

# Three Stars

A film by  
**Lutz Hachmeister**

**94 minutes; German, Dutch, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, English & French  
w/English subtitles; Digital; 16:9; Stereo; 2010; Documentary**



## **FIRST RUN FEATURES**

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*"Most captivating!" – Mike Sula, Chicago Reader*

*"Another welcome addition to the smorgasbord of approaches to documenting the endlessly fascinating process of how food is prepared!" – Ray Pride, New City (Chicago)*

## **Synopsis**

*Three Stars* depicts the daily drama of life in the world's finest restaurants including exclusive interviews and intimate access to some of the world's most talented chefs as they work in their gastronomic laboratories, hunt for exquisite ingredients in local markets and gather rare edible plants along rough coastlines. Hachmeister's camera reveals the kitchen rituals of these culinary mavericks, probing their varying food philosophies that embrace the highest convictions on molecular gastronomy and innovation alongside the exaltation and embodiment of local ingredient sourcing and traditional cuisine. The Chefs include Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Chef of *Jean George* in New York; René Redzepi, Chef of *Noma* in Copenhagen, Denmark; Yannick Alléno, Chef of *Le Meurice* in Paris; Nadia Santini, Chef of *Dal Pescatore* in Runate, Italy; Olivier Roellinger, Chef of *Les Maisons de Bricourt* in Cancale, France; Sergio Herman, Chef of *Oud Sluis* in Sluis, the Netherlands; Sven Elverfeld, Chef of *Aqua* in Wolfsburg, Germany; Juan Mari and Elena Arzak, Chefs of *Arzak* in San Sebastian, Spain; and, Hideki Ishikawa, Chef of *Ishikawa* in Tokyo. Watch in wonder as these culinary masters perform such gastronomical feats as the deconstruction of a raspberry, the delicate assembly of caviar blinis with salmon cream, decrusting rhubarb baked in a sugar cylinder with the blow of a hammer and the perfecting of a quintessential handmade pasta. With access to the vision, craft and kitchens of some of the most revered chefs in Europe, and with commentary from the powers that be at the Michelin Guide, *Three Stars* is a *non plus ultra* cinematic foodie fantasy experience.

## About the Chefs

### **Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Jean-Georges (New York)**

Jean-Georges Vongerichten has 15 plus restaurants to his name and a family legacy following in his footsteps. A chef with three-star Michelin training, Vongerichten comes from a strong-willed Alsatian background with a culinary history. Early exposure to Asian flavors in Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Singapore have been influential to Vongerichten's style, which he introduced in 1991 with the restaurant Jo Jo. This restaurant, Vongerichten's first, introduced New Yorkers to his "vibrant cuisine," which creates intense flavors and satisfying textures by substituting traditional meat stocks for vegetable juices, fruit essences, light broths, and herbal vinaigrettes. The restaurant earned three stars from the *New York Times* and was *Esquire's* "Best Restaurant of the Year."

After Jo Jo, Vongerichten he went on to build a veritable empire, adding the Asian-influenced Vong to his eponymous fine-dining flagship, Jean Georges, which opened to in 1997. And he continues to set the standard for sophisticated, progressive fine dining. Recent additions like ABC Kitchen and Perry Street showcase his versatility and skill for culinary expansion. Vongerichten has also penned numerous cookbooks, transcribing everything from his personal style of cooking to his favorite cuisines of the JG empire.

### **Yannick Alléno, Le Meurice (France)**

Le Meurice, part of the Dorchester Collection and run by head Chef Yannick Alléno, was awarded three Michelin stars in February 2007. Alléno started at the hotel in late 2003, and since then food critics and diners have raved about Le Maurice. After his first six months, he achieved a two Michelin star rating. Most recently, Alléno was awarded the title of "espoir," a new Michelin designation for chefs on their way to a glittering third star. The Dorchester Collection is now the only hotel group in the world with 6 Michelin stars in one city (Alain Ducasse at the Plaza Athénée in Paris also holds 3 Michelin Stars). Heading a team of 74 staff, the ambitious chef's mission to re-invent gastronomic cuisine has led the restaurant to the summit of its reputation. Yannick Alléno was also elected "Best Chef of the Year" by *Chef Magazine* in 2008.

