

Fine Dining Takes Small but Stellar Strides in Germany

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A traditional ham-and-egg sandwich called a strammer Max costs about \$6 or \$7 at a local greasy spoon here. But at Juan Amador's restaurant the sandwich - along with a tube to sip a few drops of pork fat and smoked oil, followed by a quail's egg swaddled in paper-thin dough - is part of a multicourse meal that runs about \$240.

Innovations like this one have earned the restaurant, Amador, three Michelin stars, the highest rating, and have drawn attention to a surprising development in the land of sauerkraut and sausage: Germany now has more three-star restaurants - nine - than any other European country except France.

'Germany's eating behavior has changed radically in the last 10 years,' Mr. Amador said. 'We are creating a new eating culture that simply did not exist before.'

Mr. Amador's pat on his own back is probably true in today's Germany, but not only at the high end of the market. A restaurant culture has blossomed here in the last decade, with Germans shaking off a reputation for tightfistedness when it comes to eating out.

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