

THE TASTE OF *Excellence*

Gourmet food, delicatessen and hospitality company FAUCHON has been a standard bearer for exemplary French cuisine for well over a century. We caught up with CEO and President Samy Vischel to hear about the future of innovation, pleasure and French luxury.

SAMY VISCHEL

CEO & President, FAUCHON

The challenges of leading a well-established business are very different to those which arise when building something from nothing. Attempts at modernisation, while necessary, must be balanced with an awareness of the importance of history. This rapidly became clear when Samy Vischel took up the reins at French food institution FAUCHON.

A satisfying role

Since the nineteenth century, the FAUCHON story has been intertwined with the story of French gastronomy itself. Mr Vischel therefore found himself heading up a legacy brand, one celebrating savoir-faire and creating some of the world's best gourmet products and cuisine.

"It happened by luck," Mr Vischel says with a modest laugh. "Luck and a lot of work, of course. I graduated from the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne and joined FAUCHON in Paris in January 2009. I then spent six years in Dubai, where I was in charge of the whole Middle East, during which the company grew its operations in the region very successfully."

This impressive start to his corporate career eventually led Mr Vischel back to Paris in September 2014, when he was appointed global de-

velopment manager for the brand. Essentially, the company gave him the task of repeating what he had achieved in the Middle East across the entire planet. Under his guidance, a network of new FAUCHON shops and cafés were soon opened across Europe and Asia.

"I really enjoyed my time as development manager for the brand," Mr Vischel recalls. "I feel brand development is what I love the most. Then I guess there was a bit more luck because the company president resigned in 2018, leaving an opening. It took me a couple of months to think it over, but then I took the job on."

A new formula

The wait was a necessity, as at the time FAUCHON faced considerable challenges, despite its long-standing fame. While the opportunity appeared huge, was it the right move for the young executive at the right time?

"At that moment, FAUCHON was not doing very well," Mr Vischel explains. "Our costs were too high, especially in Paris. A huge restructuring programme was needed, so in the first instance, I needed to know that there was scope to do this. When I then took the job, it was with this restructuring built in. That was essentially my primary task as CEO." →

Over the next three years, Mr Vischel implemented this large-scale reimagining of FAUCHON's operations. His vision and energy led to an evolution in the company's product offerings, exemplified by the five-star boutique ho-

tel the company opened close to the Champs-Élysées in Paris. In as clear an indication of the FAUCHON identity as could be found, the hotel is located on the Place de la Madeleine, the stylish Parisien square where the very first

FAUCHON shop was opened by Auguste Fauchon in 1886.

"For me, this says it all," the CEO confirms. "Our DNA is in being a fine delicatessen outlet, but we have evolved so much with time. Now

even though the location is unchanged, FAUCHON is becoming a holistic, luxury experience hub."

Rising success

The company's diversification over recent years, such an important part of Mr Vischel's work, has led to branching out into catering and even the operation of a gourmet school. This has helped to create a new, modern identity, of which the CEO is clearly proud. "There is no other brand like FAUCHON," he says. "No-one else in the sector offers what we offer."

