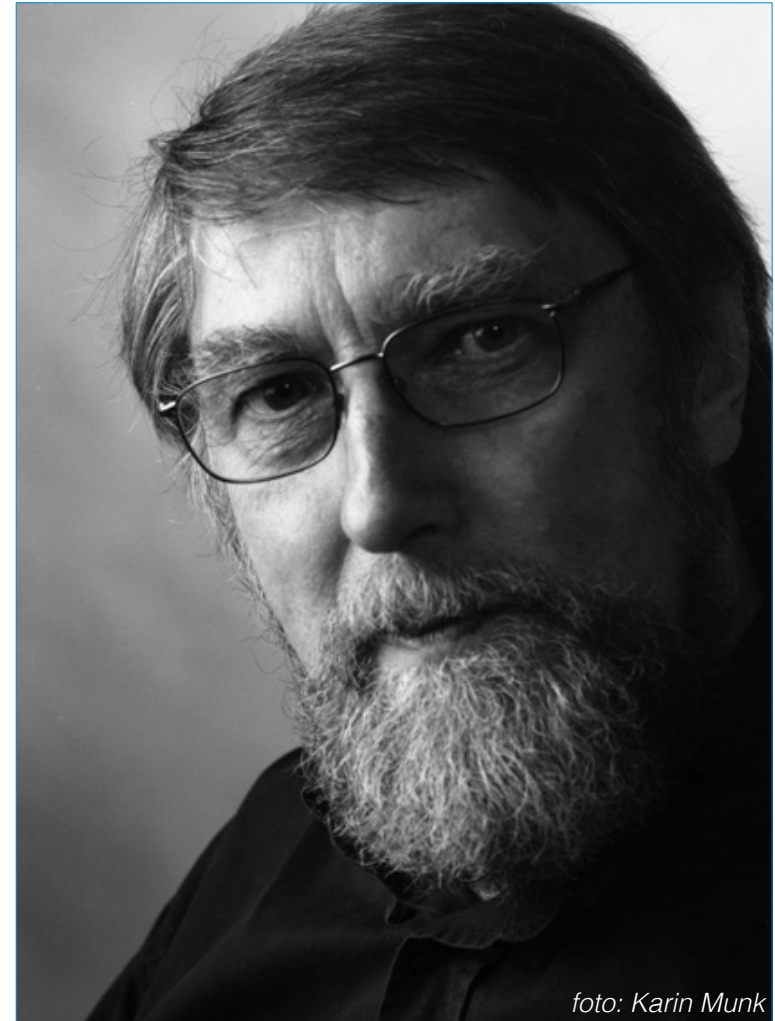
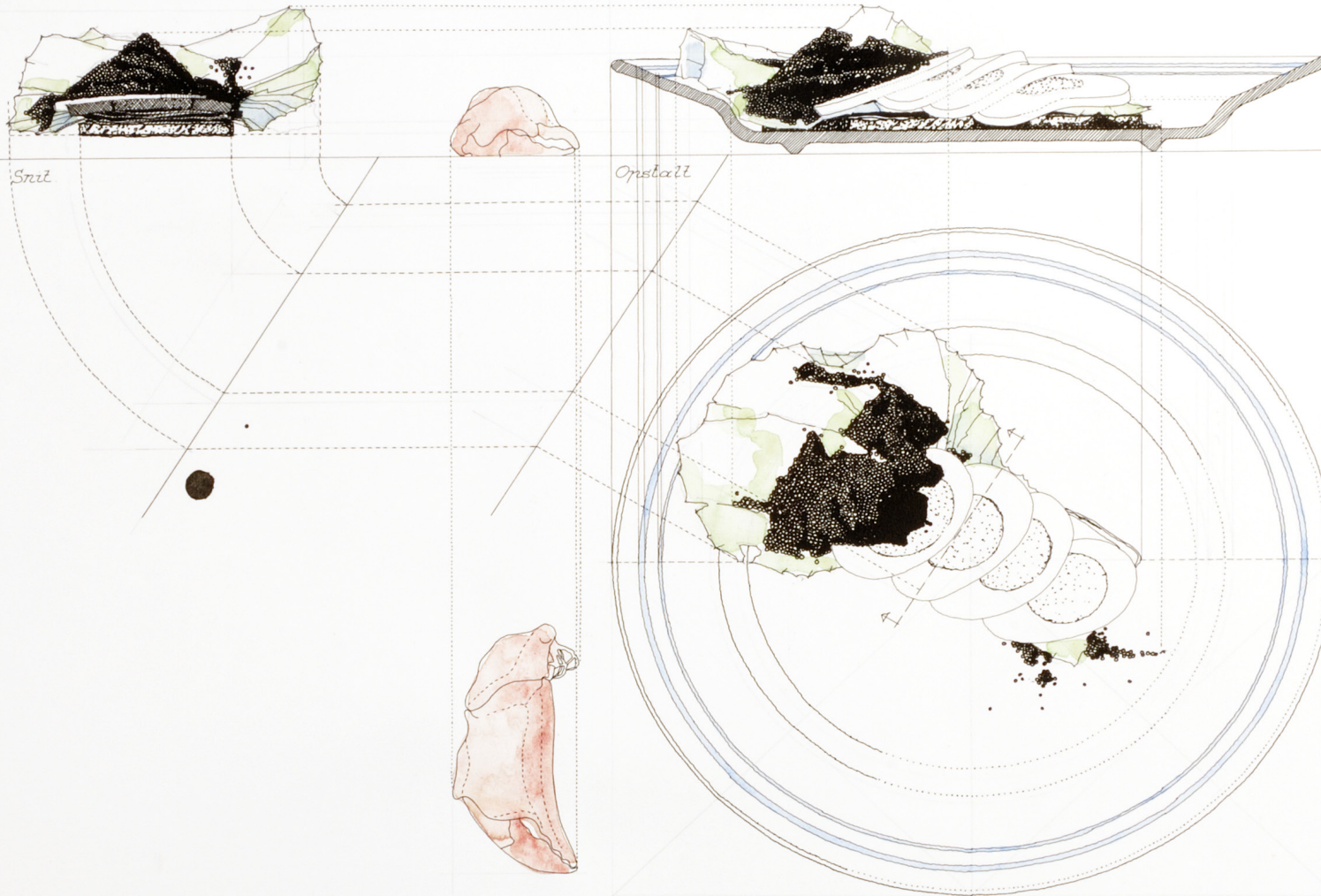


