

STO  
CCO  
LMAA



*Il ristorante Oaxen Krog & Slip si trova in un cantiere navale del XVIII sec. ancora in uso.*



# Stockholm Syndrome: the new Swedish kitchen

STORY *by* STYREGÅRD  
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Recent developments on the Swedish restaurant scene make it difficult to avoid using the word "boom". My personal, unscientific attempt to count the number of seats in recently opened restaurants only in Stockholm, easily reached a thousand. Most new places serve everyday, comfort-style food. Many are large establishments, very few fine dining.

During the last couple of years, previously rather sleepy Old Town in Stockholm has gradually become more and more interesting as a restaurant destination. Lately, the area around the streets of Stora Nygatan and Lilla Nygatan has exploded, turning itself into a haven for late night bar and restaurant hopping. Internationally acclaimed, double Michelin starred restaurant Frantzén (formerly Frantzén/Lindeberg) recently opened their 800 square metres take on a British pub, The Flying Elk, and the wine bar Gaston across the street. Only a block away, restaurateur Daniel Crespi has created a small empire with four venues in the same block – restaurants Djuret, Svinet,

Pubologi, and, most recently, the wine bar Tweed.

Also, the maverick restaurant and wine bar 19 Glas – yes, also within the same few blocks – has changed gears by employing chef Olle Tagesson, formerly at Paté Paté in Copenhagen. His style of straight-forward, honest cooking might very well be the future. With perfect pitch, he applies inspiration from Mexico, the Middle East and California to a kitchen otherwise firmly based in the Nordic tradition.

Four of the most influential restaurants that have opened during the last couple of years in Stockholm are Volt, Gastrologik, Ekstedt and Oaxen. Together with a few other restaurants, they're at the forefront of the development of the regions' cuisine. They explore new ground, but unpretentiously so – these are not very stiff and highfalutin places. They have ambition, curiosity, and integrity in common, but their personalities are entirely different.

*Guanciaie glassato, pruea di patate e insalata di cetrioli*



## Oaxen Krog & Slip

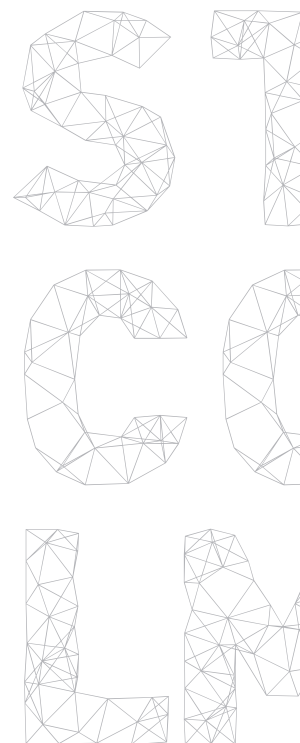
It's not that maritime atmosphere is anything new for restaurateurs Magnus Ek and Agneta Green. In restaurant Oaxen's previous location, more than an hour south of Stockholm on a small island in the archipelago, maritime life heavily inspired the menu, the interior, and the surroundings.

Nevertheless, Oaxen at its present location is something entirely different. Now at Djurgårdsvarvet, a shipyard from the early 1700s, with many of the ancient industrial buildings intact.

Where the original slipway was located, Magnus Ek and Agneta Green have personally lead the creation of an entirely new building measuring 760 square metres in two stories. It's more or less a copy of the old slipway, much of the material and character being preserved or imitated—the stone and oak timber floors, corrugated metal walls, and the huge, rough metal beams holding up the impressive structure with an enormous glass wall opening up the stunning view towards the skyline of Stockholm.

"We wanted to recreate the industrial character," says Magnus.

Agneta has collected some of the furniture from auctions. The tables are new copies of vintage furniture. Most of the designers are Scandinavian. The place is still so new that there's a





scent of linseed oil, sawdust and wet oak when you enter the building.

In some ways, moving this close to the city must be a huge relief. Within walking distance from the city centre, a short trip on the tram, a ten-minute bicycle trip, or a not too expensive cab drive. For the first time since they opened Oaxen in 1994, they will be able to stay open all year round, serve lunch during the week and brunch on weekends.

Hinting at great loyalty among the employees and good leadership, all but one in the kitchen team is coming back from the previous Oaxen, despite the two years break.

The bistro has 76 seats, and the restaurant, which will open a week after the bistro, seats 32 persons. In the bistro, most dishes come out on platters instead of individual plates.