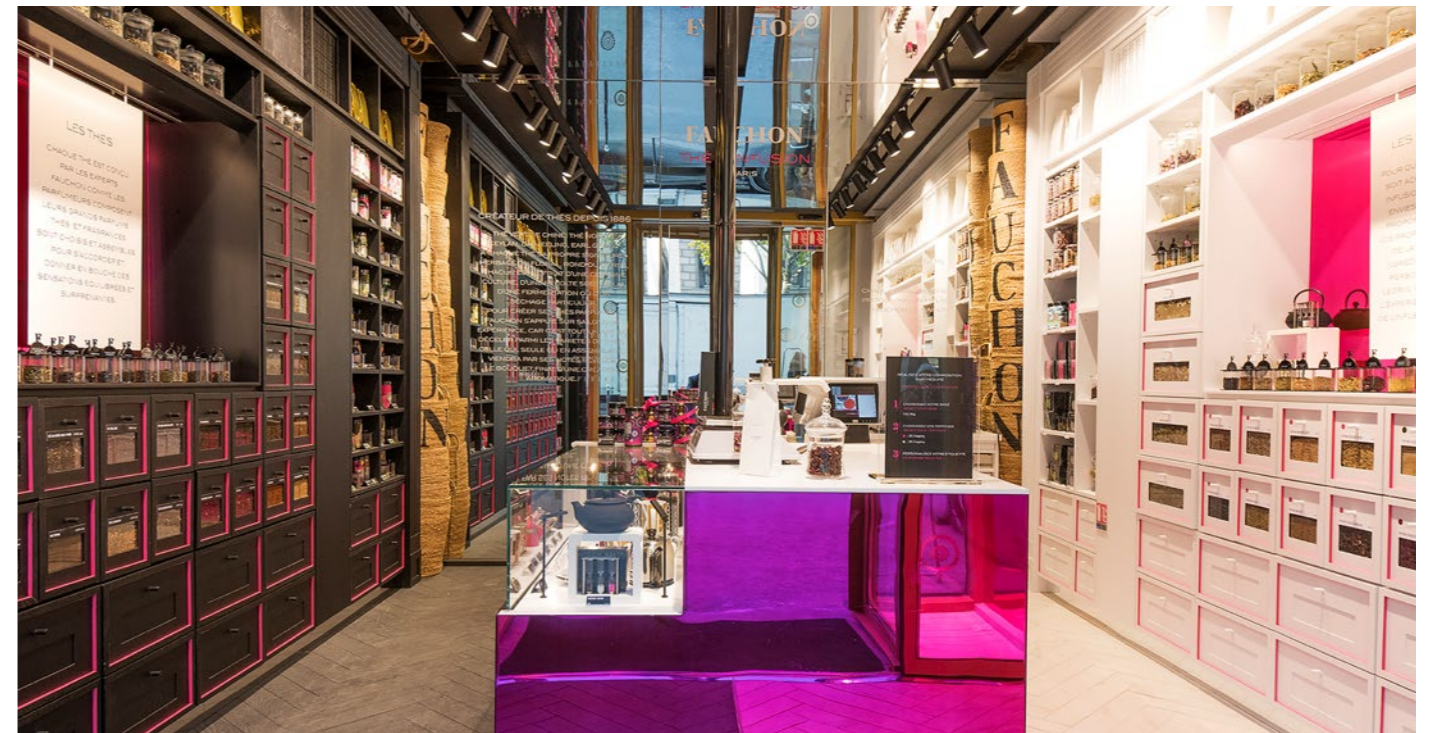
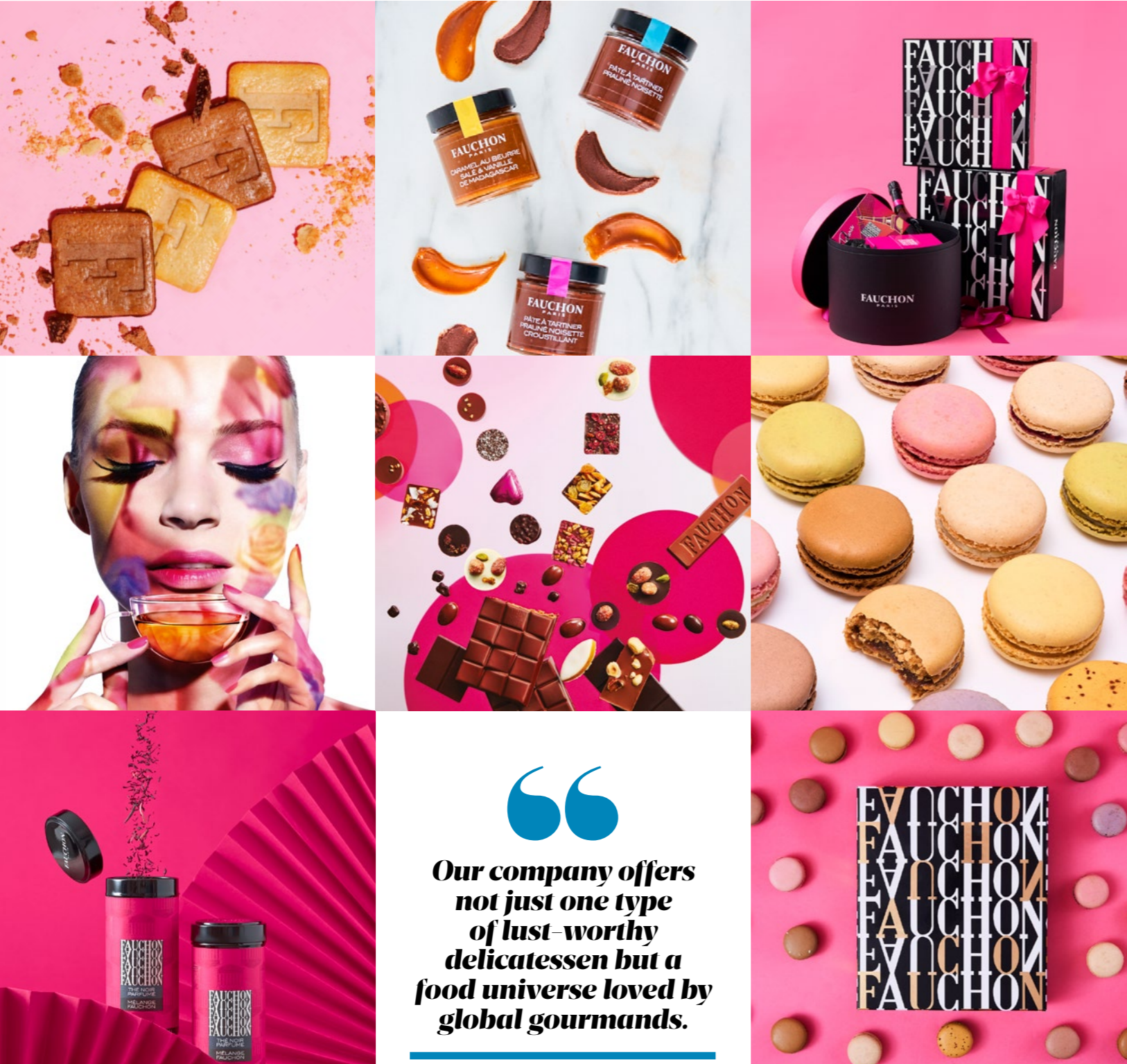
In order to reach this point, however, FAUCHON has had to negotiate several crises. The early years of the company saw it survive two world wars, while a major fire destroyed the company's main site in the 1970s. More recently, of course, the coronavirus pandemic wreaked havoc across all industrial sectors. Through all of this, FAUCHON has prevailed.

