

## LDV's Evolution



LDV's new flagship location – Scarpetta NYC, 88 Madison Avenue at The James New York – NoMad

### An Interview with John Meadow, President, LDV Hospitality

**EDITORS' NOTE** Focused on concept and business development, John Meadow drives the creative process for LDV, envisioning and creating new concepts as well as forging business partnerships with hoteliers, developers, and celebrated chefs alike. Meadow began his career in the hospitality industry immediately after graduating from Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, serving as manager at The Plaza Hotel's Oak Room. In 2008, he sought to create something of his own and opened



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Scarpetta to critical acclaim in New York City's then-emerging Meatpacking District. With Scarpetta's success, he went on to launch LDV Hospitality, which now boasts 26 food and beverage concepts throughout the country. Meadow's vision and philosophy for LDV is to take inspiration from iconic, classic moments of Old World hospitality cultures and adapt them to today's modern social life. Today, Meadow remains active in the alumni network at Cornell University, serving as the school's official Entrepreneur-in-Residence, as well as hosting and participating in a variety of classes, panels and events for the school throughout the year. Additionally, he is an active member of the NYC Food Service Industry Partnership Advisory Council. In 2016, he received the "Next Generation" Award from the New York City Hospitality Alliance.

**COMPANY BRIEF** LDV Hospitality ([ldvhospitality.com](http://ldvhospitality.com)) is a boutique hospitality group that creates authentic and unique restaurant and cocktail bar experiences. Inspired by La Dolce Vita (*The Good Life*), the group was founded by John Meadow in 2008. The LDV portfolio spans across eight cities throughout the country with its home in New York City, as well as The Hamptons, Miami and Las Vegas. The LDV signature brands include Scarpetta, American Cut, and Dolce Italian; along with hotel concepts such as The Beach Club MTK, The Regent Cocktail Club and Corso Coffee. LDV works with iconic hotel partners including The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, The Fontainebleau of Miami Beach, Gurney's Resorts and most recently, The James New York - NoMad.

#### What have been the keys to LDV Hospitality's success and has made the brands so relevant?

At the most basic restaurant level, we have been very true to who we are, keeping a classic

sensibility towards the brand positioning and the product.

We're not chasing fleeting trends or gimmicks. Post-recession, many things changed, but we always remained true to creating and providing an authentic classic guest experience that never goes out of fashion. At the same time, there are design tweaks to maintain relevance, and quality always stays relevant.

The fact that we're young and eager means we can manage classic restaurants with a youthful approach.

Taking it one step further, where we really stand out is we're independent restaurant operators who had scaled and proven a capacity to operate hotel F&B. Therefore, we have become an ideal one-stop shop for hotel clients, partners and landlords to address their food and beverage solutions.

#### Will growth for LDV Hospitality come from the existing brands or from creating new concepts?

LDV Hospitality's growth is ultimately now going to be headed towards our new hotel division. We're taking our signature brands and growing them with hotel partners to provide a social food and beverage experience throughout these hotel properties. In addition to bringing our signature brands, we have also created "tailor-made" concepts for hotel partners like The Ritz-Carlton Coconut Grove, Miami and Gurney's Resorts in both Montauk and Newport. With Gurney's Resorts, while we created custom concepts for the resort, like Tillie's Restaurant and The Beach Club MTK, we also took our flagship signature brand Scarpetta and made it come to life within the property.

It's a win for us when we can grow a signature brand while also creating new concepts and experiences.

#### How do you evolve your menus and has it been important to offer healthy eating options today?

Across the board, we've always had seasonal menus. It's motivating for the staff to be part of creating something new and allows us to express nature's bounty and to source local ingredients. This is what the guest expects today.

There is a real shift now in terms of health, and also in terms of how we dine – we're more

prone to sharing and grazing. We're more interested in fostering the dinner party environment, even if that is only among four people, as opposed to a formal structured coursed out dining setup.

We're staying true to the core DNA of classic items with our menu, but we've added a section to the menu of vegetable-based small plates so it's a main dish as opposed to a side. It's amazing how that has become a part of ordering.

#### What are the keys to a successful hotel partnership?

Like any relationship, it starts with honestly communicating the expectations of each party and, of equal importance, each party learning each other's strengths, weaknesses and roles.

The old-fashioned chef model where the chef shows up once a year is over. The licensed model doesn't pass muster either because the consumer wants a real restaurant.

The customer today knows when it's the real deal product versus just another deal. We have always worked with talented chef partners, but we're not a chef-centric company.

Our hotel restaurants feel like LDV independent restaurants that happen to reside in hotels, which has led to our success.

There are some scenarios where we have made a real impact on a hotel with our food and beverage space.

#### Is brand awareness for LDV Hospitality important or is it about promoting the individual brands?

Our consumers go to Scarpetta to eat, so it's very important that it's about the restaurant. In messaging for our hotel partners, we have to build the LDV brand. LDV has to be business-to-business branded as the leading operator of hotel food and beverage, while our guests develop brand affinity with Scarpetta.

#### Were you attracted to the hospitality industry at an early age?

I was attracted to the business from the age of six. I have always had a burning passion to be in the hotel space. I ended up in restaurants because there are fewer barriers to entry, and it was an opportunity for me to engage in my passion of creating a hospitality experience. Most of our future growth is in hotels so I'm fortunate to have been able to visualize this life from an early age. ●