Crispy sourdough croquettes with smoked fish and roe dip are gulped down in a second. So are the Spanish anchovies in oil. Of the roasted cauliflower with truffle and Oaxen's own bacon, I'm particularly happy with the bacon, which is smoked to perfection.

The chopped egg with lumpfish roe, Dijon and tarragon is really good, but the tartare of top-side with Dijon mayonnaise, sour cream and sourdough croutons is even more memorable. Knowing Magnus and Agneta, the cow's arse is most likely from a happy, retired milk cow at a small farm not too far from Stockholm.





*Chef Magnus Ek*

The raw, chewy muscle matched with crunchy croutons makes for a truly mouth-watering experience.

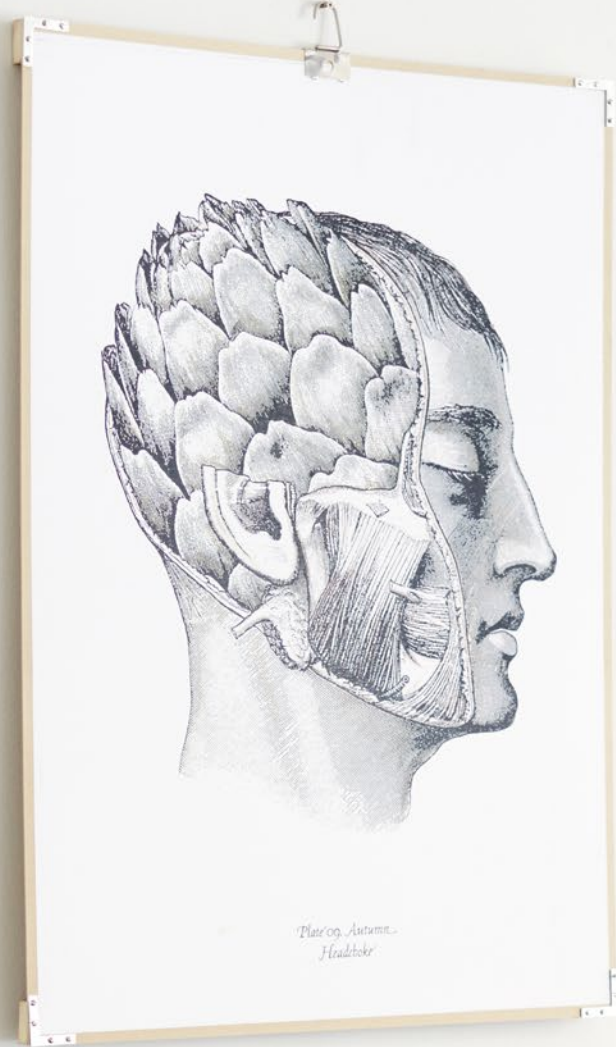
A remnant from the previous Oaxen's bistro called Pumpen, is deep-fried herring served with a simple herb vinegar. Nordic cuisine cannot be more simple, precise and enjoyable. The dessert list is – as the rest of the menu – hardly innovative, but still not predictable. It's a great combination of fine produce, some commonplace, others less so. My finale is a nutritious fried brioche with delicate chocolate crème and a refreshing sorbet of Spanish chervil. I never thought Spanish chervil would be my favourite choice of sorbet flavour, but from now on it is.

The 32-seat fine dining restaurant has a large terrace facing the water and a small port where guests can actually land their own boats, just a few metres from their dinner table. The menu is already set, but Agneta and Magnus are secretive. They say there will be lactic acid used in some dishes. Also, from experience of the previous Oaxen, one can expect smoking being a part of some dishes. After two years of speculations about the new fine dining concept, their opening is much anticipated.

"If I'd think too much about all the expectations, I'd pee in my pants," says Magnus Ek.



Volt





I've always felt restaurant Volt lies in an unlikely location. In the heart of Östermalm, the Mayfair of Stockholm, among spacious, posh apartments, the understated Volt is an anomaly. In fact, it's so subdued that several times I've mistakenly walked by on my way there, even though I know the address. Most Stockholm restaurants have a clearly stated concept. An obvious interior design idea intimately connected with the food served. Often with a tight story behind the produce and tableware used. That's not Volt. It's four guys – Bengtsson, Johnsson, Andersson and Carlsson, all 30 or 31 years-old – with similar values and opinions on food, eating and service. It feels like coming home. The interior resembles a clean, rather dark bachelor's apartment in the 60s with homey Swedish sandwiches on the wallpaper in the restroom. The tableware is round and rustic. The overall lighting is muffled, with stronger lights focusing on food and guests.