foto: Karin Munk

Rugbrød: Hjemmebagt fra bageren i Hårboøre
 Æg: 4 skiver af kvalitet kl. A. Store Danøeg 65-70 Gr. (vægtklasse 2.)
 Kaviar: Danish Queen. Sandvad og Co.

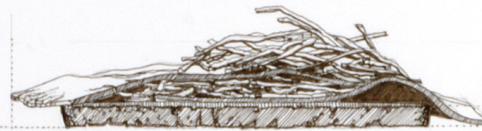


Plan af et stykke groft rugbrød med æg og kaviar

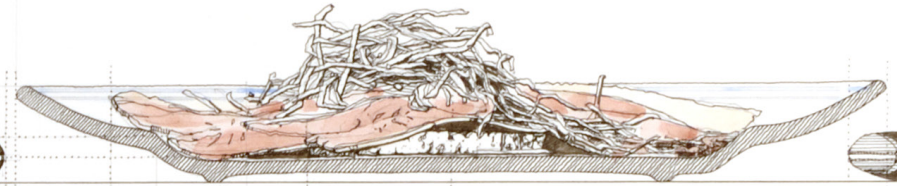
Maal 1:1.

Opmåling udført i Langerhuse 2. juli 83. Renlegning Århus 9. sep. 83.