The modern incarnation of the company is now supported by what Mr Vischel refers to as 'the four pillars,' namely, retail, food and beverage, hospitality and event and education. The four pillars support a network which has grown to spread across fifteen countries around the world with eighty-five points of sale, three five-star hotels and the gastronomy school in Rouen.



“FAUCHON is becoming a holistic, luxury experience hub.”

"It is important to us that the pillars remain strong," Mr Vischel explains. "And that requires diversity and flexibility. Using retail as an example, we have a lot of strength, especially in Japan, where we currently have around 25 shops. Our tea and bread are particularly successful products there. But in the Middle East, our success is based more around chocolate and pastry. If we talk about Mexico, we do very well there with our salted products →





and olive oil. Then the funny thing is at home. In Paris, you can ask ten Parisians about FAUCHON, and they will all say something different. One might say macarons, jam, teas and chocolates to foie gras, salmon or our famous Christmas log. Our company offers not just one type of lust-worthy delicatessen but a food universe loved by global gourmands. This is very important.”

This diversity of product offering also reflects the customer base. Just as there is no one FAUCHON product, there is no one stereotypical FAUCHON customer. Young, old, and a variety of ethnicities and religious persuasions all enjoy the company’s offerings.

Adding layers

Just as with retail, similarly strong identities have been embedded in all four of the company’s pillars. These retain an entirely French identity, using only French ingredients and producers, ensuring they provide a platform for FAUCHON’s present and future while bearing the weight of the past.

With this forward-thinking yet authentic corporate blueprint in place, what could the future hold? As FAUCHON heads towards its

140th anniversary in 2026, this is the new challenge for Mr Vischel.

“Looking at the next three to five years, we have many projects in Mexico,” the CEO says. “We have four new shops to be opened there. We also have a big project in Qatar, while in Europe, we will focus on Turkey. There is a more geographical expansion on the way. We also want to continue our hospitality expansion and have a plan to open ten hotels before 2030 and hopefully at least two more schools, one in the Middle East and one in Asia. There is a lot for us to do, but these are exciting times for FAUCHON.”

With this future development based across several subsectors and involving a broad base of products, it is clear that under Mr Vischel’s leadership, the company has put itself into a very strong position, retaining its core identity while modernising in a variety of ways.

“The key for me is enjoyment,” the CEO concludes. “I enjoy my work. I am very proud and honoured to be doing what I am doing. I want everyone associated with FAUCHON, from employees and customers to artisans and partners, to feel the same way. Joy is the most important part of the FAUCHON DNA.”

“It’s a collaboration spanning over thirty years, working in harmony between the development of bespoke recipes based on original ideas from FAUCHON or suggested by us, the sourcing of quality ingredients and our traditional know-how that characterizes us. We share the same values of high standards, quality and French know-how, to satisfy our demanding, epicurean customers.”

BRUNO CASSAN
President of Maison AndréSy



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