"Sweden is often dark," says manager Johan Bengtsson who has created and built the interior together with his three colleagues. "There is no outdoor seating, so we have to be fantastic during the period when it's cold outside. We go all in for the dark season."

Their philosophy is to take away rather than add. To push the limits of simplicity. It doesn't have to be expensive to be good. They have not raised the prices since they opened 2.5 years ago.

"At the beginning, we planned to make it even more simple," says head chef Fredrik Johnsson.

They are debating how to find good quality vegetables and get them to the restaurant, since none of them have a car. One of them does have a moped, but Skilleby farm, where they take most of their greens from, is located 50 kilometres away. Several small, local producers delivering products, have been recommended by customers. Loyal eaters who share the owners' passion for products of great quality from artisan farmers. Like the farm in Östervåla, an hour north of Stockholm, that recently built their own micro slaughter house to gently put to death their animals – pigs of the almost extinct, Swedish breed Linderösvin, and the very old cow breed, Rödskulla.

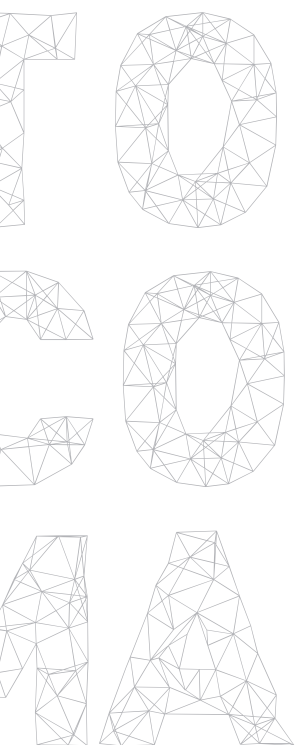
This is my fifth or sixth visit since Volt opened. First couple of times, I felt there were small inconsistencies. Out of five dishes, four were fantastic, but the fifth had something I wanted to correct. The last couple of times this was adjusted, in good balance. The team seems to have reached a point of gastronomic flow.

To quench the appetite, I'm served brawn of lamb brisket, flavoured with nettles, and fried, small potatoes filled with baked egg yolk, and with nettles, mustard powder and dried herbs on top.

The lamb dish is wrapped in blackened leaves of white cabbage, making the interior amazingly juicy. On the inside, opulent aromas of lamb, blackened by a touch on the griddle. In addition, sweet onion and a fresh, soft cream made from oysters, herbs and blackened cabbage.

A bottle of Gamay from oddball winemaker Cyril le Moing in





French Anjou, is a killer. The wine is not only well suited to gulp down with the blackened meat, it's a genius choice flavour-wise, given its aromas of unripe berries, cherry pits and succulent dirt. In fact, it's one of these bottles one really has to find again to relive, just to make sure.

Volt always serves cheese presented in an innovative, but not complicated way. This time it's Wrångebäcks hard cheese from organic farm Almnäs Bruk grated in super-thin flakes on top of a strip of hard, Norwegian flatbrød. Underneath, there's a thin spread of soft cheese and honey hidden.

The ice cream dessert (it's actually not ice cream since there's no egg yolk, but only milk and cream) is deliciously creamy with a feather light touch of aromatic pine tree resin. On the side, fried and dried almond paste served in really crunchy, sweet chunks.

A small bottle of velvety, honeyed Recioto, La Biancarra Gambellara, from Angelino Maule in Veneto wraps up the wine servings beautifully.

With the filtered coffee, a small bowl of candies appears – bonbons of dried spruce resin and caramelised white chocolate in very crunchy bits.

"As long as we think it's good, we'll go for it," says Johan Bengtsson. None of us like sparkling water. Hence, there's no sparkling water. None of us like espresso. We only have drip coffee. If someone gets grumpy about this, we have to win them over with love."

# Gastrologik/ Speceriet

Some of the most important work at Gastrologik is done when the restaurant is closed. Chefs Jacob Holmström and Anton Bjuhr start every week by jumping on the tram or bicycle for a short ride to their vegetable garden. They're often joined by some of their employees although it's their day off.

"If you buy vegetables on the market, they could very well already be a week old," says Jacob Holmström. "In addition, our stagiaires get a completely different feel and respect for produce they have farmed and harvested themselves."

Well, it's not really their garden; it belongs to a foundation with the main purpose of presenting biodynamic garden cultivation to the city slickers of Stockholm. Rosendals Trädgård also delivers greens to a few, selected, high-end restaurants in town – among them Mathias Dahlgren.

