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Press release

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Outstanding collection of Chef of the Century Eckart Witzigmann now at the Saxon State Library – Dresden State and University Library

Prof. Eckart Witzigmann is donating his extraordinary culinary library containing about 6,000 volumes to the German Archive of Culinary Arts the Saxon State Library – Dresden State and University Library (SLUB). The archive was jointly founded by TU Dresden and the SLUB in 2022. Thanks to this donation, this marks the first time that the archive will receive a comprehensive collection of modern culinary art from 1970 onwards, documenting contemporary exquisite culinary art in a way that allows for a fundamental analysis of the change in culinary aesthetics and enables further research.

Katrin Stump, Director General of the SLUB Dresden, states: "Taking over Eckart Witzigmann's collection one year on from the founding of the German Archive of Culinary Arts is a significant milestone for its future development. As a result, our collection now spans Europe from the gourmet cuisine of the Renaissance to the present. We are absolutely delighted that we have succeeded in bringing Witzigmann's collection to Dresden and will now make it accessible to academia, the public and, above all, to young cooks, as is Eckart Witzigmann's wish."

Eckart Witzigmann has been the doyen of high culinary art in Germany for decades, and he is revered both nationally and internationally by many current top chefs. He was the first chef in Germany to be awarded three stars by Michelin in 1979, and at the same time one of only four chefs worldwide to be named Chef of the Century by Gault & Millau, along with Paul Bocuse, Joël Robuchon and Frédy Girardet. The 82-year-old currently acts as patron of the *Ikarus* restaurant in Salzburg, which invites a different top chef every month to present their menu.

Witzigmann began collecting culinary works in the 1970s: "I was always reading cookbooks, even as a young chef. When I finished my training, I began to collect the respective country's culinary literature during my travels abroad in order to continue my education and development. This grew into a passion for collecting. Since my time as head chef at the Tantris, I've been able to build up a private collection, enabling me to study the cooking styles of my eminent colleagues around the world," says the chef of the century.

Today, Witzigmann's collection includes more than 5,000 cookbooks and magazines published since 1970, documenting top international cuisine worldwide. As top chefs have predominantly published so-called coffee table books over the last 50 years, often in very small editions, the collection contains an unusually large number of high-quality publications that are almost impossible to acquire today. In addition, the collection includes nearly 700 European cookbooks from the 17th to 20th centuries.

Eckart Witzigmann: "I gave my library to Dresden to promote research on culinary arts and, above all, to facilitate access to the tradition of exquisite cuisine for young chefs. I am extremely grateful that my collection is now being preserved and made publicly accessible at the German Archive of Culinary Arts. It is wonderful that there is a central place where the significant culinary publications are collected for the German-speaking world. I hope that many more exception chefs will pass on their treasures to the German Archive of Culinary Art, so that the high culinary art has a common fund from which it can draw."

TU Dresden and the SLUB Dresden have been closely associated with Chef of the Century Eckart Witzigmann for several years. On the day that the German Archive of Culinary Arts was founded last year, an exhibition on Witzigmann's Rumohr Veal Sweetbreads signature dish was put on display – with exhibits from the Witzigmann house that were open to the public for the first time.

We also owe the fact that Eckart Witzigmann is giving his collection to Dresden to the support and great commitment of the **Christian C. D. Ludwig Foundation**. **Christian C. D. Ludwig** says: "We have been cooperating with Eckart Witzigmann for several years, which has been and continues to be an extremely pleasant experience for me personally, and I am delighted that this collaboration has led to this wonderful result. I very much hope for myself and for all the others involved that we will continue and further expand our cooperation."

Prof. Josef Matzerath from the Chair of History of Saxony at TU Dresden has also been extremely dedicated to the transfer of Eckart Witzigmann's library to Dresden. He emphasizes that this collection will decisively advance the interdisciplinary research on culinary aesthetics as well as the historical significance of culinary art and table culture, which is unique in Dresden. "So far, German libraries have hardly had any noteworthy holdings of modern culinary literature. The German Archive of Culinary Art will now enable us to intensively focus our research on culinary aesthetics for European cuisine of the 20th and 21st centuries, as it is scarcely possible anywhere else. With Eckart Witzigmann's cookbook collection, this is no longer just a pipe dream."

Prof. Andreas Rutz, Chair of History of Saxony at TU Dresden: "Eckart Witzigmann's collection represents enormous gain for interdisciplinary culinary research at TU Dresden. It is an excellent addition to our existing collection and will enable future research into the high art of cooking since the 1970s not only in German-speaking countries, but also worldwide. Our "Change in Taste" research group, which focuses on culinary aesthetics and societal change from the late 18th century to the 21st century, will evaluate Witzigmann's collection in the German Archive of Culinary Arts with great scientific curiosity and enthusiasm."

For more information on the German Archive of Culinary Arts, please visit www.archivderkulinarik.de.

For press coverage, please use the freely downloadable **press images** here: www.slubdd.de/pressebilderwitzigmann

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The Saxon State Library – Dresden State and University Library (SLUB Dresden) and TUD Dresden University of Technology founded the **German Archive of Culinary Arts** at SLUB Dresden on October 10, 2022. The extensive culinary publications collection including manuscripts, books and journals as well as menu cards, commercial graphics, photographs and audiovisual media is one of the most significant of its kind in Germany. Its highlights include the collections of Ernst Birsner, Walter Putz and Wolfram Siebeck. It forms the basis for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research in the humanities, cultural studies and natural sciences regarding culinary art, table culture and nutritional science and their impact on culture and society over the ages, as already successfully established at TUD. SLUB and TUD invigorate the scientific and societal discourse related to nutrition and culinary arts by organizing events, exhibitions, participatory formats, and publications, thus establishing the German Archive of Culinary Arts as a pivotal player in research, teaching, and the transfer of knowledge to society.