

A Lifestyle Brand

An Interview with Dennis DeGori, Founder, E11EVEN

EDITORS' NOTE Establishing his career in the early 1980s, Dennis DeGori has become one of the most successful owners and innovative operators within the U.S. nightclub and cabaret industries. Over the course of three decades, DeGori, a native of Long Island, New York, has created, owned and/or operated over two dozen clubs from New York City to Las Vegas and from Chicago to Miami, including some of the nation's highest-profile, most profitable, and award-winning nightclub/cabarets. In 2012, DeGori moved to Miami, Florida, where he created the 11 USA Group, and his long-envisioned concept of E11EVEN became a reality. Two years following, in 2014, DeGori opened the doors to E11EVEN Miami, South Florida's most sought-after destination that has catapulted the nightlife scene to new heights and established itself as one of the most unique and recognizable nightclubs in the world. Throughout his career, DeGori and the venues he has owned and/or operated have been recognized by leading industry institutions. From personally being inducted by E.D. Publications as the 8th member of the coveted Gentlemen's Club Hall of Fame to Nightclub & Bar Media Group naming E11EVEN "Best New Concept" and one of the "Top-10 Nightclubs in America," DeGori continues to revolutionize the nightlife industry to new heights.



Dennis DeGori

COMPANY BRIEF Made in Miami and known worldwide, the E11EVEN name is synonymous with forward-thinking hospitality, groundbreaking innovative entertainment experiences, and living life to the fullest. The E11EVEN brand made its debut in 2014 when E11EVEN Miami (11miami.com), the award-winning ultraclub, opened its doors in downtown Miami. E11EVEN Miami ranked number nine on the "100 Best Clubs in the World" list by the International Nightlife Association in 2019, and today stands as the highest-grossing nightclub per square foot globally. Today, the E11EVEN ecosystem includes: E11EVEN Life, a hat and apparel division that sells over \$1 million in branded caps a year; E11EVEN Vodka, a women-owned, ultra-premium spirit in which E11EVEN licensed its intellectual property; E11EVEN Sound by DAS Audio brings sound back to the forefront of the nightclub sensory experience and can be found in venues in 13

countries; E11EVEN Hotel & Residences and E11EVEN Residences Beyond are sold-out twin 65-story high-rise towers in downtown Miami with 850 units which are connected by a sky bridge, and the property boasts a pool club, Chopra Spa, and 5-star dining; E11EVEN Crypto launched to create various NFT collections starting with the sold-out 11 Captain's Club on the Ethereum blockchain; E11EVEN Music is a record label and artist/producer management company that first artist 11APE was born meta-primate number 11 in the Bored Ape Yacht Club; and the newest venture Giselle Miami, in partnership with The Restaurant People, that comes January 2023 and will bring an exciting world-class culinary experience to the rooftop of E11EVEN Miami.

What was the vision for creating E11EVEN and how do you define the purpose and mission of the brand?

My vision for what would one day be known as E11EVEN first came about in 1992 when I was visiting a nightclub called The Palladium on West

14th Street in New York City. At that time, I was operating another iconic club in New York City called "Stringfellows Presents Pure Platinum." The Palladium was initially opened and operated by Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell of Studio 54 fame and then taken over by Peter Gatien, another New York City nightclub industry titan. Stringfellows was a revolutionary and famous nightclub/cabaret I opened in 1991. At the time, I envisioned a melding of a nightclub, cabaret, and a Broadway type of operation that would transform multiple entertainment concepts. I had it in my "minds-eye" from that point forward until I was able to realize my vision 20 years later when I opened E11EVEN Miami, the world's first ultraclub. E11EVEN is an experience that can only be defined by experiencing it in person. The guiding principle at E11EVEN Miami is to create a unique and captivating experience from hour-to-hour and day-by-day. Each person leaves E11EVEN with a different experience proving true to our original tagline, "E11EVEN Miami, it's exactly what you think it is!"

Today, E11EVEN has become a lifestyle brand with a mission to increase the presence of E11EVEN by continuing to expand our verticals into other categories on a global scale.



50 Cent (above) and Travis Scott (top) performing at E11EVEN Miami

Will you provide an overview of E11EVEN Miami and how the ultraclub is positioned in the market?

Located in Downtown Miami, Florida, E11EVEN Miami opened in 2014 and is the world's first and only ultraclub. The venue has received accolades, including being awarded "Best New Nightclub Concept," perennially voted among the top 10 nightclubs worldwide, and becoming the highest-grossing nightclub per square foot globally. E11EVEN plays host to some of the most spectacular live shows ever performed inside a nightclub with world-class aerialists, acrobats, and contortionists. Bringing the highest level of performance art, choreographed to original music against the backdrop of state-of-the-art sound and

allowed the guest's experience to dictate our daily operations. E11EVEN is not judgmental but inclusive – open format and open-minded. We are willing to meet our guests' expectations and never try to dictate expectations. We embrace our guests upon arrival with a "welcome home," whether it's your first experience at E11EVEN or your 100th. We are guest forward thinking; everything else will always follow. So, I define E11EVEN Miami's success by the positive experience that our guests have.