The garden is located right outside Stockholm, a 20-minute walk from the city centre. On weekends, the path is filled to the brim with an army of upper middle class couples and families on their Sunday promenade routine on their way to the garden's café.

Another reason for Jacob and Anton's attachment is Niklas Karlsson, chef-turned-biodynamic gardener with a history in some of the most celebrated Swedish restaurants. He understands chefs, and they understand him. He has also worked in the kitchen at Gastrologik to understand their philosophy and needs.

"The Nordic countries have just very recently started to appreciate the exclusivity of our own produce," says Niklas Karlsson. "Only ten years ago, foie gras and truffle were the thing. The partnership with Gastrologik is the proof that what we're doing here at Rosendal is 'the shit'."

A great challenge for all chefs on this latitude is the supply of vegetables all year around. For this reason, according to Jacob Holmström, they're planning to build a cellar for storing root vegetables in the backyard of the restaurant in the middle of the city.

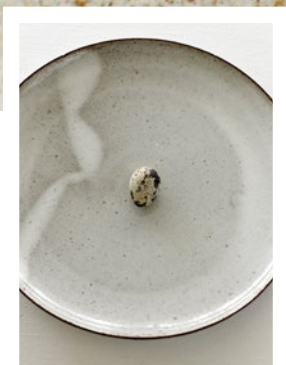
Gastrologik and the bistro Speceriet have together created a food destination in two steps. Speceriet, with a no-reservation, drop-in policy featuring simple, delicious food like tarte flambée with steak tartare, rotisserie chicken, veal heart kebab or Norwegian matjes herring with beetroot and baked egg yolk.

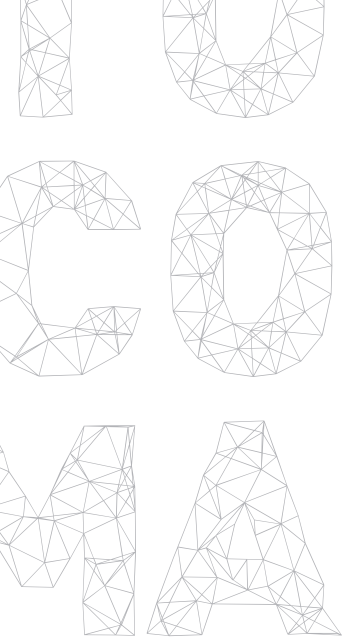
In the adjacent fine dining part, Gastrologik, the tasting menu is a different story.

I'm seduced by the velvety crème of cock's liver with a surprisingly refined flavour. Why eat fatty, corn-tainted foie gras when you can have this natural taste? The crème is served with crunchy meringue and super thin slices of lightly acidified apple.

The quail eggs have a yellowish tint. They look dirty. They're marinated in the restaurant's own, homemade soy from yellow pies. It gives the egg a strong, umami-enhanced flavour,







finely complementing the raw yolk. Wild char from Vindelälven up north is served with garlic mustard, sorrel and ground elder. A small blob of mayonnaise is distinctly flavoured with smoked leftover fish parts. Deep fried fish skin is served as a crunchy side to match the large roe berries. This is respectful head to fin cuisine according to Gastrologik. The dish “reindeer blood in reindeer brisket” is spectacularly presented, looking like miniature carbon black sea urchins. The lady at the next table can’t help but look when I take a bite.

“How does it taste?” she asks with a combination of excitement and disgust.

“It tastes like sucking blood from a live animal,” I say. “Like fresh meat, metal, moss, lichen, birch tree, herbs...anything that grows where the reindeer lives. It’s both succulent and rough.”

The head to tail approach is also applied to the healthy piece of langoustine tail from Fjällbacka on the west coast, served with a crème made from the head with toasted fennel seeds sprinkled on top.

The dessert list is pleasantly unpredictable. Dessert chef Anton Bjuhr tends to work with exactly the same produce as for the main dishes. He just looks at them from a dessert chef’s perspective. A refreshing milk sorbet sits on top of dense, sweet syrup with a touch of vinaigrette and pitch dark colour from burnt leek, with juicy and quite salty pieces of samphire. That’s an amazing finale.