#### Timeline:

1984: Graduation from Santos Dumont, a Saint-Cloud high school

1986: Pastry Apprentice, Lutetia Hotel: Head Chef - Jacky Freon

1987: Commis de Cuisine, Royal Monceau Hotel: Head Chef - Gabriel Biscay

1990: Demi-Chef then Chef de Partie, Sofitel Sevres Hotel: Head Chef - Roland Durand then Martial Henguehard

1992: Chef de Partie, Le Meurice: Head Chef - Marc Marchand

1994: Chef Adjoint, Drouant Restaurant: Head Chef - Louis Grondard (MOF 1979)

1999: Chef de Cuisine, Scribe Hotel

Competitions and Distinctions:

1994: Auguste Escoffier International Prize, Nice, 1st Place

1999: Paul Bocuse Trophy, Lyon

Vice Champion du Monde de Cuisine (Bocuse d'Argent)

2007: National Order of Merit

Secretary General of the Academy of Bocuse d'Or Award Winners

Maître Cuisinier de France

**Juan Mari & Elena Arzack, Arzack (Spain)**

Juan Mari Arzack's grandfather, José María, founded the family restaurant that was subsequently run by Juan Mari's father, Juan Ramón. When Juan Ramón died in 1951, his wife and Juan Mari's mother Francisca ran the restaurant, and Juan Mari replaced her in 1967. Juan Mari attended hotel management school in Madrid and trained with a number of French chefs such as Bocuse, Troisgros, Senderens, Boyer, and Arrambide. In Juan Mari's words, what he aims to do is "produce an author's cuisine, with a Basque dimension, green sauce, cod Pil-pil and hake 'kokotchas.' In short, combine traditional cuisine with research and make it avant-garde."

Elena Arzack, daughter of Juan Mari Arzak, developed a love for cooking at an early age. She also went to the hotel management school in Lucerne in Switzerland and then went to train at the top restaurants in France and Europe: Gagnaire, Bras, El Bulli, and Dutournier. When she returned to the family business, her parents and staff taught her management. In Elena's words, "My father and I work as a duo and have done for many years now. Life in the kitchen is very intense. I am very sentimental and not a day passes where I'm not moved by something."

An excerpt from an interview with Juan Mari and Elena:

What was your most moving culinary experience?

Juan Mari: I have had several in the course of my life. The most important was a meal at 'El Bulli' which transported me to a different planet.

Elena: Cooking always has moments, circumstances and opportunities to taste new things which are thrilling. For example, I still remember the time when I was 8 years old and tasted a truffle for the first time. I have also eaten in lots of wonderful places. For example, at El Bulli which always amazes me.

The most amusing kitchen incident you ever witnessed?

Juan Mari: One of my friends was eating the head of a hake and I pointed at it with my fork and told him 'that's the best bit'. And without thinking I popped it into my mouth!

Elena: I'm ashamed to admit it but luckily no one noticed. A few years ago I served duck with the monkfish sauce. When I went over to the table to explain this to the guest, he had already eaten half of it. After I told him what had happened, I was very surprised to find out that he had loved it!

Your best piece of advice for amateur chefs?

Juan Mari: Humility and passion. Look at the world with the eyes of a cook and think with the mind of a child so that you can continue to use your imagination.

Elena: Don't be scared of cooking, learn from those who know how and enjoy yourself.

### **Sven Elverfeld, Aqua (Germany)**

Elverfeld's very independent culinary style distinguishes itself by its sophisticated combinations of simplicity and refinement. Elverfeld's philosophy is "attain your goal with commitment and love for detail." With the highest award in the Guide Michelin since November 2008, he became the first three-star chef in northern Germany – one of only nine in the entire country. Concurrently, the restaurant guide *Gault Millau* awarded him 19.5 points and the gourmet magazine *Der Feinschmecker* honored Aqua with its highest score of 5 F.

