

The

CENTURION

MENU



CARME RUSCALLEDA
likes to experiment and
brings an artistic flair
to her Catalan food



SANTI SANTAMARIA
is a staunch advocate
of traditional
Catalan cuisine

Spain's Santi Santamaria and Carme Rusalleda both bring their own different cooking style to the traditional fare of their native Catalunya. We combine personal contributions from the Michelin three-starred chefs to form our exclusive Centurion Menu

PHOTOS COURTESY SANTI SANTAMARIA, JOE RAY (PORTRAIT CARME RUSCALLEDA), STOCKFOOD



“We didn’t have a TV. We had food and we talked about it” *Carme Ruscalleda*

OVER THE PAST DECADE, Catalan chef Ferran Adrià has turned the food world on its head with creations like spherifications, essences and gels. Shockwaves of his influence – a cuisine he’s perfected called ‘molecular gastronomy’ – rippled around the world. Catalan and Spanish cuisine got an incredible boost and chefs here have both risen to the challenge and rode the wave. It has created an inescapable, contagious excitement about food in Spain that the French can only dream about.

Fellow Catalans and Michelin three-star chefs, Santi Santamaria of Raco de Can Fabes, in Sant Celoni, and Carme Ruscalleda of Restaurant Sant Pau in Sant Pol de Mar, are both understandably closer to classic Catalan than Adrià’s other-worldly offerings, but are each doing their distinct best, basing their work on magnificent, pure presentations of local ingredients.

Each chef offers a unique and delicious definition when asked, ‘What is Catalan cuisine?’ Ruscalleda, who thrust herself into the spotlight in 2005 when she became Spain’s first female three-star chef (she also has two Michelin stars for the Tokyo version of Sant Pau), tweaks her definition every time she stands behind the stove or considers what to highlight in her frequent menu changes. Santamaria, who has a total of six Michelin stars including the three at his Can Fabes home base, forced the question when he unleashed a media firestorm in early 2008, attacking Adrià and Spain’s new wave.

Exclusively for Centurion readers, the chefs have conceived the Centurion Menu around three typical ingredients chosen by Ruscalleda: zucchini flowers, *gambas* (prawns) and chocolate.

Product selection isn’t much of a stretch for Ruscalleda, who comes from an agricultural family in the town of Sant Pol de Mar, about 50km up the coast from Barcelona – for her, food has always played a central role.

“We didn’t have a TV,” she says, recalling her youth. “We had food and we talked about it. Everyone worked hard. Everyone did their part. I come from a generation where we helped out at home. Today, if a parent told their 12-year-old to cook dinner, they’d scream child exploitation.”

Instead, the self-taught Ruscalleda relished the experience. “My training is domestic, but I sold and grew vegetables

and meat. I learned everything from my mother,” she explains. Now, continuing the family tradition, she is joined in the kitchen by her son, Raul.

Ruscalleda also had an artistic side to nourish. At 16, she taught herself the art of charcuterie. “I learned to kill pigs at home,” she says, playfully flaunting skills few chefs at any level possess. “I discovered that I could do classic sausages and more adventurous ones and people liked those, too. This is what opened the door for me.”

Her artistic side might now be most evident in what she calls ‘squid 2008 with five flavours’, where flavours are distributed across the protein in gelatin packets that are a gentle wink to Ferran Adrià, each containing liquid distillations of tastes like tomato, red pepper or squid ink, each bite different.



This love, understanding and appreciation of the product is evident in Ruscalleda’s ingredient choices. “The gamba is the princess of the sea,” she says, as if playfully referring to a fellow member of royalty. “In the kitchen we only use masculine zucchini flowers,” which are slightly smaller and grow on the plant stem, “they have the right form and nutrients.”

And the chocolate? She grins. “All women love chocolate.”

The real fun comes in seeing what Ruscalleda does with her products. Her deceptively simple ‘zucchini flower in tempura’ dish is encased in a nearly invisible tempura batter and dusted with gold flakes. Its ‘liquid stuffing’ combines Catalan classics like blood sausage, pumpkin and zucchini, which ooze from its floral wrapper only when cut.

