

## Moveable Feast

*From Tablecloths to Taco Trucks, the World's Best Food*

By Julia Bainbridge on November 5, 2009 3:40 PM | [No Comments](#)

### Three Things You Didn't Know About Alain Ducasse



Photo: Mikael Vojinovic

A few weeks ago, I sat down with [Alain Ducasse](#), whose [miX on the beach](#) restaurant will open in April along with the new [W Retreat & Spa on Vieques island](#). (Think local ingredients like papaya, cashew fruit, guanabana, and pumpkin squash.) I felt prepared for a tête-à-tête with the 15 Michelin star man: Ducasse's [Adour](#) restaurant in New York's St. Regis Hotel, where I've dined a number of times, was on Condé Nast Traveler's [Hot List](#) last year; I was familiar with both his cooking style and his 20-some restaurants around the world, including the [Jules Verne](#) in the Eiffel Tower. I thought there was little about this very famous chef that could be news to me. Wrong. Read after the jump for three things I learned about Ducasse over the fluffiest [madeleines](#) imaginable.

1. For someone who spends a lot of time tucked in the kitchen, the office, or the tasting room, Ducasse knows a lot about culture. That's because those kitchens, offices and tasting rooms are located all around the world: together with his hospitality group,

ALAIN DUCASSE Entrepeneur, Ducasse runs 20 restaurants across 8 countries (not to mention his hotels and the cooking school listed below). So what has the man learned from his Hong Kong-Tokyo-Osaka-Las Vegas-New York-Paris-Monaco-London schedule? One city's delicacy is another city's throwaway. "The Chinese like their fish juicy and well-done—cooked almost in a bouillon," Ducasse says. He figured this out after his [Spoon Hong Kong](#) customers returned dishes with only the edges nibbled off of whole-cooked fish. "In New York and Paris that doesn't work—they like it just cooked. A Chinaman from Hong Kong could never eat at Le Bernardin, for example, because the fish would be undercooked for them." And for Ducasse, [Le Bernardin](#) is the reference for seafood.

2. Last May, Ducasse opened [École de Cuisine Alain Ducasse](#), his first culinary school for non-professionals, in Paris. You may not see him walking the halls of the new building on rue de Ranelagh, but you can take classes led by chef des chefs Romain Corbière, who trained with Ducasse at Le Relais du Parc and Le Louis XV. Ducasse's main piece of advice: "Speed is not of the essence!" Courses last a minimum of a half day or evening.
3. His dream job? Professional traveler.