

The Ingredients of a Successful Partnership

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March 16,
2017

In February, Yannick Alléno was recognized with three Michelin stars for two restaurants he and YPO member **Florence Cane** own and operate: Alléno Paris au Pavillon Ledoyen on the famous Champs-Élysées and Le 1947 at Cheval Blanc in Courchevel, France. Receiving the Michelin's three-star status remains the highest ranking a restaurant can attain in the competitive world of culinary mastery and fine dining; running two restaurants with three Michelin stars at the same time is historical. A unique pair — Alléno, a member of the exclusive circle of the greatest chefs in the world, and Cane, a masterful marketer with a keen business eye — teamed up in 2008 to form the Yannick Alléno Group. Their vision is to spread concepts and products associated with the high-end gastronomic sector throughout France and around the world. The company promotes the chef's brand image, and handles the marketing of its creations and the management of its restaurants.

Cane, who shares openly that she didn't have a unique passion for the restaurant business, finds herself, at 39, in a world that is dominated by men. With no training in gastronomy, she attributes her success to her agility to apply her skills across disciplines. "What I do have is that I'm good at understanding creative people and I am able to provide structure around their ideas, promote them and sell them," she says. "It's not really about having the passion for something and living that out in your work, but rather having the vision of transferable skills."

One of a handful of companies in the world that are pioneering this new business model for the culinary sector, Cane says the Yannick Alléno Group is unique in that it is passionate and committed to promoting creative French cuisine, and highlighting talented men and women – in kitchens or front of house – who share Chef Alléno's vision.

Exporting French cuisine

The Yannick Alléno Group works under two distinct business models. Conceived as an exclusive luxury cuisine experience, the team works with three concepts of restaurants — ALLENNO, their ultimate gastronomic experiences, STAY their modern fine-dining restaurants and TERROIR PARISIEN their authentic bistros. Outside France, the company falls under the licensing model, exporting their French *Art de Vivre*, while operating food and beverage programs to restaurants and luxury hotels in destinations such as Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Taiwan, Hong-Kong and South Korea.

“We create culinary outlets for clients with their own brands” explains Cane. “This may be a hotel or a local restaurant. We own the creative license to promote Alléno’s culinary model and we use this model to implement the layout of the kitchen, tableware, and the interior design for instance.”

This is all done for hoteliers and restaurant owners for an entrance fee and then once the restaurant is open, Cane’s team visits the locations several times a year taking on the communications, marketing and the creation of new menus.

When it comes to Paris however, Cane’s team operates under their own model, managing their own property. “In our city, we do own our operations, the business is different and it makes more sense for us and our team to be fully in charge.”

A marriage of cuisine with genuine creative ambition

Cane’s mission for the Yannick Alléno Group is an ambitious one: to become the culinary leader in the art of French cuisine. A task easier said than done in what can sometimes be a cut-throat business climate. Her approach is to mix genuine creative ambition, with a kinder, gentler leadership style when it comes to managing her own team to success.

“My point is that people don’t understand what kind means and in terms of management, it is looked upon as a sign of weakness. From my point of view, it is quite the contrary. You have to take the time to be available to your team, get to know them, connect with them daily. The door must always be open,” she says.

The company’s values are refreshing: Creativity, passion, kindness, professionalism, ambition, consistency, modernity, quality and accessibility. “I own these people for so many hours and in reality, they need to take time to refresh, be with their families,” she says. “As a leader, you ask your team to give a lot of their life to the company. It is your responsibility to do the same.”



As for her partnership with Alléno, Cane says it is a strong, balanced partnership based on trust, respect and always having fun. "It also helps when the job description is fully defined on day one." Cane explains that both she and Alléno work together in a set of defined parameters. For Cane, this means staying true to the concept and strategy they designed together. "In other words, I am not advising him about his kitchen. He takes care of the quality of the food and beverage of all our different restaurants. My part is to take care of the financial model and the global balance."

A balanced partnership indeed. The Yannick Alléno Group now boasts 19 restaurants in six destinations, employing 1,200 people all carrying the colors of France around the world and making a lot of people deliriously satisfied!

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