# Ekstedt

To team them up was a stroke of genius. Niklas Ekstedt, extreme sportsman and chef prodigy turned restaurateur and celebrity chef, and Gustav Otterberg, who as a very young chef re-conquered a Michelin star for restaurant Leijontorner in Stockholm in 2008, with a truly personal version of austere Nordic cuisine. By the time Niklas Ekstedt, in the beginning of 2011, started to make plans for creating his second restaurant, Gustav Otterberg was sick and tired of the Stockholm restaurant scene. "I thought everyone did the same thing."



*Chef Gustav Otterberg*



Incidentally, he'd just moved into a house from the early 1800s in the countryside, with a fireplace and wood-burning stove. He had started to experiment with cooking over an open wood fire in his own house, and Niklas Ekstedt's idea of creating a restaurant with a Scandinavian pre-electricity kitchen couldn't have been more timely. Suddenly, Gustav Otterberg's inspiration returned.

The chimney-smoked avocado has a very distinctive, burned taste, which is matched with a healthy piece of sweet-tasting king crab tail, fried in butter. On the side, a small pile of chopped crab with cured lemon and almonds.

The king crab dish is washed down with a white wine with opulent, mature fruit and refreshing acidity from French Macon.

The sweetbreads are hidden in a pile of glowing hay. The burnt hay sticks to the sweetbread adding a rough edge to the refined taste of gland. A juicy pile of sweet and soft mush from fresh corn with generous amounts of grated summer truffles on top is served à part. In fact, the whole dish looks like something you picked up from your lawn, but the taste is lovely.

The lamb is served in two ways: the saddle, marinated in ginger, garlic and lemon, and a lamb sausage with the same flavours. The cherry tomatoes have dried on a wire above the hearth for a day to obtain their shrivelled, flavoursome state. Unexpectedly, the lamb and tomatoes sit on a soft spread of salted caramel.

"I happened to pass the salted caramel dessert in the kitchen one day when I had just taken a bite of the lamb," Gustav says. "And I realised, caramel and lamb...that's delicious!"

This is not your average subtle dish with nuanced flavours. It's obnoxiously full of taste, even the breadcrumbs are cooked in lamb fat. But still, it's well composed and in balance.

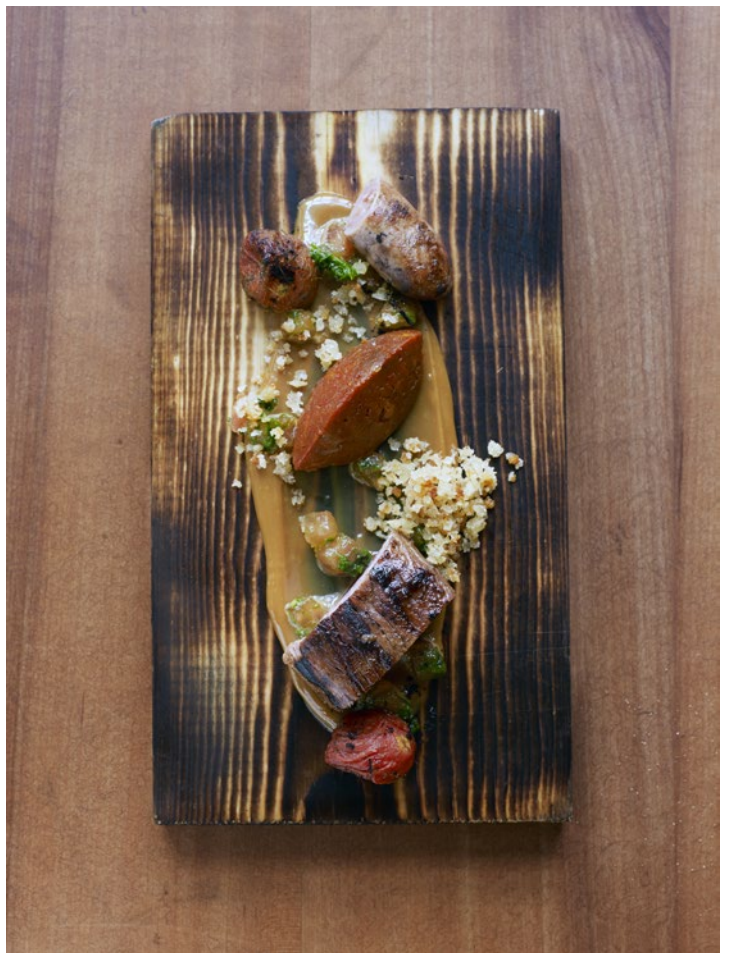
To match, the sommelier pours a thirst-quenching red wine, Nero d'Avola, from Sicilian wine whizz-kid Arianna Occhipinti. As with most of her creations, the wine is lean, easy to drink, yet full of earthy, herbal and spicy notes.