The focus of his avant-garde cuisine has always been on the essential, concentrating on the harmony of aroma, characteristic flavor and texture. He is particularly stimulated by the rediscovery and reinterpretation of traditional dishes and classical trimmings. It is partially because of this that Elverfeld, a native of Hanau in the Hessen region, is considered to be a passionate de-constructivist and re-inventor of plain cuisine. His "boiled filet from Müritz lamb with Frankfurt green sauce" and "Breton sole - modern Finkenwerder style" he attempts to evoke memories of regional roots. Elverfeld dissects classical dishes anchored in taste memory into their original components, plays with textures and reintegrates aromas in compositions. He often uses modern technology and cooking methods as much as classical methods of preparation.

### **Sergio Herman, Oud Sluis (The Netherlands)**

Sergio Herman's Oud Sluis is a family-run business. George Herrel, Sergio Herman's grandfather, was an artist and ran a café-bistrot on Beestenmarkt. Later, Herrel's daughter Ans and son-in-law Ronnie Herman took over Oud Sluis and turned it into one of the most renowned mussel eateries in Zeeland and Flanders. In 1991 Ronnie handed over the reins to his son Sergio Herman (1970), who for more than twenty years now has been at the top of the culinary game.

Driven by an insatiable longing for originality, creativity and craftsmanship, Sergio went his own inimitable way in Oud Sluis. Influenced by his Zeeland background, Sergio finds inspiration in every corner of the globe, works with every available product and devotes himself with a close team to the ongoing search for gastronomic perfection.

### **Hideki Ishikawa, Ishikawa (Japan)**

Chef Patron Hideki Ishikawa was born in 1965 in the Niigata prefecture. He arrived in Tokyo at the age of 20 pursuing a career within fashion, but the only job he could find was a part-time job in a casual restaurant. It did not take too long before the young promising chef realized he wanted to work in a restaurant and nowhere else. Ishikawa worked at more than ten different restaurants before he, after 17 years in the business, established his own restaurant in the geisha district of Kagurazaka.

The restaurant is tucked away at the ground floor of Takamura Building behind the Bishamonten shrine. Chef Hideki Ishikawa's cuisine is traditional Japanese kaiseki, but several dishes with his own distinct signature and rice dishes stand out as some of the best in Japan.

### **René Redzepi, Noma (Denmark)**

Hailed as one of the most influential chefs on the international gastronomic scene, culinary wunderkind René Redzepi, 31, has literally re-invented the Nordic kitchen. As head chef and owner of the 2-star Michelin sensation noma in Copenhagen, he has drawn on his own cultural heritage, offering an inventive blend of Nordic and Macedonian cuisine with a distinctive emphasis on regional specialties such as musk ox and local seafood. Classically trained, Redzepi began his culinary career in 1993 at Copenhagen's Restaurant Pierre André. Prior to opening noma in 2003, Redzepi worked at the 3-star Le Jardin Des Sens, El Bulli, Thomas Keller's 3-star Michelin restaurant, and as sous chef under Chef Thomas Rode Andersen at Copenhagen's Kong Hans Kælder.

Since the opening of noma, Redzepi and his restaurant have received numerous awards and accolades. Since 2005, noma has been continuously rated as best gourmet restaurant in Copenhagen by Denmark's AOK. In 2007, noma ranked number 15 out of 50 restaurants in *Restaurant Magazine's* "50 Best" while Redzepi was voted "Best Chef Outside Italy" by Identita Golose. The restaurant was awarded its first Michelin star in 2005 and its second in 2007. In 2006, Michelin recognized Redzepi as a "Rising Star" and was declared Honorary Chef by Madrid Fusion in 2008. In April of this year "S. Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants" bestowed their greatest honor on Chef Redzepi by placing noma at number one.

### **Olivier Roellinger, Le Coquillage (France)**

Olivier Roellinger abandoned his chemistry studies and started cooking in his mid-twenties after a brutal beating left him wheelchair-bound for several years. With his wife, Jane, he opened the Maisons de Bricourt in 1982 in the 18th-century house he was born in, winning his first Michelin star in 1984, the second in 1988 and the third in 2006.

