

Chapter 2

restaurant. bar.

The Plot Thickens in Chapter 2

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Owner - Carmen Francella III

Success Magazine:
What does success mean to you?
Carmen Francella III: Success is a platform—a goal that I work toward everyday. I haven't fully achieved success yet, but I know that when I do, it will be because I am doing something that I love, something honorable, something good, and something for others. So far, Chapter 2 has allowed me all of those things.

SM: When did you become interested in the food service industry?
CF: I have always had an interest in food service. My mother worked in and around the industry my entire life, so, I was introduced to all the ins and outs of the restaurant business at a very young age.

SM: Why did you decide to open Chapter 2?
CF: My parents owned and operated their own restaurant for a few years, and I had the chance to see first hand how things got done. This past summer my parents decided to step aside and get out of the business, turning things over to me. So, in early

September, I began the next chapter which became Chapter 2.

SM: How would you describe the menu at Chapter 2?
CF: Unique. The menu at Chapter 2 gives new life to classic American cuisine. The Contemporary-American menu takes simple American dishes and gives them a twist. In our own original style, we mix the freshest ingredients to offer our patrons something truly distinct.

SM: What time do you stop serving?
CF: Our dining room is open for seating until 10 p.m. Our bar menu runs a bit later on Friday and Saturday, until 1 a.m.

SM: What is the most difficult aspect of running a restaurant?
CF: For me there are two. The first is my need for perfection. I want everything to be ideal, the food and service to be exact, and to know that each and every person leaves pleased. The second most difficult aspect for me is time. The hours are very long, and owning Chapter 2 has certainly taken away from the time I am able to spend with family and friends.

SM: In a restaurant, teamwork is essential. How do you ensure that you hire the right people, and, most importantly, retain them?
CF: Before I hire anyone, I meet with them one-on-one so I can get a feel for their personality. It is important to determine what they will bring to the workplace and how motivated they are in making Chapter 2 a success. I try to be as fair as possible. I admit that I expect a lot and set rather high standards, but I aim to be firm, not harsh. I feel that my staff can relate to me and I think they respect that.

SM: You mentioned that as a restaurant and bar owner, you work very long hours. How are you able to find time for yourself?
CF: I do my best. Any free time I get is typically spent at the gym—it's really my only outlet. Other than that, I try to spend whatever time I have with the people I love.

SM: What are some of the challenges that you face as a family owned business?
CF: Competition is probably the number one challenge that any family owned business faces. The chains are always going to do well. I need to find a way to set myself apart from them and stand alone. That is why I genuinely try to offer the Capital District a completely innovative experience.

SM: What is the most rewarding aspect of running your own business?
CF: The community aspect is most rewarding for me. I love that unlike a chain, I am able to get to know my patrons by name and interact with them on a friendly level. I think that when it comes to small businesses, people look for and really appreciate the personal touch.

SM: Who is your target market?
CF: Anyone who is ready for a fun, hip, and sophisticated experience. I want an enthusiastic clientele who is ready to try something new.

SM: What sets you apart from other restaurants in the region?
CF: A lot. The décor is like no other restaurant. The colors, the walls, the lights, the furniture, and the menu are all original. I can promise you that you won't find them anywhere else. I want Chapter 2 to wow people.

SM: Who did your interior design?
CF: I personally envisioned the design concept of each room. From placement to design, I had made the decisions. I did work with graphic artists, however, for designing the walls, as well as Experience in Schenectady for our furniture selection.

SM: Where do you see Chapter 2 heading in the future?
CF: If all goes well with Chapter 2, I would truly love to open sister restaurants in other locations, such as Albany or Saratoga.

SM: How do you transition from the dinner crowd into the late night bar crowd?
CF: Slowly. The main transition nights are Friday and Saturday, when we have our resident DJ (DJ Sweat)—from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. I usually have him start out soft and slow, so that our guests are able to finish their meal without the interruption of loud music. Once the dining room is empty, we close it off and become solely a bar and lounge until 4 a.m.

SM: What can a patron expect from Chapter 2?
CF: An overall wonderful experience—a fun place, with high quality service and an exciting menu. You truly have to come try the place for yourself. The experience cannot be compared—Chapter 2 is that unique.



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