In the fall, Niklas Ekstedt and Gustav Otterberg will have more time together developing new ideas. This means experimenting with wood, fire and smoke. The present equipment – a large, wood-burning hearth, the fire pit and the wood-burning stove – will be joined by two new contraptions. A long tube cooling off the smoke, enabling the cold smoking of fish and seafood. The other device is a box where meat is grilled at lower temperatures, increasing the effect of the character of the wood on the taste of the meat.

According to their experience so far, fruit and berry trees generally give a sweet taste. Harder woods, such as oak, give a more sour and pungent tasting smoke. And pine and spruce give off a slightly tarry touch.

Gustav Otterberg is also interested in the Jamaican style jerky.

"People think the taste comes from the technique, but much of the character comes from the allspice tree wood which gives a very aromatic smoke."



## Oaxen Krog & Slip

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## Volt

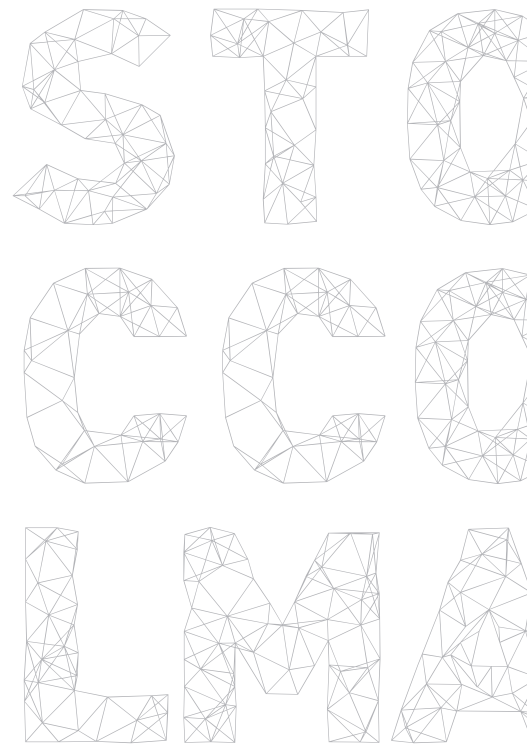
Kommendörsgatan 16  
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[www.restaurangvolt.se](http://www.restaurangvolt.se)

## Gastrologik / Speceriet

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## Restaurant Ekstedt

Humlegårdsgatan 17  
114 46 Stocolma  
Tel. +46 8 611 12 10  
[www.ekstedt.nu](http://www.ekstedt.nu)





**PANE SOFFICE**

**crosta** liscia, quasi assente  
**mollica** umida, morbida che si scioglie in bocca



**CIABATTA**

**mollica** quasi completamente priva  
**crosta** croccante sottile  
**alveolatura** irregolare aperta

**crosta** friabile  
**mollica** assente

**CIALDA**



0 IMPASTO  
12h RIPOSO

0h

1h

2h

3h

4h



**FOCACCIA IN TEGLIA ALLA ROMANA**

**alveolatura** aperta  
**crosta** croccante

**GRISSINO ALL'ACQUA**

**crosta** croccante  
**interno** cavo e leggero



**PAGNOTTA**

**crosta** croccante  
**mollica** umida e chiusa



L'uomo non ha ancora trovato il modo di fermare il tempo, perché il tempo è il carburante della vita. E così è per il pane: i fermenti nel tempo trasformano un impasto di farina, lievito, acqua e sale nei pani della nostra tavola. Lieviti vivi che si nutrono di farina e restituiscono l'energia che tira su il pane: dal cracker secco e sottile alla pagnotta con la crosta dorata e la mollica gustosa e ricca di umidità, passando per il grissino, la ciabatta, il panino morbido, la mantovana e così via. **Il tempo crea la struttura del pane, le consistenze, le diverse umidità, i sapori diversi a seconda dei piatti da accompagnare.** L'uomo non può fermare il tempo, ma il cuoco può controllare i fermenti dell'impasto. **E CON PETRA® USI UNA SOLA FARINA, UN SOLO LIEVITO E UN SOLO IMPASTO PER COSTRUIRE LA TUA LINEA DEL PANE.** Ti serve soltanto un orologio che misuri il tempo e questa linea del pane che ti dice quando bloccare la fermentazione dell'impasto. Da lì in poi saranno le tue idee a dare forma al pane della tua tavola. Facile, economico e buono. Come il vero pane.