



The Guest Experience

An Interview with
Noah Tepperberg, Co-Founder, TAO Group



The Pearl Lounge at Beauty & Essex (left) and dining room at TAO Downtown (above), both located in lower Manhattan

EDITORS' NOTE Noah Tepperberg and his partners are the masterminds behind some of the most successful restaurant and nightlife brands to open over the past decade, including Marquee, TAO, Avenue, and LAVO. In 2003, Tepperberg and Jason Strauss opened Marquee nightclub in New York City. Soon thereafter, the duo partnered with TAO founders Marc Packer and Rich Wolf to open TAO at The Venetian in Las Vegas. They followed the tremendous success of TAO Las Vegas by opening LAVO Restaurant & Nightclub at The Palazzo Hotel Casino Resort in Las Vegas and added partner Lou Abin to the TAO Group in 2008. In 2009, they introduced Avenue in New York's trendy Chelsea neighborhood and in 2010 they opened LAVO Restaurant & Nightclub in New York. Together with his TAO Group partners, Tepperberg opened Marquee Nightclub & Dayclub at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas on New Year's Eve 2011. They made their first foray into international territory with the debut of Marquee at The Star Casino & Hotel in Sydney, Australia. In 2013, the group once again raised the bar on nightlife with the introduction of TAO Downtown in New York City. Tepperberg earned a B.B.A. degree in Business Management from the University of Miami.



Noah Tepperberg

COMPANY BRIEF TAO Group (taogroup.com) is a leading restaurant and nightlife company that develops, owns and operates many of the most successful food, beverage and nightlife entertainment venues. Founding partners Marc Packer, Rich Wolf, Noah Tepperberg, and Jason Strauss bring decades of hospitality experience to the company. Currently TAO Group boasts operations in New York City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Chicago, Singapore and Sydney, Australia. In New York City, the collection includes Avenue, Beauty & Essex, LAVO Italian Restaurant and Nightclub, Marquee Nightclub, The Stanton Social, TAO Asian Bistro Uptown, TAO Asian Bistro Downtown and Vandal. TAO Group operates all of the food and beverage outlets within the Dream Downtown hotel including room service, PHD Rooftop, Electric Room and Bodega Negra. Additionally, they operate all of the food and beverage outlets within the Dream

Midtown hotel including The Rickey, Fishbowl and PHD Terrace. TAO Group unveiled three new concepts within Moxxy Times Square including Legasea, a Seafood Brasserie; Egghead, an egg-centric all-day breakfast sandwich shop; and Magic Hour Rooftop Bar & Lounge, New York City's largest hotel rooftop open year round. Las Vegas operations include TAO Asian Bistro, Nightclub & Beach at The Venetian, LAVO Italian Restaurant & Lounge at The Palazzo, Beauty & Essex at The Cosmopolitan and Marquee Nightclub & Dayclub at The Cosmopolitan. TAO Group's Los Angeles venues include Avenue, Beauty & Essex, Luchini Pizzeria & Bar, TAO Asian Bistro and The Highlight Room rooftop, lounge, pool and grill atop the Dream Hollywood. Marquee Nightclub at The Star-Sydney represents the company's first international offering. TAO Group made its Asia debut with the opening of LAVO Italian Restaurant & Rooftop Bar in Singapore at Marina Bay Sands. TAO Group's most recent U.S. market expansion introduced TAO Asian Bistro & Nightclub to Chicago.

What have been the keys to TAO Group's success and to the consistent strength of the brands?

The absolute key to that success is our team. We have put together such an amazing group of professionals, most of whom have been with us for many years.

It's like having a band that has played together for years – they don't need to be queued; they know exactly when to play their part.

That is how I look at things. We have become an amazingly well-oiled rock star band. The people on our team know what to do and they all share the same culture, which is making sure we provide the best possible guest experience every single night and day.

Where do you see growth opportunities for TAO Group?

Right now, our focus is on growing our core brands, which are TAO, LAVO, Avenue, Marquee, and Beauty & Essex. We're working on scaling those particular five brands.

However, we're always looking for opportunities for the other brands and we're

always looking for a chance to create new brands. We're working on two to three new brands a year at this point, but those core five brands right now are the ones that we have had the most success with scaling.

Once we have two or three locations within a brand, it becomes a bit easier to scale.

Will your growth be in the U.S. as well as in international markets?

Our focus right now is on our hubs, which are New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Chicago and Singapore.

We don't have immediate plans to add more hubs, but our goal would be to eventually add two to three more, which would probably include Miami and London.

I would rather have 10 amazing places in eight great cities than have 80 places in 80 different cities.

When you are known for the scene that your brands provide, is it challenging to build awareness for the quality of the food as well?

Sometimes people are misled. They go to TAO because they want the scene and they are surprised when they get an amazing dish. What they don't realize is that we spend more time and effort trying to make sure the food and service is right than we do on the actual scene in the dining room.

Great food is truly a product of great ingredients. Our chefs are relentless when it comes to finding the best ingredients available.

Do you look to hire people with a hospitality background and what are the key characteristics that you look for in your team?

The first thing we look for when we're talking about the people on the ground, whether it's a host, a server or a bartender, is a smile. One can teach hospitality and the steps of service. What we can't teach is how to have a warm smile that hugs every person they talk to. That is what we look for.

What has made the relationship among the four partners work so well and do you focus on different areas of the business?

We all respect each other's abilities and what each of us excels at. We all do a little of the same thing, but we each have our lanes that we're best in. We all understand that each partner has a lane and everyone tries to stay in their lanes which is a big part of why we work so well together. ●