

Press Release
April 4, 2018

Ultima – Finnish restaurant pioneers in high-tech hyperlocal production

The Finnish restaurant Ultima, to open on the 15th of May, is a global pioneer in high-tech hyperlocal production of food. While enjoying the evening, the customers can see their meal literally growing around them.

Restaurants around the world are experimenting ever more with growing ingredients on location. This trend is motivated mostly by sustainability. [Ultima](#) is taking hyperlocal produce to a new level by combining Finnish, top-of-the world food technology and circular economy know-how.

Ultima, located in the centre of Helsinki, houses a hydroponic growing system, aeroponic potato tubes, balloon-shaped pendants with crickets living inside them and a mushroom-growing statue. The ability to grow fresh ingredients on the premises year-round is a revolutionary concept to a restaurant in a city where winter temperatures reach -20 C and snow in April and even in May is business as usual.

Cold climate and a short growing season haven't prevented the Helsinki food scene from flourishing. The capital of the happiest country in the World (UN's Happiness Report 2018) is gaining reputation as an exotic and delicious weekend destination. Finnish food belongs to the family of now world-famous Nordic cuisine. But Finnish food, due to the location of Finland in a remote, Northern corner of Europe, is edgier and wilder than its' Scandinavian siblings.

The main idea behind Ultima, founded by two of Finland's top chefs, **Henri Alén** and **Tommi Tuominen**, is to test how effectively circular economy can work in a restaurant in an Arctic country. They are combining top Finnish food tech, circular economy and most importantly, their ability to prepare delicious food sustainably.

Ultima is cooperating with Sitra, the Finnish innovation fund with expertise on circular economy. As the first country in the world, Finland has had a national circular economy roadmap since 2016.

"Finland is a country of engineers. Now they can show what they can do in food technology", Alén says. Another reason why Alén and Tuominen think Helsinki is exactly right spot for an experimental restaurant is the Finnish people.

"Finns are very willing to experiment with food. They are radical, even. They don't have as many fixed ideas about how food should be as people have for instance in France or Spain or in other countries with an old and dominant culinary culture", Alén continues.

Ultima is a Finnish restaurant in the sense that 90 per cent of its' ingredients originate from Finland. All the ingredients are traceable. Alén and Tuominen create both Nordic and international tastes from these Finnish ingredients. Just as well as a classic elk-meat tartar, you could be served Finnish wild fish with Ultima's version of fermented Asian sauce. Instead of soya, Alén and Tuominen prepare the sauce from broad beans. Crickets are on the menu, too.

Alén and Tuominen's previous restaurant *Finnjäväl* caused a sensation by delving into the history of Finnish food and elevating the Northern country's traditional, sometimes very meagre delicacies to haute cuisine level. Alén owns several restaurants in Helsinki and is a known tv-chef. Tuominen's Demo restaurant has had a Michelin star for 12 years.

Ultima's hyperlocal farming:

- Hydroponic, vertical greenhouse by [Green Automation](#)
- Funguses by [Helsieni](#)
- Crickets by [Entocube](#)
- Biodesign by [Ateljé Sotamaa](#)

Media enquiries: Publicist Katja Viitalähde-Annala, +35850 3956084, katja.viitalahde@cestlavie.fi

Photos: [restaurant-ultima.fi](#)