



# HYDE & SEEK

BY CAROLE DIXON

**A**s founder, chairman and CEO of sbe, Sam Nazarian has become the West Coast's most powerful hospitality owner by creating elite venues such as Hyde, SLS and Katsuya. In addition, Nazarian created two of LA's hottest hotel brands SLS and The Redbury as well as celebrity favorite restaurants including The Bazaar at SLS, helmed by renowned chef José Andrés and Cleo at The Redbury. It's hard to keep track of sbe and all the hospitality projects Nazarian has scheduled to open during a time where many hospitality stalwarts are downsizing. The charming, 30-something entrepreneur even brought New York's favorite hot dog chain, Papaya King, out west – but not before building a secret spot behind the stand for musicians and live bands, The Sayers Club. His latest LA venture, Mercato di Vetro, is a sexy Italian eatery and Nazarian is not stopping there. On schedule for 2012 is more brand expansion with popular sushi spot Katsuya in California's South Bay, the SLS in Miami and the highly anticipated Hyde at Bellagio.



**Q** It was recently announced that sbe and MGM Resorts partnered on the M life program. What attracts you to MGM Resorts as a partner for a program like this?

**A //** MGM Resorts is one of the world's premier hospitality and entertainment brands and partnering with them to unite sbePREFERRED and M life is something we're all very excited about. Not only does it validate the success of the rapidly growing sbe platform, it also enables our vast and loyal Southern California clientele to access the best-in-class hospitality and lifestyle experiences in Vegas. Jim Murren is a close friend and a great mentor of mine, so having an opportunity to partner with MGM Resorts is an honor and only the beginning of great things to come from our alignment.

**Q** How does the partnership benefit sbe customers visiting Las Vegas? What benefits will M life guests enjoy with sbe?

**A //** There are a number of benefits and rewards that sbe's clientele will now receive as a result of the partnership. Everything from preferred room reservations to exclusive access to restaurant and nightlife experiences are available at MGM Resorts award-winning properties. M life members will be automatically enrolled in sbePREFERRED giving them exclusive access to the entire sbe platform as well as the ability to earn rewards points redeemable at any sbe property. Knowing that LA is Vegas' No. 1 feeder market and that sbe's clientele has a proven affinity for Las Vegas, we've created an enhanced experience for both MGM Resorts and sbe customers that is unmatched in the marketplace.

**Q** sbe is the preeminent nightlife and hospitality brand in Los Angeles. Any number of resorts in Las Vegas would have been anxious to partner with you. Why did you choose Bellagio for the Hyde brand?

**A //** Bellagio is the greatest hotel and casino brand in the world. From an overall service and experience perspective, there's no one doing it better. Add to that the location of Hyde, overlooking the Bellagio fountains, and you can begin to see why it was such an easy decision. Combining Hyde's legendary mixology, Philippe Stark's visionary design and a location on Vegas' 50-yard line has allowed us to create a truly unprecedented Vegas nightlife experience.

**Q** You were once quoted as saying that you wanted to "build a hotel business that moves beyond the four walls." Can you explain that concept in more detail?

**A //** My vision for sbe has always been to develop an all-encompassing hospitality and lifestyle platform that takes the guest experience beyond the four walls of a single property. This also is what we like to call a "keys-to-the-city" approach, which allows the sbe guest to tailor their experience and choose from our diverse collection of award-winning hotel, restaurant and nightlife destinations. We've proven the approach in Southern California and are quickly expanding the model to Las Vegas, Miami, Texas and soon New York City.

**Q** How will the Las Vegas outpost of Hyde differ from LA? And, what will be the similarities?

**A //** The DNA of the brand will always exist whether you're in Hyde Sunset, Hyde Beach in Miami or Hyde Bellagio. That DNA speaks to exclusivity, expert mixology and a chic and refined nightlife experience. Hyde Bellagio will be our largest rendition of the brand at 10,000 square feet – that combined with the epic view of the Fountains of Bellagio are just a couple of factors that separate the space from other Hyde locations.

**Q** Besides gaming and the celebrity clientele, what are the fundamental differences between Las Vegas and LA nightlife?

**A //** LA's nightlife scene is far more local driven while Vegas has a customer base that comes for only a few days at a time. This is a consideration that influenced the development of Hyde Bellagio a great

deal. We wanted to create a space that became a home-away-from-home for Vegas locals as well as for those who are visiting.

**Q** How do you plan to ensure that Hyde Bellagio has the same longevity and celebrity loyalty in Vegas as in LA?

**A //** Our success has always come from an unyielding commitment to providing the best service and experience possible. From operations and mixology to programming and design, we make every possible effort to set a new standard in hospitality and lifestyle. Having that approach has served us well in the past and we're confident that the same will be true of Hyde Bellagio.

**Q** Can you tell us what else you have on tap for Vegas and LA in the coming year?

**A //** We're moving toward an early 2012 opening of Katsuya in both San Diego and Houston. We're thrilled about the opening of SLS Hotel South Beach in Miami, which will also include The Bazaar, Katsuya and Hyde Beach. Right now we're focused on working with MGM Resorts and Bellagio to make Hyde Bellagio the very best it can be.

**Q** Where do you like to dine or have a drink at Bellagio or other MGM Resorts properties, or what would your perfect night in Vegas look like?

**A //** I would have to start the evening with dinner at Prime in Bellagio, followed by drinks at GOLD Boutique Nightclub and Lounge and then a night out at HAZE Nightclub in ARIA. To cap the night out, I head to the best buffet in Vegas at Bellagio's Fountains Brunch at Jasmine on Sunday morning. ■

