

DOLCE



SINCE 1996

RAMI MALEK'S LIFE-CHANGING ROLE AS QUEEN'S FRONT MAN & ROCK IDOL FREDDIE MERCURY



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Entertaining filters into every facet of the Centners' lives, with Sebastien's business, Eateertainment, and in their personal lives, hosting at their home as a couple

Most Gracious HOSTS

Sebastien Centner, the creative mind behind Eatertainment Events and Catering, shares his keys to hosting successful events in his business life as well as his personal life with his wife, Sheila

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CLARKE
INTERVIEW BY VICTORIA SCOTT

Growing up in his parents' restaurants, Sebastien Centner, founder and creative director of Eatertainment Events and Catering, was not so much inspired by the restaurant business itself, but by the idea of exploring his excitement for entertaining. It was while working in one of these restaurants that he first began catering small events. "I just sort of had a knack for it. We love to do it at home, so doing it for other people came very naturally," says Sebastien, who catered between 20 and 30 events that first year almost 20 years ago, when he founded Eatertainment.

Since then, with genuine love and enjoyment, and by paradox of simplicity and grandeur, he has worked his way up to creating and managing around 1,700 innovative events a year. As Sebastien puts it: "We take the expertise we have in all of our event work [and] apply it to other places. And all of a sudden, we can execute pretty much anywhere." From Toronto to Istanbul, Los Angeles to New York, Miami to Cape Town, they have honed their skills in all aspects of entertaining and are now experts in providing spectacular events anywhere in the world.

Sebastien has organically intertwined his passion for entertaining at home with his wife, Sheila, with his gift of orchestrating large events. To take this melding of life and work even further, he has mastered the rare craft of providing amazing events for Eatertainment's clients, while forming lasting personal relationships with many of them as well. Due to the impressive size of these events, the planning phase alone can take months, even a year at times. Because Sebastien begins the undertaking of each event by sitting down with his clients to get a clear vision of their ideal expectations and also includes them throughout every phase of execution, he inevitably develops strong bonds with clients along the way. Eatertainment serves as a one-stop shop, handling all the logistics of events, similar to an event agency, rather than an event planning or catering company.

In his work, Sebastien approaches each event with what Sheila considers to be one of the major necessities for successful entertaining — a good attitude. "I would say one of the major must-haves is a really good attitude, because your guests will feed off of your energy. If you're calm,

relaxed and looking to have a great time, people feed off that, and that certainly sets the tone." From conceptualizing the event to executing every detail, Sebastien and Sheila carry a genuine enjoyment and appreciation of having people around them — a sentiment Sebastien infuses through his business by providing clients with the event of their dreams.

Sebastien stresses innovation in everything he approaches. Whether it's putting on multi-day events introducing the BMW M series, travelling, putting on a wedding for a childhood friend or hosting a dinner party at home, Sebastien emphasizes that he and Sheila don't want to copy what other people are doing and hope their original visions will inspire other couples to entertain.

When entertaining at home, the Centners practise the same good planning as they do with their Eatertainment events. From setting up the bar ahead of time to making sure the front closet has enough hangers for guests' coats, Sebastien's belief in planning in advance is ever-present. He points out: "We show that, as a couple, you can entertain well without it being overwhelming, as

Sebastien and Sheila are working on an entertaining-themed book and an online miniseries to give people an inside look at how they successfully plan and co-ordinate events



Celebrating their 24th wedding anniversary this year, Sebastien and Sheila have infused their life with their shared passion for entertaining

long as you plan properly for it." Even when they are simply ordering pizza for their guests, their focus is to make the gathering a new and interesting experience.

Leading by example, they have already inspired their sons Colsen and Logan to entertain friends in their home. "How we inspire our children to entertain – which we don't do purposefully, it just happens – is how we really hope we can inspire other couples to entertain," says Sebastien. Both agree it was not their plan to coax their sons into entertaining, but once again, their enthusiasm and good cheer were contagious, inspiring their sons to take on small events such as hosting weekend brunches for their friends when their parents are out of town.

Eatertainment takes the Centners all over the world, as do their personal travels. Not unlike the natural flow present in any event they host, they keep a practical yet adventurous spirit when travelling. "Carry-on only – that's a big rule in

our household," says Sheila. By keeping it simple and planning ahead, they ensure that their family trips are as stress-free as possible. They want to pass on their love for experiencing new things to their sons, but they have also set rules and

boundaries, along with clear expectations. By laying the groundwork of good planning and having a positive attitude, you can achieve just about anything. This is the spirit they are passing on to their sons.

Amid the hard work and glamour, the sentiment of sharing good fortune with others has not eluded Sebastien and Sheila. In recent years, they have given back through a charity called The Stop. This organization runs a drop-in community centre, where people who are finding it hard to put together meals for their families can have access to non-perishables, as well as fresh produce. However, The Stop does not stop there. This charity offers educational programs about how to cook, how to make baby food and even how to file taxes.

Another way the Centners have participated in community building is through Homes First. Sebastien and Sheila combine their talents in entertaining by participating in an event called Homes for Dinner, where they are one of several



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Eatertainment Events and Catering currently manages around 1,700 events a year, handling everything from conceptualization to catering
Bottom right: Sebastien and Sheila, joined by their two sons, Logan (left) and Colsen (right)

families who open up their home for a dinner to between 10 and 12 strangers. “All the money generated from ticket sales goes directly to the charity.” Says Sebastien: “We host a five-course dinner here for complete strangers. The evening of the dinner we’re like, ‘OK, who’s coming for dinner tonight?’ And we end up with this amazing group of eclectic people who don’t know one another, but know that they all have the same goal in common.”

What is on the horizon for Sebastien and Sheila? They are working on a book about entertaining as a couple they are really excited about, as their passion for hosting has been a significant and consistent aspect of their life together for the past 24 years. Of course, there is more: an online mini-series in the works scheduled to air later this year called *Setting the Mood*. This series will dedicate each episode to a specific type of entertaining, where viewers will get behind-the-scenes access to how Sebastien and Sheila host at their home and work together with breathtaking results. Some

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— Sebastien Centner

potential titles? “Setting the Mood: Oscar Party” or “Setting the Mood: Backyard Entertaining.” Sebastien points out that “it’s about what it takes and our interaction, from start to finish, how we divide and conquer.”

Both the book and the miniseries will be a guide of sorts to bettering your marriage or partnership, while sharing a love of entertaining. The Centners will impart their experiences with learning how to compromise and delegate, while still having a grand time. In other words, learning how to divide and conquer — peacefully and joyfully.

Sebastien and Sheila have worked diligently and willingly to obtain the richness in their lives. It’s a wealth they’re happy to share with loved ones and clients alike. In Sheila’s words, a good life is full of “family, cocktails, dancing, music and sunshine.” Sebastien could not agree more, and he’s thrilled to be “along for the ride.”

www.eatertainment.com

📷 @sebcentner

📷 @sheilacentner