

# LADURÉE

*Paris*

*David Holder, a passionate president*



With his long hair, rock ‘n’ roll rings, slim-fit jacket and white shirt (no tie), David Holder is no ordinary president. Constantly jetting from place to place, this Parisian-at-heart is instinctive, visionary, warm, and open. He rarely stays in one place for long and yet is always fully present, attentive to the world that surrounds him, and keen to share his various interests.

Having taken over the presidency of Ladurée in 1993 and the vice-presidency of the Holder Group in 2000, David Holder’s work is based on emotions, connections, impulses – in short, on a love of the finer things, especially when it comes to food!

These are the qualities that transformed Ladurée, once just a little tea room on the rue Royale, into the entity that it is today. A brand, a label, a signature; something akin to haute couture, or perfumery, or the wider creative arts.

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His philosophy: bring creativity, emotion, and tradition together in an intensely personal definition of the French art de vivre. A clichéd phrase that takes on new life on the lips of this passionate, multi-talented entrepreneur.

David Holder lives life in the fast lane, and isn't content with merely being the president of a globally successful company, founding boutiques, and developing business strategies.

He gets stuck into the creation of each new macaron flavour and the development of innovative pastries, he has his say in the brand's savoury menus, he was one of the pioneers of the chocolate line Les Marquis de Ladurée, the home fragrance range, and Les Merveilleuses de Ladurée cosmetics.

In short, he does it all, his life built on a passion for culture, fashion, and contemporary art – a passion he inherited from his father, a keen collector.

## **From rue Royale to Versailles...**

David Holder was born in Paris, 1968, and not into just any old circles! That said, though his childhood was charmed, nothing was simply handed to him. When he was young, his father Francis bought the Lille bakery Paul and, with the help of his wife Françoise, a talented jurist and entrepreneur, turned it into the business it is today.

It was undoubtedly David's parents who instilled the love of professional and personal adventures in him.

In 1989, while holding tenure in business and finance at the University of Dauphine, he joined the family group – but not at the top of the ladder, for playing favourites with the boss's son was not the business's way.

Rather, he joined the ranks as an apprentice patisserie chef; nothing would do but to learn the trade and see if he enjoyed it. Two years later, he took to the United States to continue his studies at the University of Berkeley, and got his masters degree.

Returning to France in 1992, he was entrusted with managing the national and international development of the Holder Group.

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In 1993, with his father's help, he bought the mythical Ladurée tea room on rue Royale, waking the sleeping beauty from her long slumber.

Four years later, encouraged by the success of the rue Royale store, the Ladurée tea room and boutique on the Champs-Élysées, decorated by Jacques Garcia, opened its doors in a blaze of glory. Openings in other prestigious locations came to follow: in 2002, the rue Bonaparte won over the left bank, in the old gallery of one of the post-war era's "great ladies" of interior design, Madeleine Castaing. In 2005, a store in London's Harrods marked the start of an international adventure.

David Holder's knack for finding the spots best suited to the spirit of Ladurée, along with an inestimable flair for launching new ventures, has led to inauguration of over one hundred sales points across the world.

In 2008, the first store launched in Japan, in parallel with the opening of the first Ladurée Bar in Paris on rue Lincoln; a fresh venue that backs on to the Champs-Élysées store, but tells a whole new story.

The fairy tale of Versailles came next, with a store opening in the castle's Royal Court the following year.

2011 was New York's Madison Avenue.

2012 was a big year, with a host of new arrivals; in Japan, the cosmetics line Les Merveilleuses de Ladurée (which would be launched in France the following year), in Switzerland, the opening of a Ladurée manufacture in Enney, and in France, the new chocolate line Marquis de Ladurée launched on rue de Castiglione in Paris. This year also saw new boutiques in Hong Kong, Cannes, Saint-Tropez, Sao Paulo, and Stockholm.

2013 to the present day has seen arrivals in Singapore, Florence, Bucharest, Soho in New York (the first tea room restaurant), Miami, Bangkok, Brussels, Azerbaijan, Dubai, the Philippines, and Luxembourg.

So, is David Holder an over achiever? Yes, and no, because this smiling entrepreneur who manages to stay trim despite admitting to eating dark chocolate every day, has given Ladurée an unparalleled brand image, and an international aura that stems from surrounding himself with people who share the same passion for sweetness, good food, and beauty. The same passion for life.