



ESPLANADE ZAGREB
LUXURY HOTEL

In Zagreb, 12th April 2012

The New Face on Croatian Gastro Scene

Ana Grgić
The *Chef de Cuisine* of the Esplanade Zagreb Hotel

The young and affable Ana Grgić (31) is the new *chef de cuisine* of the prestigious Zagreb hotel, the Esplanade. For the past three years, in her function as deputy *chef de cuisine*, Ana has worked closely with Jeffrey J. Vella. Her high levels of knowledge, professionalism and culinary skills have led to her leadership of the *cuisines* of both the hotel's restaurants - the luxurious Zinfandel's and the charming Le Bistro - as well as the Esplanade catering. Ana continues to pursue the Esplanade tradition of supreme gastronomy; but, by her selection and combination of tastes, she strives to 'spice' it all up with a part of herself, thereby putting her signature on the dishes.

After completing her education at the Zagreb Hotel-Tourism School, Ana passed the 5th level master examination and acquired the highest title - master chef. Aware of her abilities and driven by high ambitions, in 1999 Ana contacted the *executive chef* Ivica Štruml and accepted voluntary work in the cuisine of the prestigious Esplanade Hotel. For many years, she acquired knowledge and skills from the experienced culinary masters and progressed quickly. In 2004, with the arrival of the Regent brand, Ana began collaborating with the new *chef*, the Belgian Marc Fontenelle, and became the shift manager. Her talent was also recognised by the prize winning supreme *chef* Jeffrey James Vella, who offered huge support and appointed her his deputy.

Ambition and the desire to learn have led Ana to the addresses of the most prestigious world restaurants carrying two Michelin stars, where she polished her culinary skills for some time under the leadership of famous *chefs*, such as Yves Mattagne of the Sea Grill restaurant in Bruxelles and Christian Lohse from the acclaimed Berlin restaurant Fishers Fritz. She also developed her knowledge at the culinary academy of the Rezidor Hotel Group.

During her career at the Esplanade, Ana has made dishes for numerous statespeople, such as the Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, the Austrian President Heinz Fischer, and famous royal families such as the Prince Albert of Monaco, the Princess Anne; the endless list of famous people includes also the sports legends David Beckham, Cristiano Ronaldo, and people from the show business: Shakira, Sade, Sting, José Carreras, Bob Geldof, Bono Vox, and others.



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Jeffrey J. Vella, until recently the hotel's *executive chef*, emphasised: "Ana is the most talented co-worker I have had the opportunity to work with. She is a gracious and well-disposed person, ready to take on new challenges. I truly believe that she is the right person for this position, and she will justify the high expectations of her co-workers and equally so of demanding hotel guests."

Ivica Max Krizmanić, General Manager of the Esplanade Hotel, said: "I am glad that the Esplanade Hotel has had an excellent *executive chef* such as Jeffrey J. Vella, who will stay in Croatia and continue to enrich the restaurant scene with his tasty and imaginative delicacies. His abundant experience, perfectionism and passion for food have raised the Esplanade *cuisine* to the highest level. For the past several years, Jeffrey has educated young *chefs* who are nowadays capable of managing the *cuisine* alone, and Ana Grgić, through her talent, dedication, precision and determination has stood out in particular. Her long experience at the Esplanade, her ambition, creativity, but also the knowledge of various cuisines are an ideal formula which promises our guests the supreme culinary experience."

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About Esplanade Zagreb Hotel

Opened in 1925, the Esplanade Hotel Zagreb is one of the city's most famous and elegant buildings. Originally built for passengers of the Orient Express, this iconic hotel combines stylish luxury, genuine hospitality and a tradition of capturing the zeitgeist to reflect the art deco heritage. The hotel was recently renovated adding contemporary touches while retaining some of the classics. The effect was described by a guest as "very old Hollywood glam". The hotel provides 208 spacious and lavishly furnished rooms and suites, signature restaurants, a health club, bar/lounges, conference facilities and Scented Baths and much more.

For more information, visit www.esplanade.hr

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