Mr. Roellinger's cuisine is rooted in his native Brittany. Since part of the world's spice trade once passed through Brittany's ports, he felt the need to travel extensively, often by boat, to uncover new spices and flavor combinations. His food is an interplay of familiar and exotic — lobster with sherry and cocoa, or scallops infused with "Dream of Cochin," a mixture of spices including coriander, anise and cardamom. Mr. Roellinger, 53, recently turned in his three Michelin stars and will close the Maisons de Bricourt, his restaurant in the small Brittany port of Cancale, in part because of health reasons resulting from the assault he went through in his 20s.

He plans to work in another restaurant, Le Coquillage, near Cancale, which would serve food similar to that in his three-star restaurant but in a simpler environment. Mr. Roellinger also has said he would work with his wife on developing the spice importing company Mr. Roellinger runs under his name, along with a cooking school, a hotel and cottages, and a pastry shop, all in and around Cancale. He is also planning to write three books and rework his three-star restaurant for conferences.

### **Nadia Santini, Dal Pescatore (Italy)**

Born and raised in a small village outside Vicenza, Italy, Nadia Santini was a student of political science when she met her future husband, Antonio Santini, at Milan's university, where he studied economics. They married in 1974, honeymooned in France and began to get acquainted with the philosophies and working methods of the great French restaurants.

Upon their return to Italy, they decided to abandon traditional careers in the attempt to revive the Santini family restaurant, in the bucolic, riverside location of Canneto sull'Oglio, near the city of Mantua. In 1990, Dal Pescatore became a Relais Gourmand in the prestigious Relais & Chateaux group, and is also a member of Les Grandes Tables du Monde, boasts three Michelin stars, and is one of Italy's recurring names on the S.Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list. Considered Italy's undisputed "Queen of the kitchen," Nadia has also been crowned by French food critic Gilles Pudlowski as the best chef in the world.

## **Filmmaker Bio**

**Lutz Hachmeister** is a media historian, award-winning filmmaker and journalist. A graduate from the University of Münster, wrote his doctoral thesis about the history of communication research in Germany. Hachmeister is the head of the Institute for Media and Communication Policy. As a journalist, he has worked for *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Die Woche* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and is an associate professor at University of Dortmund.

In addition to *Three Stars* his films include *Hotel Provençal*, *Aufstieg und Fall der Riviera*; *Schleye*, *Eine deutsche Geschichte (Schleyer – The Business of Terror)*, winner of the German Grimme award; *Baie des Milliardaires (Bay of Billionaires)*; “*Freundschaft! – Die Freie Deutsche Jugend (Friendship!)*” a documentary about the Free German Youth organization in the former German Democratic Republic; *Revolution! Das Jahr 1968 (Revolution! The Year 1968)*; and most recently, *The Real American – Joe McCarthy*. His film *The Goebbels Experiment* was a *New York Times* critic’s pick and premiered at the Berlin Film Festival.



## Credits

<b>Director</b>	Lutz Hachmeister
<b>Assistant director</b>	Christian Wagener
<b>Camera</b>	Hajo Schomerus, Dirk Wojcik
<b>Sound</b>	Stavros Charitidis, Laura Schnurre (New York)
<b>Editing</b>	Mechthild Barth, Christian Wagener
<b>Sound mix</b>	Frank Maraite, Rheingold Studios
<b>Colour correction</b>	Mark Czessack, Filmwerk
<b>Recording</b>	Steven Charles, Cattle C. Studios
<b>Narrator</b>	Deborah Friedman
<b>Producer</b>	Lutz Hachmeister
<b>Production HMR</b>	Hermance Grémion
<b>Production Arte</b>	Heike Lettau, Cécile Thomas
<b>Production WDR</b>	Uwe Herpich
<b>Executive producer Arte</b>	Olaf Grunert
<b>Executive producer WDR</b>	Christiane Hinz
<b>Executive producer NDR</b>	Barbara Denz
<b>Special thanks to:</b>	Institut National de l'Audiovisuel Marie-Bénédicte Chevet, Guide Michelin Daniela Heykes, Wolfsburg Tomoo Itoh, Tokyo Fumi Kato, Tokyo Peter Kreiner, Copenhagen Hartmut Mayer, Tokyo Marta Mirasolain, San Sebastian Sanne Mooij, Sluis Emilie Pichon, Paris Mónica Rico, San Sebastian Fabienne Tizon, Cancale Tamara Wood, New York Jörg Ziarno, Tokyo
<b>As well as:</b>	Dieter Anschlag Santo Esposito Yoshie Kunita Julia Lottermoser Bart Luttkhuis Alexander Matschke Antonio Menga Yuiko Morita Diemut Röther Annkatrin Schiller Carina Steinmetz

