

THE DEVELOPMENT TREND OF FINE DINING RESTAURANTS IN UKRAINE

Fine dining restaurants are historically a consequence of the social stratification of society and are designed to satisfy a wider range of needs, in addition to the basic human need for food. In the 20th century to emphasize the elitism of the restaurant, a separate gastronomic award – the Michelin star – was introduced. And in the 21st century, the community of Michelin-starred restaurants is kept on the VIP pedestal of the economic gradation of restaurant establishments. However, with the growth of the welfare of the population of developed countries and the scale of international tourism and the development of the restaurant business, the number of fine dining restaurants outside the framework of the Michelin rating has been growing exponentially over the past decades.

The trend of the last decade is increasingly active price democratization and diversification of the market of fine dining restaurants. Scientists, market analysts and food bloggers from different continents describe this trend as a consequence of pent-up demand and growing consumer demands in the post-Covid-19 era for the comfort, luxury and aesthetics of gastro-leisure [1; 3; 6].

The “fine dining” format is a synthesis of the techniques and art of highly qualified chefs in terms of high-quality cooking, artistic design and presentation of dishes, as well as an aesthetically refined atmosphere for their consumption and cultural leisure of guests [1; 2]. In recent decades, the “fine dining” format in the restaurant business has been actively diversifying financially – from a limited VIP group for the wealthiest gourmets to an all-encompassing network of non-Michelin establishments, but no less luxurious. The ever-increasing consumer demands encourage restaurateurs to open financially affordable establishments, adhering to the standards of “fine dining” in terms of cooking and customer service.

The classic “fine dining” format with professional chefs and a European aesthetic understanding of the concept of sophisticated, high-end cuisine has “taken root” in Ukraine since the mid-2000s thanks to the initiatives of individual restaurateurs. Therefore, a real fine dining revolution has been taking place in Kyiv and regional centers over the past 15 years.

Despite the fact that there are still no establishments in the “Michelin Star Fine Dining Restaurants” segment in the country, the popular international rating platforms (Tripadvisor, etc.), Google search and mobile booking applications record the growth of the “Fine Dining Restaurants” market niche in Ukraine, despite the devastating challenges of 2008, 2014-2015, 2020 and 2022.

According to wartime statistics, naturally, in 2022, more than 7,000 restaurants were closed in Ukraine [5]. At the same time, restaurateurs do not capitulate; there is a partial relocation of business and a bold implementation of new business ideas both in the capital and in the regions. Dozens of new fine-dining restaurants have announced their opening in 2022 in Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv. Well-known Ukrainian brand-chefs continue to actively build the national fine-dining identity.

Today, local fine dining in the capital of Ukraine is represented by the establishments of a group of famous chefs such as Dmytro Borysov (restaurant of high Ukrainian cuisine

“Canapa”), Mirali Dilbazi (“Mirali” restaurant) or Volodymyr Yaroslavskyi (“Lucky” restaurant) [4]. And the competition for the capital’s restaurants is increasingly visible from the regional centers of the Ukrainian fine dining identity in Odesa, Dnipro, Lviv, Truskavets, Bukovel, etc. One of the confirmations of the successful expansion of the Ukrainian fine dining identity is enthusiastic Internet reviews and high points of consumer evaluation of restaurants.

Restaurants in 5-star hotels occupy a separate niche of classic fine dining. Among them in the capital of Ukraine are such fashionable establishments as “All Day Dining” (at Hilton Kyiv), “Comme Il Faut” and “Olivera” (at InterContinental – Kyiv, an IHG Hotel), “IKIGAI” and “Terracotta” (at Premier Palace Hotel Kyiv), “Grill Asia” and “Bar on 8” (at Hyatt Regency Kyiv), “Teatro” (at Opera Hotel), “SWEETBOOK” and “Fairmont Kyiv” (at Fairmont Grand Hotel Kyiv), “City Holiday”, “Vnette” and “Panoramic” (at City Holiday Resort & SPA), “11 Mirrors Rooftop Restaurant & Bar” (at 11 Mirrors Design Hotel), etc. A similar situation occurs in Lviv, Odesa, Truskavets, Bukovel, where international standards of fine dining are promoted by restaurants in top 4-5 star hotel and restaurant complexes.

Thus, the centers of gastronomic tourism of Ukraine (Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa) even in the crisis realities of the war period, in terms of standard evaluation criteria, aesthetics and creativity of fine cuisine are not inferior to anything (and in some cases stand out favorably) to competitors in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

References:

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