

KNEBWORTH HOUSE

Elham Vahedi Sarrigani

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Q: What excites you most about taking on the GM role at Knebworth House?

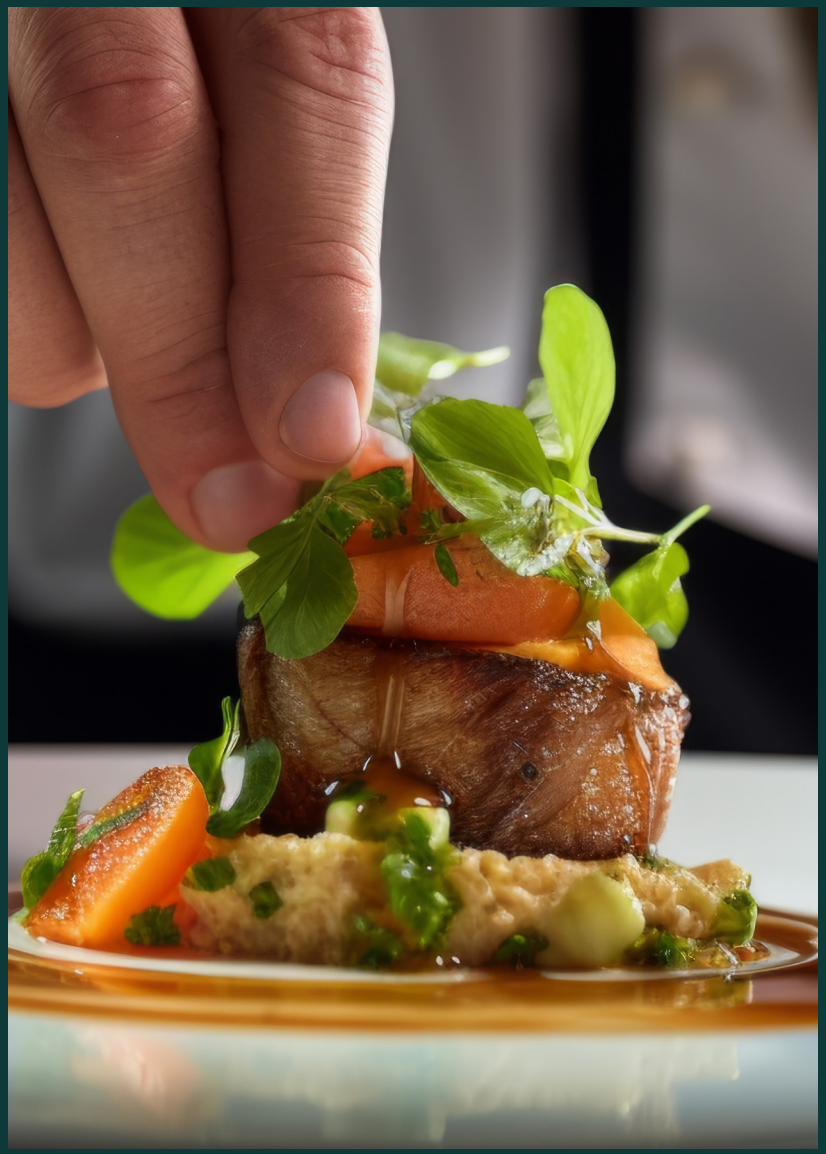
What really excites me about joining Knebworth is the opportunity to be part of somewhere so unique. It has so much history, character and potential, and I think there's a real opportunity to build on what's already here.

I've spent many years working across hospitality, from hotels and event venues to conferences and large-scale operations, so I'm looking forward to bringing that experience into a different environment and learning more about what makes Knebworth special.

On a personal level, I want to make a positive difference. I want to build a strong team, create an environment where people enjoy coming to work and take pride in what they do, and make sure we're delivering the experience our guests expect. I also want to challenge myself. I don't want to simply keep things running as they are. I'm always looking at how we can improve, develop and grow.

It would be great to look back in a few years' time and see how much we've achieved together.





Q: How will you bring the team together to deliver the consistently high standards that Knebworth House deserves?

I've always believed that everything starts with the people. We can have a beautiful venue, fantastic facilities and a great product, but without the right team and the right attitude, we won't deliver the experience we want our guests to have.

My first priority is getting to know the team, understanding how each department works and listening to the people who know the business best. I want to understand what's working well, where the challenges are and where people feel we could do better, particularly once I've experienced a busy season and seen the operation at its fullest.

From there, it's about making sure everyone understands what's expected of them and, more importantly, how their role contributes to the overall guest experience.

Communication between departments is something I feel strongly about. Sales, operations and the kitchen team can't work in isolation. We need to support each other and work towards the same goals, especially when we're delivering weddings, corporate events and busy visitor days at the same time.

I'd also like to introduce more structure around team briefings, training, guest feedback and regular communication, so standards remain consistent and everyone understands their responsibilities.

For me, accountability is important, but it has to come with the right support. I want people to feel comfortable sharing ideas, raising concerns and taking ownership, rather than waiting for someone else to solve a problem.

I believe in being visible and leading from the front. I want the team to know I'm there to support them, but also that I have clear expectations. My aim is to create a team that works well together, enjoys what they do and feels proud of what we achieve.

Q: How do you see Knebworth's hospitality offering developing over the coming years?

I think Knebworth has some really exciting opportunities ahead.

For me, growth isn't just about bringing in more business. It's about attracting the right customers, delivering a brilliant experience and making sure the business is commercially successful at the same time.

One area I'd like to continue building on is weddings and private events. Knebworth offers a setting that's difficult to find anywhere else, and I think there's an opportunity to strengthen its reputation even further by focusing on the experience we deliver and the details that make each event feel special.

I'm also particularly interested in conferences and corporate events. Having worked in conference and event operations for many years, I'd like to look at how we strengthen client relationships, improve sales conversion and give organisations even more reasons to choose Knebworth.

The visitor experience is another area that's important to me. Whether someone is attending an event, visiting the estate for the day or simply stopping by the Tea Room, every interaction matters. I'd like us to keep looking at ways to enhance that experience and explore seasonal offers and activities that encourage people to come back throughout the year.

Alongside that, it's important that we fully understand our commercial performance. Looking closely at revenue, costs, margins and sales trends helps ensure that any growth is sustainable and beneficial for the business in the long term.



Whilst I'm excited by the opportunities ahead, I also think it's important that we don't lose what makes Knebworth different. It isn't just another events venue. Its history, surroundings and character are a huge part of its appeal, and I would never want to lose that while developing the business.

My vision is to bring together the heritage and character of Knebworth with the level of hospitality and service guests expect today. I want people to choose Knebworth not just because it's a beautiful place, but because of the experience they have here and how they feel when they leave.

If guests remember their visit, recommend us to others and want to return, then we'll know we've done something right.