

# Germany unveils the hands-free restaurant

**By Harry de Quetteville  
in Berlin**

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GERMANY'S reputation for efficiency has been taken to a new level after an inventor and amateur chef dispensed with the need for waiters by designing an automated restaurant.

Baggers, in the southern town of Nuremberg, has caused such a sensation since it opened that its owner said yesterday that it is now booked out for weeks in advance. "On weekends we are booked out five times a day," said Michael Mack.

While Michelin-starred restaurants aspire to greatness with staff catering to a diner's every need, Baggers is seeking accolades by dispensing with the human touch altogether.

Its tables are fitted with touch-screen computers that customers use to send orders directly to the kitchen on the upper floor.

Chefs then cook the dishes and place them on an ingenious helter-skelter rail system that uses the power of gravity to guide the order to the customer who placed it.

Mr Mack said he first came up with idea 10 years ago while rushing to serve guests at a dinner party. He has now patented the system and has fielded interest from abroad as well as the world's biggest fast-food chains.

But he insisted that the restaurant was not a glorified fast-food joint and said customers could use their screens to inspect the organic ingredients in every meal, or even send emails or text messages.

Reaction in an online guest-book appeared overwhelmingly positive, though some diners said they had been put off by the robotic atmosphere. Nonetheless, Mr Mack said he was planning to open a second restaurant next year.

Above all, he said his idea showed that Germany's national trait could be harnessed in the kitchen. He said: "People will get more service, better food and more comfort for less money - thanks to the efficiency."