Her ‘gamba omelette’ is a nib of *pa amb tomàquet* – garlic-rubbed, olive oil-coated tomato bread – rolled into an ultra-thin omelette. Beneath it, a pink sauce made from roe, all topped with one perfect, finger-sized gamba with fiery red stripes.

The chocolate she loves is part of a well-thought-out dessert simply called ‘bitter’ – coffee, chocolate, hazelnuts and citrus ice cream, each lending different forms of bitterness and acidity, all floating above a pool of grapefruit juice. It’s the perfect follow up to a cheese course and a sumptuous meal.

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“There’s a time where chefs have to say, ‘This doesn’t go on a plate’” *Santi Santamaria*



Santi Santamaria, on the other hand, is an altogether different proposition.

While Senyora Ruscalleda is the gentle teacher who wins your heart by sliding edible art under your nose, the Can Fabes chef is a Spanish bull in a china shop.

He is also a man on a mission – the Catalan version of activist French farmer José Bové. He knows what he likes about his food and what he doesn’t like about other styles of cuisine.

While Bové literally drove a tractor into a French McDonald’s restaurant, Santamaria has been driving a figurative one through Spain’s new wave of cuisine for the past year. He is both a protectionist and a predator, a genius and a manipulator, a relentless self-promoter; you will know what he thinks whether it’s through your mouth or your ears and after a long interview, I can’t decide if I want to hug the man or hit him.

Among other wildly provocative statements, in early 2008, he accused Ferran Adrià and his camp of poisoning diners by using ingredients such as methylcellulose to help create gels and emulsions. This went down like a lead balloon in Spanish gastronomic circles, causing hundreds of back-bitten chefs to sign a protest letter.

“We learn to cook from our parents and we’re at the point of major change,” he says, undaunted. “We have to respect our products. I have to denounce these things.”

You get the sense that his take on the world has been shaken to the core by Spain’s new wave and now he’s lashing out, but when we spoke, he did show a bit of soul beneath the hot air.

“There’s a time where chefs have to say, ‘This doesn’t go on a plate,’ and we have to ask what kind of society we want,” he says, defending his attacks. “I don’t have problems with other chefs – I’m talking about food and morals.”

His methods can be brutish – his is a very blunt instrument – but he’s also forcing the thinking gastronome to question everything they put in their mouth. Is this good? Is it worth it? Why? Plus, the person he raises the bar for the most is himself, a challenge he relishes.

Curiously, Santamaria wants change. More specifically, he wants progress, but his vision of progress is linear, not the parabolic rise Spain has seen in the last several years. He may serve cockles in a ginger broth, leaving the tiny bivalves blissfully untouched, but unlike Ruscalleda, it will be a cold day in hell before he makes any on-plate references to Ferran Adrià.

The dish also reveals Santamaria’s strict adherence to product primacy. “You can’t make an oyster more perfect,” he exclaims, exhibiting restraint in one of his favourite ingredients. “The chef’s job isn’t to dominate. We must just understand. Usually, we have fantastic local mushrooms. This year, there aren’t as many, but there’s no way I’m going to import them.

“A menu must always be a function of time – it’s got to go with the seasons.” He uses what his local farmers and fishermen can provide; this is what he knows and he will fight for.

His choices for what to do with the Centurion Menu ingredients reflect and flaunt this primacy. His ‘zucchini flower with cheese’ is a perfect example of this. Even in their fleeting season, the flowers are incredibly temperamental – available one day, closed up and off the market due to foul weather the next. Storage tends not to be much of a problem – if you get them in the morning, you serve them that evening or you throw them on the compost heap. On the plate, they are presented both cooked and uncooked to flaunt their beauty, stuffed with fresh cheese.

He creates ravioli with gambas, or more precisely, ravioli from gambas – replacing the pasta with thin slices of the crustacean and surrounding it

with a mushroom sauce that has bubbled away in the oven for an astounding twelve hours. His chocolate beignets are traditionally a cream-filled Easter dessert in his homeland, but chocolate is the star this time, stealing the show when each beignet’s tiny orb is broken and the molten chocolate truffle slowly works its way across the plate.

