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GIARDINO

PRESS RELEASE

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"Ristorante Ecco" Ascona –
Reto Brändli ushers in a
new era with a strong team

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HOTELS

CULINARY REINVENTION AT "RISTORANTE ECCO" ASCONA – RETO BRÄNDLI USHERS IN A NEW ERA WITH A STRONG TEAM

Ascona, April 15, 2025 - As the season begins on April 16, 2025, Hotel Giardino Ascona ushers in a fresh culinary era with the arrival of Reto Brändli as the new Head Chef at Ecco, the Giardino Hotels' acclaimed fine dining restaurant. With a fresh vision, creative ingenuity, and dynamic momentum, Brändli promises to elevate the culinary offerings at Ecco to new heights.

Reto Brändli, at just 33 years old, has already earned an enviable reputation in the world of haute cuisine. Born in Schwyz, Switzerland, Brändli's passion for cooking began early. His talent was honed through his apprenticeship at the esteemed Hotel Waldhaus in Sils Maria, and soon led him to the kitchens of some of Europe's most prestigious restaurants. These included Cà d'Oro in St. Moritz and Lorenz Adlon Esszimmer in Berlin, where he garnered two Michelin stars and multiple Gault Millau points. Mentored by culinary legends such as Rolf Fliegau, Andreas Caminada, and Benoît Violier, Brändli refined his expertise and creativity to develop his unique culinary style.

"We are delighted to welcome Reto Brändli to Ecco," say Daniela and Philippe Frutiger, CEOs of Giardino Group. "His exceptional talent, creativity, and passion for the finest ingredients make him the perfect person to continue Ecco's legacy and take it in an exciting new direction."



Ascona Minusio-Locarno Champfèr-St. Moritz

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A Homecoming for Brändli

For Reto Brändli, this return to Giardino is much more than a career milestone—it's a homecoming. "The atmosphere here at Giardino is incredibly welcoming, and I still have strong connections with many members of the team from my previous time here," says Brändli. Having spent four formative years at Giardino, his connection to the hotel group and the region is deep-rooted.

His Cuisine: A Symphony of French Craftsmanship and Innovation. Brändli's culinary approach is a refined blend of classical French craftsmanship, modern techniques, and seasonal ingredients. "I don't cook to impress - I cook to evoke emotions," he explains. His philosophy centers around pure, precise craftsmanship, with an emphasis on simplicity without sacrificing refinement.

The result? Bold, creative dishes that surprise and delight the palate. Brändli's spring menu at Ecco will feature locally sourced ingredients presented in a modern, minimalist style. One such creation is the Brüggl lake trout with radish, jalapeño, and green gazpacho, a dish that underscores Brändli's commitment to regional, sustainable sourcing.

A Strong Team with a Shared Vision

Pastry Chef Antje Hauser, who joined Ecco in 2021, adds her own flair to the culinary team. Known for her precision in pastry and innovative dessert creations, Hauser's approach combines modern techniques with a passion for classic French patisserie. Her desserts have garnered attention for their elegance and finesse, contributing to Ecco's stellar reputation.

Theresa Windhofer, Restaurant Manager at Ecco, completes the leadership team. A seasoned sommelier, Windhofer's keen eye for detail and dedication to impeccable service ensure that every guest's experience at Ecco goes beyond just exceptional food, offering a memorable and luxurious evening.

An Exclusive Culinary Experience

Meet the new Chef

For those looking to experience the new Ecco firsthand, the "Meet the New Chef" package offers an exclusive opportunity to engage with Reto Brändli and immerse themselves in his culinary vision. The package includes an overnight stay at Hotel Giardino Ascona, a behind-the-scenes aperitif in the Ecco kitchen with Brändli himself, and a five-course tasting menu showcasing his signature dishes. Guests will be treated to an inspiring culinary journey and a unique opportunity to interact with the visionary chef behind the new Ecco experience.

The future of Ecco is set to be a thrilling one, as Reto Brändli brings his talent, passion, and creativity to this iconic dining destination.



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About the Giardino Group

The Giardino Group comprises three distinctive properties: the five-star hotels Giardino Ascona and Giardino Mountain in St. Moritz, as well as the boutique hotel Giardino Lago in Minusio, near Locarno, nestled along the shores of Lago Maggiore. During the summer season, the Engadin-based Giardino Mountain adapts its concept to a bed & breakfast without star classification, catering to the needs of summer guests.

Internationally acclaimed for its culinary excellence, the Giardino Group is home to the renowned Ecco fine dining restaurants, led by chef Reto Brändli. Known for his refined craftsmanship and innovative approach, Brändli continues the legacy of exceptional gastronomy at both the Ascona and St. Moritz locations. The hotels' second restaurant concept, Hide & Seek, celebrates innovative, light, and flavorful cuisine crafted from regional ingredients. Meanwhile, Ristorante Lago at Giardino Lago draws inspiration from Italian culinary traditions, reinterpreting classic dishes with a modern and refined approach.

Since 2016, the Giardino Group has also been a pioneer in holistic well-being, with dedicated Ayurveda centers in Ascona and St. Moritz. Guests can further indulge in relaxation at the dipiù Spa, featuring the exclusive in-house dipiùcosmetics line, alongside premium products from AVEDA and QMS.



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