



**A documentary about a beloved cuisine and its humble quest for its first Michelin Star**



## Synopsis

The Michelin Guide is one of the most influential and notoriously secretive institutions in gastronomy, and the awarding of its Michelin Star is steeped in glamor. With the Guide's inspection process so opaque, even chefs who have achieved a Star are uncertain exactly what Michelin is looking for. Michelin never discusses their assessments with chefs.

There has never been a pizzeria anywhere in the world to receive this coveted award. Passionate Neapolitan *pizzaiolo*, *Ciro Oliva*, hopes to change this. Four generations of his family have operated this humble pizzeria, but it is *Ciro's* years of effort that have transformed it into a culinary destination complete with a tasting menu, sommelier, and an ever-present line to enter. He has committed to a more Michelin-centric experience not typically associated with pizza.

Globally, the traditions of fine dining are changing, and Michelin must adjust. Michelin awards Stars based on five criteria which happen to be the very qualities *Ciro* is devoted to in his restaurant. Pizza is a meal for everyone, suitable for everyone's pocket, yet at the same time it can be quite complex. As Michelin expands their view, we will see if this democratic food can rise to the shifting standards of the culinary world and the arbiters defining what is good taste.

## A Friend of Michelin

A Michelin Star is the de facto gold metal of gastronomy, and is the preferred shortcut used by nearly all culinary content to label a chef or restaurant as "elite." Because of the secretive nature of Michelin's process, there is effectively zero official on-camera involvement from the organization. Michelin granted *Stella* uncharacteristically long-form interviews with International Director, *Gwendal Poullennec*, and Head of Historical Heritage, *Stéphane Nicolas* to discuss the mission and history of the Guide, and provided nearly unthrottled access to their archives. *Stella* have cultivated an open and respectful line of communication with Michelin that no other culinary documentary has before achieved.

## More Than Just a Taste

The production of *Stella* spanned three years, three countries, and examined three very different elite restaurants. *Ciro Oliva* is among the best pizza chefs in the world, and all eyes are on him. While "will he/won't he" in regard to earning a first-of-its-kind Michelin Star may compel *Ciro's* story on the surface, there is more to a Star beyond the shiny plaque. With in-depth looks into the experiences of other Starred chefs, interviews with culinary experts, and surprise access to Michelin Guide top brass, we begin to demystify what a Star represents to chefs and restaurateurs. Can a young chef manage the attention from earning a landmark Michelin Star? Will he find peace if a Star never comes?

## Filmmaker's Bio

*Tyler Doehring* has worked in non-scripted television since 2012, working on programs for Viacom, History Channel, Bravo and others while based in New York City. *Stella* is his first feature-length film and directorial debut. Along with his producing partner *Pablo Diego*, Tyler has produced many short-form projects, music videos and commercial content. Tyler is also a Motion Picture Academy Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting Semifinalist.

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Runtime: 78min 57sec  
Aspect Ratio: 16:9  
Audio Format: Stereo (48khz 24bit)  
Language: English/Italian/French  
(English Subtitles)