

Raising The Bar

An Interview with Sebastien Silvestri, Chief Executive Officer, The Dinex Group

EDITORS' NOTE Sebastien Silvestri is the Chief Executive Officer of The Dinex Group. His focus is on defining the next era for the Group's collection of restaurants and brands, expanding the brand portfolio through strategic acquisitions and new business development, and maintaining the excellence of the existing operations. He oversees the Group's company-owned and licensed venues around the world. Silvestri joined The Dinex Group as CEO in August 2019. He was formerly the Chief Operating Officer of Disruptive Group, a



Sebastien Silvestri

division of sbe that works to develop, manage, and expand award-winning culinary concepts, nightlife venues, and Umami Burger. He oversaw all food and beverage operations for over 170 venues across the sbe portfolio globally. In his role, Silvestri worked closely with world renowned chefs Katsuya Uechi, Michael Schwartz, José Andrés, Daniel Boulud, Dario Cecchini, and many more. Silvestri joined sbe in March 2017 as Senior Vice President of Food and Beverage and led the F&B operations within the hotel division. He was heavily integrated with the acquisition of Morgans Hotel Group

within the sbe portfolio, and in the openings of the SLS Baha Mar, the SLS LUX Brickell, and the Mondrian Park Avenue. Prior to joining sbe, Silvestri was the Vice President of Food & Beverage at The Venetian and The Palazzo Casino Hotel and Resort in Las Vegas, a 7,000-suite integrated resort where he worked with luminaries including Thomas Keller, Daniel Boulud, Wolfgang Puck, Charlie Trotter, Emeril Lagasse, and Buddy Valastro. Previously, he held a variety of leadership roles at the Bellagio Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Orient-Express Hotels in Bora Bora, Rosewood Hotels & Resorts in Dallas, and in London at the Lanesborough Hotel. Silvestri has been recognized with many accolades and received



The main dining room at DANIEL



The bar at La Tête d'Or by Daniel

senatorial recognition from both Nevada Senators Harry Reid and Dean Heller, as well as Congressman Joe Heck for his service to the restaurant industry and his community. In May 2019, Silvestri was named 2019 Power Player of Los Angeles by Angeleno Magazine. In November 2018, he made The Observer's Dining and Nightlife Power List: Food and Drink's 55 Most Influential People. Las Vegas, Inc. recognized Silvestri in 2014 with the 40 under 40 honor and the Nevada Restaurant Association named him 2016 Restaurateur of the Year. Silvestri serves on several advisory boards including Reed Expo and G2E, the Global Gaming Show, The Culinary Institute of America, Board of Fellows, and served as chairman of the Nevada Restaurant Association. He holds a baccalaureate hotel and culinary art degree and a bachelor in hotel management and culinary arts from Esitel School in Montpellier, France.

Will you highlight your career journey?

I was born and raised in France and started my studies and career in hospitality there from the age of 16. After school, I launched my career in Paris and London, and then when I had the opportunity to transfer to the U.S. with Rosewood, I took the chance and have never looked back. I worked at the Rosewood Hotels & Resorts in Dallas and then made the move to Las Vegas, where I spent a large part of my career. I held a variety of leadership roles at the Bellagio Resort and Casino, and then was the Vice President of Food & Beverage at The Venetian and The Palazzo Casino Hotel and Resort. There I worked with luminaries including Thomas Keller, Wolfgang Puck, Charlie Trotter, Emeril Lagasse, and Buddy Valastro, as well as Daniel Boulud. It led to my friendship with Daniel, and when he was looking for the first CEO of Dinex, he approached me with this fantastic opportunity to work together.

What excited you about the opportunity to join The Dinex Group and made you feel it was the right fit?

It starts of course with Daniel Boulud, who is one of the greatest chefs working today and who has also built a very solid business. I saw that he had world-class restaurants, strong brands, and an exceptional team, and there was a real opportunity to build on this foundation and take it to the next level. As a CEO, that is what excites me and where I know I can add value. We have a business that we've been able to grow very selectively and strategically, while continuing to maintain excellence and be a leader in the industry worldwide.

How do you focus your efforts leading The Dinex Group?

It can be an almost 24-hour a day job. By day, I am mostly in the office, focused on performance, working with our corporate team to stay on top of the business, and also working on planning for the future. At night, I am making the rounds of our restaurants. This is a hands-on business, and it's critical to be there, engaging with our restaurant teams, and helping to elevate the guest experience. The days are long, but I love spending time with our guests just as much as I love working on business development.

How do you define The Dinex Group's mission?

Our mission is to be a world-leading hospitality and restaurant group, building an exceptionally talented culinary and service team of individuals who are proud to uphold the standards of Daniel Boulud, and to bring joy, delight – and incredible food – to our guests every day.

Will you discuss the strength and expertise of The Dinex Group team?

Daniel Boulud opened his first restaurant over 30 years ago, and Dinex is very fortunate to have team members who have been here since the very beginning. Daniel is an incredible mentor, and over the years so many young chefs and service professionals have come to learn from him and our leadership team, and it's wonderful to watch them grow with us. We have a very strong company culture, and it's all based around the culinary and hospitality expertise that keeps getting passed on to our new team members.

What has made the working relationship between you and Daniel work so well?

Since we spend so much time together, it's a good thing that we actually like each other. We both work very hard, and we wouldn't have it any other way. We are passionate about our work and love what we do, and we also manage to laugh a lot together. Hospitality is about enjoyment, and if we didn't enjoy it, we wouldn't be good leaders.

What are your priorities for The Dinex Group as you look to the future?

My priorities are always to maintain the excellence of our brands, continue to elevate the guest experience, and continue to grow our exceptional team. It's an exciting time, the standards in hospitality have never been higher, and we are aiming to raise the bar every day. There is a lot more to come for Dinex. ●