Scott Gerber, CEO of Gerber Group, Reinvents Hotel Bars and Takes Hospitality to a New Level.

For the past three decades, Gerber Group has reimagined the experience of the typical hotel bar. With many hotels delivering conventional amenities to their guests, a trendy bar can become the differentiating factor in why guests choose one hotel over another. Delivering innovative food and drink items and unique design concepts, each property Gerber Group opens is complementary to the hotel, yet original and inspired.

Scott Gerber began his career as a real estate broker, but most personally fell into the bar business with his brother, Randy Gerber, when they opened Chateau, a sister restaurant, to their business mentor, Scott. Scott sat down with F&B in December 2018 to discuss how Gerber Group has established itself as a hospitality industry leader, spanning its first property, "The Whiskey" at the Paramount Hotel, back in 1993 in New York City.

When Randy and Scott initially started their bar business, "The Whiskey" was the full-time business, while Scott remained a real estate broker and was only invested peripherally. However, around 2006, things shifted when Randy bought out the business and Scott became principal and CEO of Gerber Group. "When asked why Randy left and what difference that made to the company, Scott explained, "My brother decided that he wanted to focus on the making of drinks, so he wasn't allowed to own a liquor company and be in the bar business simultaneously."

"The success rate is slim for making it in the bar industry, but Gerber Group has come out on top despite fluctuations in the economy and the overall hospitality industry. Gerber Group can face when operating long-term. With a varied portfolio of properties, the future for Gerber Group is looking bright. They have many projects currently in the works, including two Washington DC properties and a new bar called Kingside in the El Granado Group in New York City. Scott says, "A lot of people appreciate the while we can bring to a hotel. We understand our position and will stay out of someone else's sandbox. We expect to continue expanding for many, many years."

Thank you, Scott, for speaking with us, and we look forward to hearing about all of Gerber Group's exciting new endeavors!

Vinny Carr

"We try to understand the market we are going into and the team we are partnering up with. We are technically third party operators, so the design and architecture of the bar are very important to us in the overall concept. Scott explains that working specifically in the hospitality industry as opposed to the retail industry allows him to be more unique, the color and color scheme the create can bring with them to the hotel’s brand. We ask these owners to bring their bar to the property, and the concept that came out of it was amazing."

"If you are passionate about the concept that’s going to happen, it will become unique, and you will not have to go to the same place when you visit another hotel or another city."

The Campbell

A lot of work goes into making a bar a success including hiring house and friendly people, working long hours, and having enough capital to withstand downturns. Just because you like going out in bars doesn’t mean you’ll like owning one.

Scott Gerber

CEO of Gerber Group, Reinvents Hotel Bars and Takes Hospitality to a New Level.

February 2019

I bought my brother out of the business so he could go into the tequila business. The biggest difference was that when we were partners, we had very different jobs. I would run the business, and I would help get the places built and manage the contracts. My brother would do the design and marketing. Once I bought him out, I had to do it all. I’m not a public figure like my brother is, so the focus of our press shifted more to business.

Now that Scott is in the principal and CEO, he handles everything from design, to marketing, to management. His creative aspect of the job is finding the deals, getting the places built, and seeing how great tenants respond to the finished property. He says, "When you have a successful bar, it probably means you’re doing something right. I also love hearing when our employees feel fulfilled by their jobs. We care about our employees lives and wellbeing."

Speaking of Gerber Group employees, Scott was on an episode of Undercover Boss and had a chance to see his employees in action.

While many shows go on a show as a way to catch mistakes and make improvements within their company, Scott says he went on the show for a very specific reason: "My dad passed away about 9 years ago, but I worked with him in the company. He didn’t have a specific job, but he was a mentor and a friend to everyone.

He had a great way about him. He spent a lot of time in the bars with the people, and he established a great friendship with employees. He treated our company like family. People didn’t have that relationship with me, and I left it was missing. I did Undercover Boss, because I felt there was a void, and I wanted to see how our employees were feeling. I felt like they were family, but I didn’t know how they felt. Through the show, I found out that most of our employees love working for Gerber Group, so it was a great experience."