

SHAPED BY LEGENDS:

Freeman's Experience Creates Balanced Career

By Heather Ratliff

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The move from New York City to San Francisco not only changed Andrew Freeman's address, but his fast-paced way of life.

Joining the Kimpton Group in 1998, Freeman had to adjust to the company's mindset and unique corporate culture.

"One of the major philosophies of the Kimpton Group is the whole idea of personal and professional balance in your life," Freeman said. "That has been a work in progress for me, because I've always prided myself as being a workaholic."

Founded by the late Bill Kimpton in 1981, the Kimpton Group operates 29 hotels and 28 specialty restaurants in eight markets: San Francisco, Portland, Ore., Vancouver, B.C., Seattle, Tacoma, Wash., Denver, Salt Lake City and Chicago.

Kimpton's concepts range from Portland's Red Star Tavern and Roast House, serving regional American fare, to Seattle's cozy Italian bistro, Tulio.

Even though the restaurants are adjacent to Kimpton Group hotels, Freeman's marketing approach targets locals.

'I wanted to use my passion for marketing and also my newly discovered passion for food and beverage.'

"If you have a restaurant that is popular with the locals, that is where the visitors are going to want to come," Freeman said.

Freeman began his career as an account executive for the French Culinary Institute after graduating Summa Cum Laude from Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, N.J.

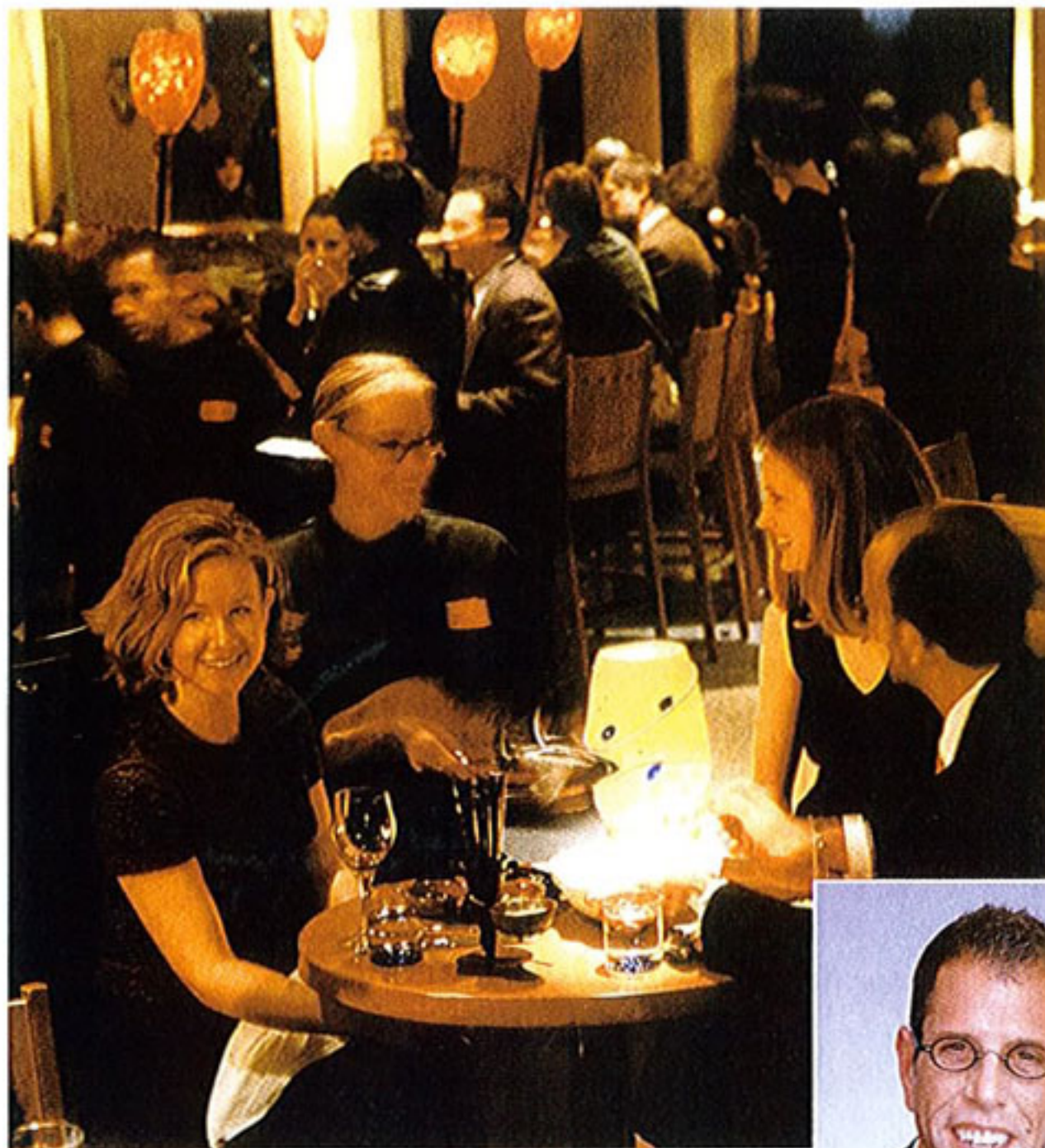
His experience at the French Culinary Institute made Freeman realize the restaurant-marketing field was for him.

"It was like a light bulb going off in my head," he said. "I realized that this is what I really wanted to do. I knew that I didn't want to be a chef or necessarily own my own restaurant, but I wanted to use my passion for marketing and also my newly discovered passion for food and beverage."

Coast to Coast

Connections at FCI led Freeman to the opportunity to work on the marketing strategy for the famed Russian Tea Room in New York City. Starting as director of private dining and moving up to director of marketing, Freeman said his work at there was an amazing learning experience.

After four-and-a-half years, Freeman decided to spread his wings and take a position at another New York icon, the Rainbow Room, as director of public relations and marketing. This led him to become vice president of public relations for the Rainbow Room and Windows on the World.



Ponzu, Kimpton's modern-Asian cocktail lounge in San Francisco

"That job turned out to be the biggest career-making move for me," Freeman said. "Working with Joe Baum and the whole team was incredible. Joe pushed us hard to be the most creative and the best."

While moving from the East Coast never crossed his mind, Freeman said he had to do some soul-searching when his current boss, Niki Leondakis, called him to offer the position of director of sales and marketing with the Kimpton Group.

"I realized from a career point of view, a multi-unit was really important for me," Freeman said. "I am in my fourth year and it has been a great experience."

He was later promoted to vice president of sales and marketing, and is currently responsible for overseeing the marketing, public relations, grassroots marketing and community involvement for all the properties.

"Since I've been with the Kimpton Group, we have opened nine restaurants and plan to open six this year in areas such as Washington, D.C., and New Orleans," Freeman said.

"It is really exciting when you are part of a team that is doing something that I truly believe is very different than what any other restaurant company is doing right now."



Freeman

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