[http://www.boston.com/ae/movies/articles/2011/12/21/three\\_stars\\_at\\_mfa\\_goes\\_behind\\_the\\_scenes\\_with\\_the\\_worlds\\_top\\_chefs/](http://www.boston.com/ae/movies/articles/2011/12/21/three_stars_at_mfa_goes_behind_the_scenes_with_the_worlds_top_chefs/)



MOVIE REVIEW

## Three Stars

### World's top-ranked chefs shoot for the stars

In everyday America, where we are nothing if not star crazy, a three-star rating may not seem so impressive. Don't our kids get three stars just for turning in their homework? That's how it seems, anyway.

But in international restaurant circles where the Guide Michelin series has long been a tastemaker - that would be Europe, first and foremost - three stars is a holy trinity, a blessing visited annually on only around 100 restaurants worldwide. Careers and fortunes can rise and fall on the guidebooks' awards say both its promoters and those they anoint. The men and women (but mostly men) behind the food are the focus of "Three Stars," a 2010 documentary by German filmmaker Lutz Hachmeister that is screening at the Museum of Fine Arts beginning today.

Hachmeister, whose previous documentaries include "The Goebbels Experiment" narrated by Kenneth Branagh, made "Three Stars" for television, which frankly seems like the best way to see it. Though this latest film journeys far - from Paris to Tokyo to New York as it pops in on the lives of nine elite chefs at various levels of stardom and star rankings - it never goes very deep or big. The chefs are often less impressive than they should be, even on a small screen. That's probably because there's not nearly enough time spent with most of them, although fewer minutes with the schmooze-happy Jean-Georges Vongerichten (chef-owner of numerous restaurants, including one in Manhattan's Trump Tower) would be welcome.

The person you'll wish you could spend a whole movie with, if not be adopted by, is Nadia Santini, chef and cheerleader for three generations of family running Dal Pescatore, in the Italian countryside north of Parma. Her radiant personality and gentle, Old World approach to the nurturing of recipes, colleagues, and clientele provide the counterpoint to frenetic, confrontational kitchens run by scientist-chefs, the masters of so-called molecular gastronomy,

including Spain's Juan Mari Arzak (restaurant Arzak) and Denmark's René Redzepi (Noma). We also visit with France's Yannick Alléno (Le Meurice) and Olivier Roellinger (Le Coquillage), Germany's Sven Elverfeld (Aqua), the Netherlands' Sergio Herman (Oud Sluis), and Japan's Hideki Ishikawa (Ishikawa), who represents the Michelin guides' successful 2008 expansion into Asian markets. They talk more than they cook in this documentary, which is a pity all the more glaring because when they cook, my God, do they cook stunningly, from simple homemade pastas to white asparagus spears dotted with tiny caviar blinis and a hint of salmon cream, or indulgent theatrical statements like rhubarb baked in a sugar crust that is cracked open with a hammer, tableside. Go big or go (eat at) home, right?

The criticisms voiced by Michelin's detractors - its guidebooks are elitist, its testers old and fat, its powers inflated, its competitors rising - all get fair airing, though they're often batted down too quickly by Jean-Luc Naret, the guides' unhelpfully slick director. Maybe because Hachmeister has a background in journalism, his movie endeavors to educate by covering a lot of ground in its 90-plus minutes, which is certainly commendable, it's just not that satisfying.

There's no such thing as a three-star Michelin buffet guide.