

The FROM THE EDITORS AND BUREAUX OF MONOCLE MAGAZINE ENTREPRENEURS

● THE BUSINESS HANDBOOK FOR PEOPLE WITH BRIGHT IDEAS

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Plenty to chew over



Special Edition

HOW TO MAKE IT IN THE EMIRATES

Monocle meets the bright sparks, clever companies and business-minded folks making a mark in the UAE. Our first-ever *Entrepreneurs* nation special eyes up the key opportunities.

- + Global business toolkit for start-ups
- + EXPO: 15 leading entrepreneurs share their eureka moments

Counter culture



Towering ambition



I've got a nose for business

Scenting success



Zaha Hadid-designed HQ



Views from the top



Founders standing tall



I'm putting my best foot forward...



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WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

We profile some of the brightest founders and firms that have identified new markets and revenue streams. Plus, how to build a charming co-working space, the perfect office chair and more.

I'm known for my bubbly personality



Lightning in a bottle

Meet the beer brand that's a fine addition to any menu.

Beer might be the world's most widely consumed alcoholic drink but at a fine-dining restaurant even its most ardent enthusiast is likely to feel pressured to peruse the wine list. The founders of Japanese luxury beer company Maison Rococo decided to test this theory. Surveying Tokyo's vast fine-dining scene, they found that the pressure was real but not only for the patrons.

"Serving a beer that could be bought at a supermarket or convenience store was not an experience that chefs and sommeliers were comfortable with," says Yohay Wakabayashi, co-founder and CEO. So was there a market for a new type of beer that

befits a special occasion? It turned out that there was – and a significant one too. Within a year after launching in 2018, the Rococo Tokyo white beer gained entry into more than 100 Michelin-starred restaurants in the city. Restaurants in Singapore and Taiwan soon followed.

"It's a subtly flavoured *hefeweizen* with a touch of sweetness, which makes it easy to pair with a range of cuisines," says Tokyo-based food and drink writer Melinda Joe. Hisashi Udatsu, chef-owner of a sushi restaurant in Tokyo, calls it "a partner" that enhances Japanese cuisine's delicate taste.

Apart from the spring water that they source from the Mount Fuji area, Rococo's founders would rather not reveal the ingredients. The craft beer movement in recent decades has spawned thousands of beers that rely on geo-specific hops and other grains to create unique flavours. But Rococo, they say, is focused solely on creating an experience that elicits emotions, which they consider the core of luxury.

"It's true for all facets of our product, from the gift box to the glass," says co-founder Keith Martinez. "One of our early Japanese partners wanted to keep our bottle because she wanted to put flowers in it." Rococo's goblet-shaped glasses, made in Slovakia, are quietly elegant, with the beer's name etched almost unnoticeably on the stem.

Wakabayashi and Martinez confess that they are not beer nerds but they count this as a blessing. It helped them to spot an underserved market: female beer drinkers. While they set out to create a gender-neutral product, they responded to the feedback from women on beer's bitterness and chefs' grievances about the pairing difficulties that they had encountered. The message is in the bottle. — JSK