

ANNUAL HOSPITALITY FORUM 2018

The Annual Hospitality Forum, organized by Hospitality News ME in collaboration with Hodema Consulting Services, took place during the 25th anniversary of HORECA Lebanon 2018. This key event provided a valuable opportunity for the industry to come together and highlight the pertinent issues of the day. Here's a snapshot of what was discussed



“The shift in the political situation starting November 2017 saw Iranians, Iraqis, Kuwaitis, Egyptians and Turks considering Lebanon as a holiday destination; a shift I believe to be a healthy one.”

Dagmar Symes, General Manager, Phoenicia Hotel Beirut and Le Vendome Beirut

“Taking into consideration the difficult economic situation, we had to make concessions to maintain high occupancy and ensure continued partnerships with the companies we deal with.”

Georges Ojeil, General Manager, Le Gray, Beirut



“Guesthouses help us shine a light on some of the country's beautiful locations that have gone unnoticed for far too long.”

Ramzi Salman, Owner, Bkerzay

“My aim is to support the various aspects of local identity, by offering a complete service comprising the location, produce, cuisine, architecture, and arts and crafts, for a truly all-encompassing experience.”

Kamal Mouzawak, Founder Souk el Tayeb, Tawlet, Beit Network

“There is no shortage of hotels in Lebanon. However, these remain limited in their offering compared to guesthouses, where visitors can spend their entire time engaged, rather than enter only to exit hours later.”

Khalil Arab, Owner, Palm Beach Hotel and Al Yasmine Guesthouse

“Our management company runs a number of guesthouses and we ensure that new entrants to the industry are offered added value in terms of services, so as to gain an edge in this niche segment that is rapidly growing.”

Sarah Berjaoui, Owner, Ouda w Dar

“After a 25 year stint outside Lebanon, I returned to Sour and renovated an old house, because I wanted to help highlight the city as a touristic destination that has more than white sandy beaches to offer.”

Philippe Tabet, Owner, Dar Alma and Dar Camelia

“We are extending the guesthouse experience by using the space we have to feature artwork and in so doing, lending the experience a more home-away-from-home feeling.”

Nabil Debs, Owner, Arts Club



“Eating healthy is far better than subjecting my body to chemicals that eventually may or may not work.”
Sabine Kassouf, Owner, Organic Sisters and A New Earth

“Our B2B model has us offering our products directly to F&B outlets and therefore making them available to would-be consumers.”
Reema Maamari, Owner, Biolicious

“Our gluten-free outlets offer individuals who suffer from different kinds of allergies and have numerous other health concerns safe-to-consume baked goods and pastries.”
Rena Dagher, Owner, Oh! Bakehouse

“I started growing organic vegetables and selling them in baskets to clients once a week. Over time, we extended our range of offerings and even acquired the franchise of La Vie Claire.”
Zeina Daoud, Owner, La Vie Claire and Le Potager



“Winning the event gave me a lot of confidence in myself as a person and my abilities as a chef.”
Chef Mostafa Seif El Din Mortada, Winner, MBC Top Chef 2018

“I can truly admit that despite the fact I felt bad for not winning, I nonetheless managed to learn so much and that reminded me why I am here in the first place.”
Chef Serge Ghazarian, Contestant, MBC Top Chef 2018

“Being a contestant on the show has driven me to think way beyond what I thought was possible and that opened up incredible possibilities.”
Chef George Chartoune, Contestant, MBC Top Chef 2018

“Whether the candidate won top honors or otherwise, making it this far should be viewed as a great personal achievement.”
Chef Maroun Chedid, Owner Maroun Chedid Academy and Ritage Restaurant, Judge, MBC Top Chef



“Lebanese food is very simple, humble and healthy and if you’re a vegetarian, you’re in heaven.”
Tony Kitous, Owner, Pasha, Kenza and Comptoir Libanais

“Lebanese cuisine taught me how to be humble and is a reflection of the people, which is why it’s so generous and healthy.”
Joe Barza, Lebanese Terroir Culinary Artists

“No one is changing the cuisine; the cuisine itself is alive, and when it’s alive, it will continuously change on its own.”
Kamal Mouzawak, Founder, Souk el Tayeb, Tawlet, Beit network



“Trending in the F&B sector today are concepts that take the consumers back to their roots, because people are oversaturated with technology and feel the need for minimalism and simplicity.”
Georges Khoueiry, CEO, Disruptive Entertainment Group

“In Lebanon, people are well traveled, and therefore shy away from copy-paste concepts.”
Rouba Khalil, Owner, Rouba Khalil Kitchen

“We opened our restaurant based on the things we enjoy most, as we figured that we will be spending most of our waking hours there.”
Athanasios Kargatzidis, Owner and Chef, Baron

“Casual-fun dining will definitely continue to trend, as will the farm-to-table movement.”
Maysoon Sleiman, Owner and Managing Partner, The Sage Parlour

“When a restaurant’s menu is centered on mixing two cuisines to come up with new dishes, the success rate is very low, because Lebanese food is really good on its own.”
Emile Razzouk, Business Development and Project Manager, Addmind Group

Organic vs. Non-organic Clusters



“A standalone restaurant doesn’t get as much traffic nowadays because people don’t go out to have dinner and return home; they want to live a full experience and this is where clusters come in.”
Elie Njeim, General Manager, Zaitunay Bay

“Despite the economic situation, our projects add value to the community’s lifestyle, as we are bringing the service to them.”
Marwan Ayoub, Managing Partner, Venture Group

“I want to take my customers back in time before all the modern conveniences became available.”
Alain Hadife, Owner, Zero 4

Sustainable Beach Clubs



“The main problem we are facing when attracting tourists to our outlets for an extended time period is directly related to the size of the coastal space we are afforded.”
Nizar Alouf, Board Member, Riviera Hotel

“The key to sustainability and growth is to make a minimum number of investments that have a maximum effect on the business.”
Georges Boustani, Owner, Lazy B

“Our model offers all parties interested a year-round access to the beach and the restaurants, with more focus on food and regular beverages to generate the required profit for sustained operation.”
Charif Doumit, CEO, Al Mandaloun Management

“The idea of opening a second beach resort at a different location under the same brand is a country first.”
Khalil Noujeim, Managing Partner, Orchid Beach Resort

“Various factors affecting the tourism season will eventually see visitors thinking twice before making their summer plans in Lebanon.”
Jean Beyrouti, General Secretary, Syndicate of Beaches and Resorts, Lebanon

AHF included a host of topics including the Lebanese Food Coalition with ACT, FAO and the Lebanese Food Bank, Restaurant Interiors with Delphine Gebran Markarian, Startups and Disruptions in the Agri-Food Sector with Berytech, Food Safety and Awareness in Japanese Cuisine with the Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Night Clubs & Pastries and Sustainable Beach Clubs with Amber Consulting.

AN EVENT BY **HORECA** ORGANIZED BY **Hospitalitynews MIDDLE EAST** IN COLLABORATION WITH **hodema consulting services**

Quality on Time



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