I attribute the success of the E11EVEN concept to quite a few things, including operating in the middle of a Miami growth explosion and having a team that has made it all happen. From my co-founding partners, Michael Simkins



Performers at E11EVEN Miami

lighting technology, E11EVEN MIAMI is known for presenting unforgettable up-close-and-personal performances by some of the biggest names in the music and entertainment industry. Stars such as Drake, Miley Cyrus, Usher, Cardi B, Post Malone, Daddy Yankee, and Nicky Jam have taken the stage in front of guests, including Leonardo DiCaprio, Sting, Kendall Jenner, Demi Lovato, Gigi & Bella Hadid, Dwyane Wade, Vin Diesel and more. E11EVEN Miami delivers a one-of-a-kind five-star hospitality experience throughout all aspects of the 20,000 square-foot space, truly revolutionizing the VIP experience in the nightlife industry.

E11EVEN operates in a very competitive and robust Miami entertainment market, bridging multiple entertainment offerings. We strive to be fun, creative, and undeniable day in and day out. E11EVEN is introspective, always with an ear to our audience and never focused on what other operators are or are not doing. E11EVEN is adaptive, never dictating to our audience but always striving to exceed our guests' expectations.

What have been the keys to the success of E11EVEN Miami, and how do you define the E11EVEN Miami difference?

E11EVEN, from day one, strived to be immersed in the Miami culture. We have

and Marc Roberts, who helped build the club and the brand, to my operating partners Gino LoPinto, Daniel Solomon, Frances Martin, Derick Henry, and Ken DeGori, and top management all the way down the line, we have created a true family. Everyone loves what they do which shows whenever you walk through our doors.

Will you highlight the brand extensions for E11EVEN?

Almost from day one, I envisioned E11EVEN as a lifestyle brand. E11EVEN was conceived as a brand that had no limits. The name itself reflects the intent of the concept. I was not looking to be constrained by the name of the brand. At its core, my concept was to have a brand name that was not transparent, that did not suggest what the operation would be; not a nightclub, not a cabaret, not a theatrical offering, nor any other hint of what may define the concept. After six months of naming considerations and striving to be creative yet non-committal, the name became undeniable. I spent four months with my architect and design team, Tom Telesco & Associates, while simultaneously working with my licensing attorney, Lou Terminello. In the end, Telesco & Associates was located at 1111 Bay Harbor Drive. Lou Terminello had his office at 1111 Lincoln

Road. The concept that I was creating was on 11th Street in Miami. Further, at the time, my daughter Johanna was 11 years old, as was Justin, the son of Marc Roberts (co-founding partner). It was undeniable that it should be called, E11EVEN. The concept and the brand were born; E11EVEN is a true lifestyle brand. E11EVEN can be worn (E11EVEN Life sells \$1 million in branded caps annually). E11EVEN is Vodka (E11EVEN Vodka). E11EVEN is music (E11EVEN Sound by DAS Audio and E11EVEN Music). E11EVEN needs to accept new types of payments (E11EVEN Crypto). E11EVEN is 24/7 (we like to say 24/11). E11EVEN is home (E11EVEN Hotel & Residences).

Where do you see growth opportunities for E11EVEN?

E11EVEN translates into many segments of our community. E11EVEN is genuine. E11EVEN is fun. E11EVEN is an immersive experience. E11EVEN is unique. E11EVEN is both unexplainable without a personal experience but E11EVEN, once experienced, is exactly what you think it is. E11EVEN is hospitality at its best. So, hospitality is its obvious best opportunity. Unique Hotel & Residences, with vibrant hospitality offerings, is a natural opportunity. Any concept that ensues from the original club operations lends itself to an opportunity.

How important has it been to build the E11EVEN team, and will you discuss E11EVEN's commitment to training and customer service?

E11EVEN is nothing without our family. Every employee goes through a rigorous interview screening and then an in-depth two-week training program. We instill, first and foremost, the E11EVEN culture in our team, and we have promoted from within since day one. We accept only the best and promote those committed to enhancing our guest's experience. We build an atmosphere of respect and focused engagement on our staff's needs so that they can create a new experience for our guests every day. Our total focus in training is guest-forward. We are committed to guest service, and our points of service are reinforced daily in our departmental pre-shift meetings.

Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own business?

Yes. I have been in the hospitality industry for nearly 40 years. Initially, I worked for a company opening new clubs around the nation. As such, I had to take the lead and needed an entrepreneurial spirit as I always operated from the perspective that "This is my club! This is my business!" For the past 20+ years, I have owned, opened, and operated various nightclubs with various formats and themes.

What are your priorities for E11EVEN as you look to the future?

My priority for E11EVEN is to always ensure that our guest's experience is at the forefront of everything we are doing, and anything we do in the future. Our guests truly do dictate our path forward. We recognize that the E11EVEN brand has expanded exponentially over the last several years, and we will continue that growth for years to come while always staying true to the brand as conceived. ●