“The kitchen is a living organism,” Santamaria states, before adding, “Discussing is good. I don’t want to sleep through this – I want to fight,” he says, taking a bite of cured meat and sipping vermouth, “This is good. If I like it, I say it. I feel alive.”

Joe Ray



PHOTOS FROM TOP JOE RAY (1), ESTER SAULEDA (3)

PHOTOS FROM TOP JOE RAY (1), GÜNTER BEER (1), COURTESY SANTI SANTAMARIA (1), GÜNTER BEER (1)

CARME RUSCALLEDA

ZUCCHINI FLOWER TEMPURA SERVES 4

ZUCCHINI FLOWERS

- 4 male zucchini flowers | 8 chive sprigs
 • Steam the flowers and chives for one minute and set aside.

BLOOD SAUSAGE SAUCE

- 100g vegetable broth | 100g black blood sausage, without casing, cut in brunoise | salt and pepper
 • Crush and combine all ingredients and bring to the boil.
 • Strain, pour into 8 half-sphere silicone moulds (2cm diameter) and freeze.

ZUCCHINI SAUCE

- 50g zucchini skin cut in brunoise | 50ml mineral water | 25ml milk | 10ml olive oil | 10g butter | 25g leek | salt and pepper
 • Poach the leek with the olive oil and butter. Add the water and milk. Bring to the boil and add the sautéed zucchini.
 • Run through a Thermomix (a combination mixer/cooker) and strain. Fill 4 half-sphere silicone moulds and set aside.

PUMPKIN SAUCE

- 50g pumpkin | 35ml mineral water | 25ml milk | 15ml olive oil | 25g leeks | salt and pepper
 • Poach the leek in the olive oil and add the sliced pumpkin. Cover with the milk and cook for 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
 • Pass through the Thermomix and strain. Fill 4 half-sphere silicone moulds and set aside.

GOLD 'PAINT'

- 50g vegetable broth | 1.5g thickening gel | pastry gold
 • Mix the broth, the thickening gel and the gold in a bowl.

CHICKPEA PURÉE

- 100g boiled chickpeas, run through a potato ricer | 15g pork fat | salt and pepper
 • Add the pork fat to the chickpea purée. Add salt and pepper and set aside.

TEMPURA PASTE

- 50g wheat flour | 50g corn flour | 125ml cold mineral water | salt and pepper
 • Mix the ingredients and set aside in the refrigerator.

PRESENTATION

- Create 1 sphere of blood sausage sauce and another using one half sphere of zucchini sauce and one half sphere of pumpkin sauce.
- Insert the blood sausage sphere first and tie the flower at the midpoint with a chive sprig. Insert the vegetable sphere and close the flower with another chive sprig.
- Dredge the flower in the tempura batter. Deep fry in olive oil at 175°C for 1 minute then put the flower in the oven at 190° for 2 minutes.
- On the plate, make a line with the gold 'paint', add a spoon of chickpea purée and plate the flower with a dusting of pastry gold.



PHOTOS ESTER SAULLEDA

Carme Ruscalleda

GAMBAS OMELETTE WITH TOMATO BREAD, CORAL SAUCE AND 'CRUNCHY' LEGS SERVES 4

GAMBAS

- 4 gambas
 • Peel the tails and store in the refrigerator.
 • Set aside the head and the legs.

OMELETTE

- 2 organic eggs | olive oil and salt
 • In a 20cm sauté pan, make each omelette like a crêpe with one egg and set aside.

CORAL SAUCE

- 3 gamba heads | 15ml olive oil | 100g tomatoes | 2g garlic | 1g parsley | 20g dry sherry | 300ml mineral water | salt and pepper
 • Sauté the heads in the oil. Crush the tomato, garlic and parsley with the dry sherry and add to the sautéed heads. Cook for 5 minutes. Add boiling mineral water and cook for 15 minutes.
 • Strain and set aside.

MAYONNAISE

- 100ml olive oil | 30g pasteurised egg | 0.5g garlic | salt
 • Put the ingredients into a blender to make the mayonnaise. Set aside.