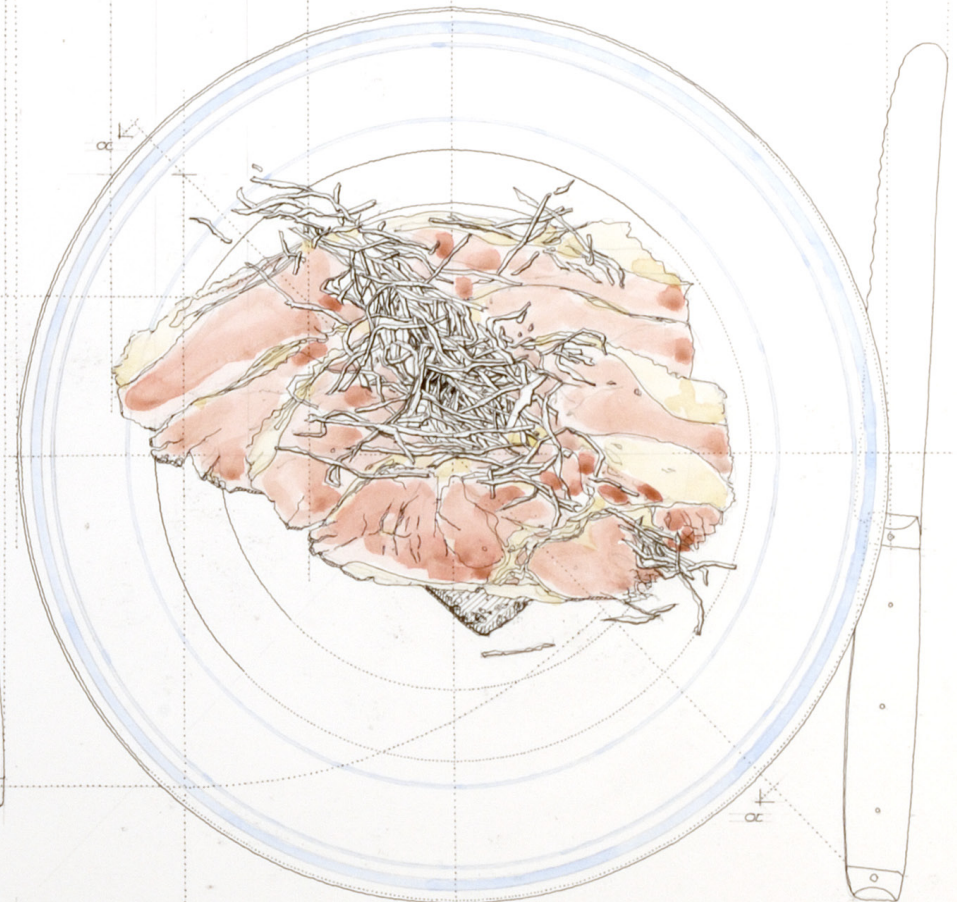
Opmåling af et halvt stykke rugbrød med sprængt oksebryst med revet peberrod.
 Langerhuse den 7. 7. 85. Mål 1:1.
 Oksebryst: Slagtermester Brø, Harbøre.
 Peberrod: Carlsen's høvlet peberrod. (sidste salgsdato 03.09.85)
 Rugbrød: Karins hjemmegøgle.



Snit a-a.



Opstalt.



Plan af et stykke smørrebrød. Oksebryst med peberrod. Mål 1:1.

Katrine Klinken

Katrine Klinken is one of Denmark's most famous chefs and most eager food writers. She has published several cookbooks, especially for children. One of her books is "smørrebrød" (2007). This book renews the tradition for "smørrebrød" and inspires the reader especially to focus on good bread, quality meat, spread and seafood. Seasons is also given priority.

Katrine Klinken is focused on daily food and does not consider "smørrebrød" as something fashionable. Katrine Klinken wants to keep local culinary tradition, but tries to renew with caution. "It is very important to learn to cook, when you are a child, but on the other hand you can learn all life", she says. "A great deal of our food culture can be labeled "fast, cheap and easy" and most people miss tasty experiences and also social contact in this modern version of preparing and eating food". That is why Katrine Klinken now is very active in Slow Food and she is the spokesperson for the Danish convivia.

She is convinced that "smørrebrød" is globally unique. "Nowhere else do you see rye bread as sole basis for either simple meat or more advanced and elaborated toppings", she says. Katrine Klinken consider "smørrebrød" to have gastronomic potential. "smørrebrød" can be considered as every other dish and can give sensory experiences. It has to be harmonic like all other dishes. "Every part of the "smørrebrød" can be lifted qualitatively, the bread, the spread and even the selection of salads or toppings", Katrine says and proceed "smørrebrød" is so Danish, based on bread from the Nordic grain rye and elaborated on the basis of simple agricultural food, slices of bread with butter or fat.

Sometime during industrialization in the late 1800th economic growth pushed forward an expression of excess – that was institutionalized with the creation of an education to "smørrebrødsjomfru" ("smørrebrød" virgin [sic]). Katrine Klinken urge us to consider every parts relevance in "smørrebrød" and to think on aesthetics when creating a piece of "smørrebrød".

Recent renewal of "smørrebrød" has been led by chefs and not the traditional creators of "smørrebrød", the virgins. However Katrine Klinken is not focusing on who takes the next culinary step in "smørrebrød", but only on keeping the special tradition, and to renew with a sense of place and culture.



foto: Jeppe Carlsen

Mogens Klausen

- The making of a “Stjernes kud” (Shooting star)

He is a living piece of artwork. Mogens Klausen, who runs his business in the small village of Hune in Northern Jutland, might intimidate somebody with his tatoos. However he is calm, focused and very innovative and is not at all a bully.

