



Günther Sader works as a waiter at the Zum Turm restaurant, which the Sader family has been running for three decades.

—INTERVIEW

Proximity alone is not enough

Restaurant Zum Turm, Kastelruth.

For the last three decades, the Sader family has been running the historic Turmwirt as a restaurant and hotel. Günther Sader discusses transparent sourcing, not wasting anything in the kitchen, and why local circular economies often falter as a result of entirely practical issues.

alma
From our farms.
For our tables.

The restaurant has formed part of the network ever since the Südtiroler Gasthaus Group was founded in 2012; a network that now comprises 26 carefully selected tavern-style restaurants across South Tyrol. These means that your meals are made up of 75% regional or local products. Which of your products come from the local area?

Everything possible: bread, apple juice, tea, schnapps, wine. In summer, we use herbs from our garden, but when it comes to fresh products, it's trickier. We pop into the farmer's market for fruit and vegetables in the summer. There are no established partnerships with local fruit and vegetable growers.

Your philosophy of meat is essentially: have less, but know where it comes from. What's behind all that?

Meat is a staple of traditional South Tyrolean cuisine, which we prize highly. That said, I'm strongly in favour of reducing our meat consumption. At the same time, anyone

who eats meat should take a closer look and find out where it comes from, and how the animal was raised. Was it transported across Europe or even halfway around the world? Even on a small scale, it's important to me to know where a product comes from and who's behind it. We work together with a farm in Telfen, from which we've been sourcing three-quarters of a cow twice a year for many years – once in the spring and once in the autumn.

How does this cooperation work, and what happens when the final few items have run out?

The head chef, a role held for the last two years by my son Daniel, stops by the farm and picks out the animals he'd like to get. Daniel cuts up and prepares the meat himself. The prime cuts, such as fillet or roast beef, are aged for two months in the cold storage and always sell out quickly. The rest keeps for longer and includes goulash, ragout, stewing meat and sausages. We used



The final touch before serving: head chef Daniel Sader is committed to using ingredients of genuine provenance.



Daniel Sader (right) has been head chef at Zum Turm for two years. He is one of the few who has mastered the art of butchering and preparing whole animals – a seldom-seem skill in many kitchens.



up the last of the autumn produce in February and March this year, and buy whatever else we need from local or regional butchers. We don't always manage to get hold of locally sourced meat for the prime cuts, however much we try. Of course, you have to stay honest: if the fillet isn't locally sourced, I wouldn't claim otherwise on the menu.

In many kitchens, butchering an animal and using every part of it is barely part of everyday life these days. How important is it for the restaurant's style that the head chef has mastered this art?

It plays a central role. Daniel worked closely with our former head chef over the last two years before he retired, and he learnt how to chop up meat. Today, he does it himself and enjoys preparing each piece of meat. Butchering an animal from start to finish is a task that many shy away from; it's easier to have pre-cut meat delivered. The fact that Daniel selected the animals himself makes a huge difference. He can tell the guests what's

on their plates: "The schnitzel in front of you comes from an animal that spent years on the Seiser Alm Alpine pasture". The guest wants to hear a story; after all, they don't just come here to eat.

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Vegetables are a whole different story compared to meat. Where do you run into difficulties?

At the farmers' market, I like to pick up whatever takes my fancy. However, the supply there is never enough to meet the daily needs of a kitchen that has to cater for hotel and restaurant guests alike. In cases like this, we usually turn to wholesalers. If I had my way, we'd absolutely be using more locally

grown vegetables in our cooking. Buying more local products ultimately means less traffic on the roads – that’s a calculation that I like to factor in too.

What’s the key factor that needs to be addressed in order to expand local supply chains in the catering industry?

Logistics. If producers delivered directly to people’s homes, many things would be far easier. Preparations happen in the morning, followed by service at lunchtime, then a short break, and service again in the evening. There’s just no time to go and collect five kilos here and ten kilos there. While the supply chains aren’t working sufficiently, a lot of produce still goes through wholesalers, even though the farms are right on the doorstep.

There have already been attempts to bring producers together to organise shared deliveries – but these have failed due to organisational issues. Is there another way of doing it?

An option could be for several businesses to jointly organise and fund a delivery service that collects the produce from the farms and then delivers it – reliably and in quantities that suit both parties involved. Another option could be for farmers to join forces and handle distribution through, for example, a vegetable trader who supplies us with the produce. And last but not least, it requires a price that works for both sides.

What you can take away from the Zum Turm restaurant

Credibility is our top priority.

Anyone stating the origin of products on the menu must also be able to provide verifiable proof of this. Anyone who talks about producers should really know the work they do.

Local marketing works where structures intersect: for example, when farmers pool their produce and product ranges and restaurants share the cost of logistics.

A holistic approach builds appreciation. Anyone who butchers and processes an animal themselves develops a different relationship with the product – and can credibly convey both its origins and the craftsmanship involved to their guests.



Behind each of these portraits is the **alma** network. The food that ends up on plates in the Seiser Alm region of the Dolomites doesn't happen by chance - it's the result of a close collaboration between farmers and restaurateurs. They discuss quantities, adjust logistics, and decide together what can be grown and how it makes its way from the farm to the table. This creates a local economic cycle in which supply and demand come together - underpinned by trust and reliability.

alma is neither a label nor a campaign, but a network that makes this collaboration visible: specific and closely tied to the daily lives of the people who work and do business here.

—seiseralm.it/alma