TOMATO

- 250g grated fresh tomato without seeds | olive oil and salt | 5g vegetable gelatin
 • Put the grated tomato in a strainer and keep the liquid. Add olive oil and salt to the tomato solids, place into a rectangular silicone mould (2.5x6cm) and freeze.
 • Create a gelatin with 100ml tomato water and the vegetable gelatin.

BREAD

- Dry four bread slices cut in rectangles (7.5x2.5cm) in a 100°C oven.

ROCKET LEAVES WITH CAVA DRESSING

- 100ml olive oil | 20ml Cava vinegar | salt
 • Mix all the ingredients and set aside to dress the rocket leaves.

CRUNCHY GAMBA LEGS

- Dredge the legs in low-gluten flour. Add salt and fry in olive oil. Dry on a paper towel and set aside.

GAMBA OIL

- 1 gamba head cut in brunoise | 20g scallion cut in brunoise | 70ml olive oil | 10ml brandy | salt
 • Sauté the scallion and add the gamba head. After five minutes, add the brandy and wait one minute. Add the olive oil and simmer for 20 minutes before setting aside.

PRESENTATION

- Heat the tomato-water gelatin to 82°C and immerse the tomato rectangle.
- Set aside and cool to room temperature.
- Mix the coral sauce with the garlic mayonnaise.
- Cut the omelette into rectangles just large enough to wrap around the tomato and bread rectangles.
- Place the tomato rectangle on top of the bread rectangle, top with a small dollop of sautéed spring garlic and roll it into the omelette rectangles.
- Heat the omelette roll in the oven at 190°C for 2 minutes.
- Create a circle of coral mayonnaise on the plate and add three drops of gamba oil. Plate the omelette roll and the sautéed gamba tail. Add three rocket leaves dressed with Cava vinaigrette and garnish with the crunchy gamba leg.

“All women love chocolate”



PHOTO ESTER SAULEDA

PHOTO STOCKFOOD

CARME RUSCALLEDA

'BITTER' DESSERT SERVES 4

CHOCOLATE AND HAZELNUT BROWNIE

*For one side of the dessert, whip 320g of eggs and 300g of sugar
For the other side, melt 400g of butter and 250g of chocolate with
70% cocoa. Keep them at 41°C.*

- Cut 250g of toasted hazelnuts in quarters.
- Mix the egg mixture with the chocolate mixture.
- Add the flour and the hazelnuts.
- Put it into an oven tray lined with baking paper.
- Cook in the oven at 160°C for 7-8 minutes and put into the freezer.
- Cut into rectangles.

COFFEE MOUSSE

*70ml milk | 70ml cream | 20g of egg yolks | 300g 70% cacao chocolate
4 gelatin sheets | 500ml cream | 200ml of ristretto espresso*

- Bring the milk, the cream, the coffee and the egg yolks to a boil. Add the gelatin and pour the boiling mix into the chocolate. Mix until cooled to 40°C.
- Add the semi-mounted cream, mix and set aside.

COFFEE GLAZE

400ml ristretto espresso | 2.5 gelatin sheets

- Dip and fuse the gelatin and mix with the coffee. When cool, add to the coffee mousse.

PHYLLO COOKIE

- Cut the phyllo pastry into triangles and paint with butter and brown sugar. Cook in the oven at 190°C for 5 minutes.

MILK ICE CREAM

*1250ml milk | 25g milk powder | 110g glucose powder | 150g sugar
100g dextrose | 10g stabiliser*

- Warm all the ingredients except the stabiliser to 40°C. Add the stabiliser and bring to 60°C. Add 80g of butter and bring to 80°C. Allow to rest for 4-8 hours then put into an ice-cream machine.

COFFEE ICE CREAM

*320ml milk | 200ml espresso coffee | 195ml cream
60g milk powder | 140g dextrose | 60g sugar
20g inverted sugar syrup | 6g stabiliser*

- Mix the milk, the coffee, the cream, the powdered milk, the sugar and the inverted sugar syrup. Bring to the boil, adding the stabiliser at 40°C. Bring to 80°C and let rest for 4-8 hours before running the mixture through an ice-cream machine.

