

The Luxe List

GLAM GIFTS, GETS & GETAWAYS

Wolfgang Puck Reveals Ingredients for Luxe Living

By The Luxe List Executive Editor Merilee Kern



A world-renowned master in the kitchen and a charismatic personality, Wolfgang Puck is a dynamic "chef-lebrity" who is globally revered for his combination of classic cooking techniques and the modern fusion cuisine he pioneered in his iconic restaurants all around the world. All of the accolades that have ensued are decidedly well-earned, given he began his formal kitchen training at just 14-years of age with the encouragement of his mother — herself a chef in the Austrian town where he was born.

After honing his craft at some of the finest restaurants in France and, subsequently, in the United States, Wolfgang arrived in Los Angeles in 1975, where he took the city's culinary scene by storm — rapidly gaining favor with the Hollywood elite. His dynamic personality and culinary brilliance, bridges tradition and invention, making his food a magnet for the rich and famous, and himself an A-list star in his own right.

Driven by a genuine love of his craft and a passion to share his lifetime of professional knowledge with as many home cooks as possible, Wolfgang has added another venture to his credit: the Wolfgang Puck Online Cooking School. This digital destination is rife with beautiful, original, entertaining and inspiring high definition videos capturing Wolfgang's expertise and utter joy in the kitchen. This collection of instructional recipe-lessons, how-to techniques and engaging video cooking courses provides members with easy-to-learn teachings to prepare diverse dishes and learn culinary practices in the comfort of their home.

Given that Wolfgang seemingly never stops working or creating in one form or another, I was curious to know how he enjoys the fruits of his labor in his "down time." Hungry for enlightenment, I connected with Wolfgang for a conversation that reveals his tasty take on luxury living — and, not surprisingly, more planned professional endeavors ahead.

MK: What does the word "luxury" mean to you?

WP: When I was a young chef in my 20s, new to the United States, the idea of luxury meant having my own big convertible American car, which I drove across the country to settle in Southern California. Now, in my mid-60s, luxury is not a material achievement but a personal one: having time to enjoy the

company of the people I love — my wife Gelila, our sons Oliver and Alexander, and my two grown sons Cameron and Byron.

MK: What do you love to splurge on?

WP: My philosophy of good cooking, a concept I teach in every video recipe class in my Wolfgang Puck Online Cooking School, is that you always start with the best-quality ingredients and cook them in ways that highlight and intensify their natural flavor, aroma, color and texture. I like to spend money on good-quality ingredients, especially if they offer pleasures I can share with my family, my friends, and the guests in my restaurants. I can invest thousands of dollars to buy the best white truffles of the season, so we can offer shavings of them on pastas or pizzas or other dishes in our restaurants. When I'm dining out myself, I love to drink really good wine.

MK: What does your travel schedule look like?

WP: I travel a lot for businesses, with new restaurants opening up around the world. I find it fascinating to visit the new locations of our restaurants in Dubai, Istanbul and Singapore. We have a restaurant opening soon in the Disneytown district of the new Shanghai Disney Resort, and I can't wait to visit there.

MK: What is your favorite dish and who cooks it?

WP: I have many good friends who are chefs, and I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings by choosing one or the other. But I can answer this question because some of my favorite dishes my mother and grandmother cooked when I was growing up. One was my grandmother's giant Austrian-style ravioli filled with potato, cheese, and fresh herbs, served topped with freshly grated cheese and brown butter. She made it almost every week. When I recently filmed a lesson

in how to make that dish for my cooking school, I got choked up, reminiscing about how she made it. Good food has power to bring back memories.

MK: What is your best tip for living fabulously?

WP: More and more, I'm aware how important it is to eat healthy and exercise. Healthy food and delicious food aren't mutually exclusive. I teach ways to achieve both at once in my online cooking school. I try to work out in some way almost seven days a week, and the results show. As an Austrian native and U.S. citizen, I love to ski, and I do it better now, with much more stamina, than I did say 20-years ago.

MK: Have your life's luxuries been fairly consistent or have they changed over time?

WP: The greatest luxury to me is the time I spend with people I love and cooking great food at home every day. You'd be surprised by the effect of a delicious home cooked meal. I turn ordinary recipes into something extraordinary and it can transform a family's life by gathering everyone around the table.

MK: What luxury couldn't you give up?

WP: There's no question: I'd have a hard time giving up good food and good wine, especially when I'm enjoying them in the company of the people I love.

MK: How do you like to start your day?

WP: I'm not a breakfast person, but I can't do without a great cup of espresso coffee — or maybe a macchiato, an espresso "marked" with just a dash of foam from steamed milk. I brew it at home with our own espresso machine. It gives me enough fuel to drive my sons to school in the morning.

Access Wolfgang Puck Online Cooking School at: www.WolfgangPuckCookingSchool.com. Instructional videos will have you whipping up wonderful world-class fare in no time. ■

"The Luxe List" Executive Editor Merilee Kern scours the luxury marketplace for exemplary travel experiences, extraordinary events, and notable products and services. Submissions are accepted at www.TheLuxeList.com. Twitter: www.Twitter.com/LuxeListEditor Facebook: www.Facebook.com/TheLuxeList.

