



One of Europe's best chefs  
Thomas Bühner in his kitchen garden

"The cauliflower doesn't become any more delicious if it travels around the globe," says Thomas Bühner, one of Europe's best chefs, who works at the three-*Michelin*-starred *La Vie* restaurant in Osnabrück, Germany. That statement could very well serve as the slogan of the locavore movement, which aims to reduce the farm-to-plate gap by encouraging chefs to grow their own food. Indeed, an increasing number of chefs are turning to homegrown ingredients for their flavour and freshness, while consumers appreciate knowing where these ingredients come from. Environmentalists, for their part, praise the absence of preservatives, along with the small "ecological footprint" left by locally grown foods.

Bühner has the privilege of using Germany's largest kitchen garden at *Schloss Ippenbühren* as if it were his own and appreciates the immense variety of plants, of which there are more than 1,000. He has also taken a liking to plant parts that are not generally used in the kitchen, such as radish leaves and sugar snap blossoms.

French chef Alain Passard is widely seen as a forerunner to the locavore movement, using ingredients from his own farm in Bretagne to cater to his Parisian restaurant *L'Arpège*. However, the most influential role model has been Danish chef René Redzepi. Before he founded *Noma* in Copenhagen in 2003, gourmet cuisine was associated with extravagant imported dishes. Redzepi turned instead to regional ingredients, serving homegrown cloudberries in place of foie gras, and became the world's best chef. Now you can find numerous top notch restaurants that grow their own food, such as *Pied à Terre*, which operates a private 200 plant-garden on a rooftop in the middle of London.

In Stockholm, several eminent chefs share a patch at the public *Rosendals Trädgård* gardens. Among them are Jacob Holmström and Anton Bjuhr of *Gastrologik*, whose 10+ courses are made strictly from the daily harvest or fish catch. The menu is blank, as these two chefs abide by their grandparents' lesson that nothing tastes as good as freshly picked garden ingredients, and that you should simply eat what the host puts on your plate.

Sometimes, placing your trust in the chef can be a bit of an adventure. At the aforementioned *Noma* (which has been named the world's best restaurant for four of the past five years), Redzepi has been known to serve "edible dirt" made from dried malt and beer. How's that for whetting your appetite? **BO**

① [gastrologik.se](http://gastrologik.se)

① [restaurant-lavie.de](http://restaurant-lavie.de)

Bühner in "his" kitchen garden

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Photo courtesy of  
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## Chefs with a green thumb

Having your own vegetable garden is  
the hottest new restaurant trend