The Genteel Xtremist: How the QCD phase diagram was unravelled by a Bielefelder

Matter undergoes phase changes as its temperature or pressure is raised. Its fate under very high temperatures, as may have been witnessed few microseconds after the Big Bang and is now being explored in heavy ion collisions, or at very high densities feasible in dense neutron stars has fascinated physicists since long. With the advent of Quantum Chromo Dynamics (QCD) as the theory of strongly interacting matter, and discrete space-time lattice as the reliable tool to extract predictions of QCD, the field has witnessed enormous progress. Pioneering contributions have come from the Bielefeld group. Major results and their impact will be discussed.