His store and restaurant serves tons of fish and shellfish to tourists, Danes, Scandinavians and Germans not to forget choosy or even fastidious Italian and French gastronomes. The specialities are among a lot of dishes, smoked salmon, smoked mackerel and one of the most famous types of “smørrebrød”, “stjernes kudet” (shooting star).

All the smoked fish is handmade, and Mogens Klausen's customers arrive from everywhere to join a success. The business was started only in 2009 after nine years of selling fish from a car. Mogens Klausen has invented the heather, smoked salmon and is now expanding the business to markets abroad.



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Place salad leaves on a plate, preferably a mix of bay leaves, bitter salads and herbs like chives, chervil and parsley. Place a grilled slice of wheat bread on top – it is best for the final result, that the crust is not too hard.



Take two or three filets of plaice according to size. If you want to make the “stjernes kud” better, use a filet of lemon sole or sole for the steamed part. Take one or two filets and dip them in a battered egg. Thereafter dip in rye flour.

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Roast one or two filets in butter in a frying pan until dark golden and crispy. Role the last filet and steam it in a little water or white wine until it is just cooked.



Place the filets on top of the bread.

22



Top again with homemade mayonnaise and thousand island dressing.

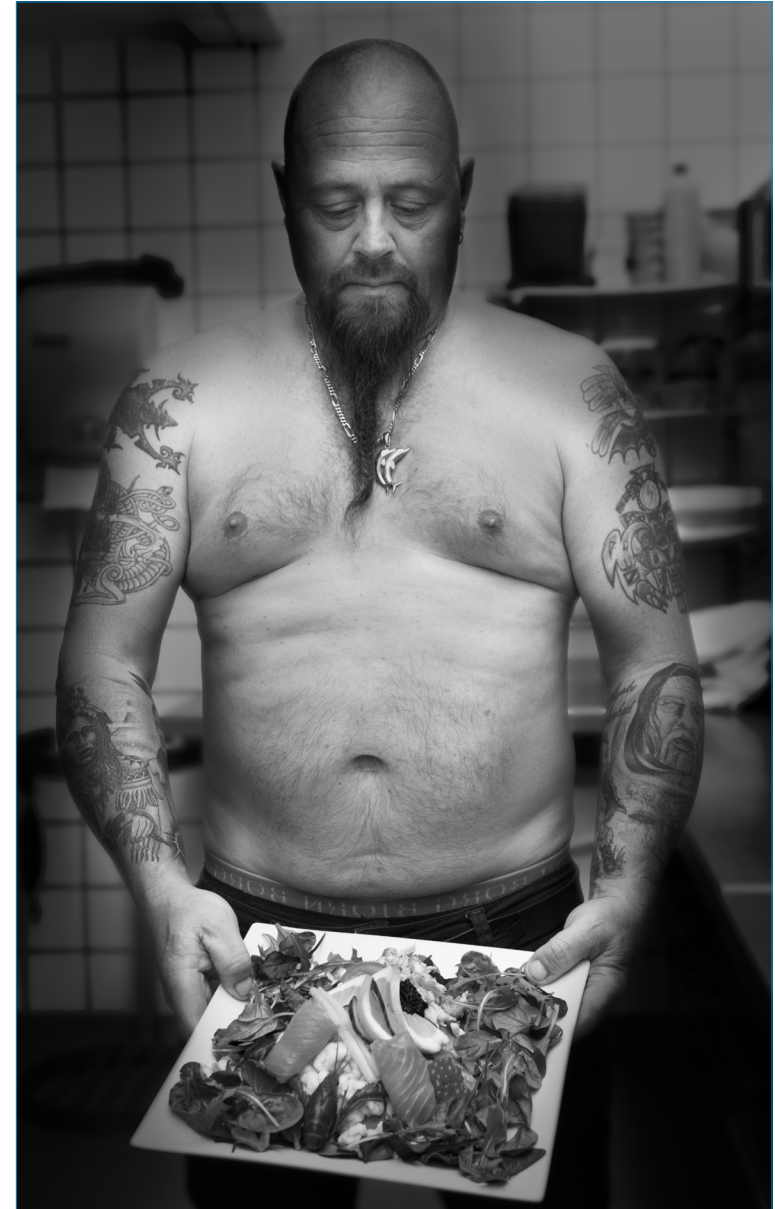


Top with a good handful of freshly, peeled shrimps and 2-3 roles of smoked salmon. You can also add crayfish.

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On top of everything place slices of lemon and cucumber, tomatoes and a tablespoon of roe from lumpfish, trout or salmon.





OPEN FACED SANDWICH




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