CARAMELISED HAZELNUTS

125g fondant | 75ml liquid glucose | 75g of toasted hazelnuts

- Combine the fondant and glucose in a saucepan and bring to 170°C. At 130°C, add the hazelnuts and remove at 170°C. Place separated on Silpat sheets to cool and keep in a box with silica gel.

GRAPEFRUIT JUICE

- Make a natural grapefruit juice and set aside.

PRESENTATION:

Place 3 separated hazelnut brownies on the bottom of a shallow bowl. Place four caramelised hazelnuts between them. Grind black pepper on top of both elements. Place a dollop of each ice cream atop the hazelnut brownies and top with a phyllo cookie. At the table, pour the grapefruit juice into the bottom of the bowl.

Santi Santamaria

GAMBA RAVIOLIS WITH CÈPE OIL SERVES 4

12 medium-sized gambas per person
 170g fresh cèpe mushrooms
 1 large onion
 40ml cèpe oil (dried cèpes in virgin olive oil)
 1 handful baby onions
 Salt and pepper

- Peel the gambas and remove the heads. Flatten the tails between two sheets of kitchen plastic wrap and freeze them for 2 hours to be able to work better with them.
- Sauté the fresh cèpes with the chopped onion and let them bubble away.
- Place the dried cèpes in virgin olive oil. Place in a bain-marie until the oil soaks up the flavour of the mushrooms.
- Finely chop the baby onions, taking care not to crush them.

PRESENTATION

- Present the dish on large plates, placing six gambas on each plate to start. Place a spoonful of the onion and cèpe mixture on top of each gamba to create the filling. Once the gambas are back to room temperature, form them into the ravioli shape around the filling.
- Flavour the dish with the cèpe oil, salt and pepper just before serving.



PHOTO GÜNTER BEER



SANTI SANTAMARIA

RICOTTA-STUFFED ZUCCHINI FLOWERS

BROTH

1 leek
 2 onions
 ½ bunch parsley
 ½ celery stalk
 2 zucchini
 1 head of garlic
 Salt

- Place all the ingredients into a saucepan and cook for 50 minutes.
- Set aside and allow to cool.

ZUCCHINI FLOWERS

16 zucchini flowers
 200g fresh ricotta
 1 tablespoon minced baby onion
 1 tablespoon minced parsley

1 tablespoon finely diced tomato
 1 tablespoon finely diced zucchini
 6 tablespoons olive oil
 Salt and pepper

- Wash the zucchini flowers.
- Blanch the flowers in boiling water and cool them.
- Dry them with a dish cloth.
- Mix the baby onion, parsley and tiny diced vegetables with the ricotta. Season with salt and pepper and add the olive oil.
- Fill the flowers with the mixture using a wide-tipped pastry bag.

PRESENTATION

- Serve the stuffed flowers in a shallow bowl (use four flowers per person – the above image is to show detail only) and add the cool broth at the table if you wish to serve the dish as a soup.

PHOTO COURTESY SANTI SANTAMARIA

“A menu must be a function of time - it must go with the seasons”

SANTI SANTAMARIA

CHOCOLATE BEIGNETS WITH COCONUT SORBET

SERVES 6

FRYING BATTER FOR THE CHOCOLATE BEIGNETS

180g flour
1 egg yolk
1 whole egg
16g yeast
50g sugar
30ml carbonated water

- Mix the flour, yeast, sugar and water first, then add the egg yolk and whole egg and mix.

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

1,250ml cream
2.5kg dark Valrhona chocolate
200g butter
250ml brandy

- Mix all the ingredients and chill before coating with the frying batter.
- Fry the mixture in hot oil until the coating has just taken on a golden colour – this should only be about 15 seconds.

COCONUT SORBET

500ml coconut milk
50g sugar
30ml rum

- Mix the ingredients and add into an ice cream maker.

PRESENTATION

- Combine the two elements next to each other on one dish, dust the beignets with powdered sugar and serve.



PHOTO STOCKFOOD

PHOTO GÜNTER BEER