

# Sasha Milovanovic

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**Commercial Beverage and Hospitality Leader | Category Building · Multi-Venue Operations · Pre-Openings · Business Development | UAE and GCC**

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## Executive profile

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Beverage and hospitality leader with more than 20 years in Dubai, the UAE and international markets. Began at Madinat Jumeirah, ran beverage at Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, then joined Fresh Express in 2010 and contributed to growing a three-person beverage department into a team of about 30 with a portfolio of more than 20 brands, selling to hotel groups at head-office level. Led beverage across a 10+ outlet nightlife and restaurant portfolio at ADDMIND, then built a premium truffle category for chefs and hotel groups. Combines operator credibility in bars, teams, standards and cost control with commercial depth in distributor terms, account strategy and category growth.

## Key capabilities

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- Multi-venue beverage leadership: standards, SOPs, recipes, stock discipline and cost control
- Hospitality and HORECA account development, including hotel-group head-office relationships
- Brand, portfolio and category building with principals and distributors
- Supplier and distributor negotiation: trade deals, pouring contracts and brand training
- Team building, retention, internal promotion and succession
- Pre-opening and mobilisation of venues, including task-force and event operations
- Beverage training, bartender education and competitions

## Professional experience

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### **Fresh Express LLC, Dubai, UAE**

**Manager – Categories and Business Development (HORECA)** · 1 Nov 2022 – 27 Jun 2026

Developed premium specialty categories for hospitality customers, including truffles, wild produce and caviar. The role was eliminated in a company restructuring.

- Became the face of fine truffle for chefs and hotel groups; white truffle sales grew strongly in the 2024–25 season, built through chef education, venue visits and after-hours delivery.
- Developed premium accounts, including Roberto's, Armani Ristorante, Il Borro, The Artisan and Chic Nonna, working directly with executive chefs.
- Developed supplier relationships and sourcing across multiple origins, benchmarking each weekly offer against at least three alternatives.
- Introduced disciplined handling, storage and stock control for high-value perishables, including a per-batch formula with Finance.
- Worked on the UAE development of Three Cents mixers and on Antoninus and N25 caviar.

## **ADDMIND Hospitality, UAE**

**Group Beverage Manager** (joined as Beverage Manager, nightlife division) · Jun 2021 – Sep 2022

Led beverage across a portfolio of 10+ outlets, including WHITE Dubai, WHITE Beach and Palmarama at Atlantis, La Mezcaleria and CUE at Sheraton Grand Dubai, with bar teams of about 80+.

- Reduced beverage cost across outlets through daily counts, pouring and jigger checks, and a monthly review with cost controllers.
- Standardised bar stations, recipes and SOPs across venues, so any bartender could work any outlet and signature cocktails matched from venue to venue.
- Built retention, internal promotion and succession; about 80% of senior bartenders, supervisors and bar managers stayed two years or more.
- Negotiated stronger support from the group's main UAE distributors, including trade deals, free-of-charge stock and brand-ambassador training.
- Part of the pre-opening teams for CUE and La Mezcaleria JBR; seconded for three months to open WHITE's franchise venue in New Delhi.
- Delivered the beverage operation for a major concert at Expo 2020 Dubai within 72 hours of acceptance: three main bars and 25 mobile bars on a cashless token system.

## **BalkanikaBee & Co., Serbia**

**Co-Founder** · Jul 2018 – Aug 2023, alongside the Fresh Express and ADDMIND roles

- Co-founded a premium produce sourcing and export business; when airfreight economics made conventional produce unattractive, shifted to wild mushrooms and truffles.
- Built direct relationships with Serbian truffle hunters, using fair compensation and consistency to earn supplier loyalty, and connected that supply to hospitality demand in the UAE. Closed in 2023.

## **Fresh Express LLC, Dubai, UAE (earlier return)**

**Head of Beverage** · 3 Sep 2019 – 1 May 2020

- Returned to lead the beverage department (MONIN, coffee, tea and other brands); stepped aside in May 2020 during COVID cost reductions.

## **Fresh Express LLC, Dubai, UAE (first tenure)**

**Sales and Business Development Manager** · 1 Mar 2015 – 17 May 2018 · **Brand Manager – Beverage** · 1 Mar 2011 – 28 Feb 2015 · **Sales Executive** · 10 Aug 2010 – 28 Feb 2011

Joined as the third member of a start-up beverage department and contributed to its growth into a team of about 30 with a portfolio of more than 20 brands, including MONIN, Voss, Alain Milliat and Comptoir Richard.

- Led a team of 20 from March 2015: six key account managers, ten customer service staff and four technical staff.
- Worked extensively on MONIN's UAE hospitality business; secured a pouring contract across 19 Rotana properties in 2011 through a group-level approach, repeated with Atlantis.
- Opened relationships with hotel-group head offices and ran training, workshops and competitions in which bar managers created and promoted their own drinks.
- Proposed co-distribution of Voss Water with the official UAE distributor, reaching alcohol-free operators that had no access to the brand.
- Supported chain and quick-service accounts jointly with MONIN's regional office; introduced flexible minimum order quantities to win bar listings.

## **Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, Dubai, UAE**

**Beverage Manager** (promoted from Assistant Bar Manager) · Jan 2006 – Mar 2010

- Helped develop and open 1897 by converting a conference room into a 28-seat bar; it beat its annual revenue budget by more than 40% in each of its first two years.
- Led about 30 beverage staff across the lounge bar, 1897 and the Mosaic pool bar, plus the beverage side of the hotel's other outlets, covering menus, staffing, training, pricing, supplier negotiation and cost control.
- Entered the team in brand competitions; a bartender I coached placed second in one of them.
- **Kempinski Hotel Djibouti task force, Mar – Aug 2010:** set up three outlets and replaced cash payments in the nightclub with a cashless token system; rebuilt the team within two weeks and launched a summer concept with outdoor events and international DJs.

## **Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE**

**Bar Supervisor** · Bar Captain · Bartender · 17 Jul 2003 – Jan 2006

- Joined the pre-opening team of Mina A'Salam and took part in 24 venue openings across the Madinat Jumeirah development, including Souk Madinat and Al Qasr.
- Selected for the opening team of Trilogy, then one of the largest nightclubs in the region: six bars over three floors run by a core bar team of nine. Promoted to Bar Supervisor after a successful opening.
- Standardised bar stations so staff could cover any bar, and trained about 30 people for bartending, some of whom moved permanently into F&B.

## **Earlier career and recognition**

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Hospitality roles in Serbia, 1994–2003.

Shortlisted, Bar Manager of the Year, Caterer Middle East Awards 2009 (Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates).