

# CHARBEL MEAIKY ON LE43 REBRANDING PROJECT

## “WHEN LOGIC MEETS INSTINCT, THAT’S WHEN EVERYTHING BEGINS TO CLICK”

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### Let’s start with the beginning of this “new chapter in taste.” What made 2025 the right moment for Le43 to undergo a full rebrand?

Le43 has been our client for several years, and the idea of a rebrand has always been on the table. Their identity simply no longer reflected who they are today. But when it comes to rebranding, timing is everything—and it’s never just about a new look. It’s about understanding the brand’s DNA, its ambition, and where it’s heading next.

Le43 is one of the region’s most prestigious catering companies, known for their scale, precision, and consistent excellence. We’ve experienced it all firsthand—from royal weddings they’ve catered to behind-the-scenes tours of their central kitchen. For us, that kind of immersion is non-negotiable. **To rebrand something this meaningful, you have to do your homework and know the brand inside and out.**

As for timing, 2025 is a milestone year for Le43. They relocated to new offices, a state-of-the-art central kitchen, and a tasting lounge in the heart of downtown Beirut. It’s more than a move—it’s a powerful statement about who they are becoming. And that made this the perfect moment to write a new chapter in taste.

### Walk us through your design thinking. Was there a core concept or word that anchored the entire rebranding process?

We weren’t the ones who originally named the brand, but to rebrand it meaningfully, we had to begin by understanding it. “Le43” takes its name from Brodmann Area 43, the part of the brain responsible for the sense of taste. That idea became our foundation. We knew the rebrand had to spark a reaction, something you feel before you even fully process it. The new identity needed to be sensory, refined, and quietly bold.

The logo draws inspiration from a wok, specifically, a subtle curve that forms the number 3. The contrast between the “Le” and the “43” introduces a tone that feels both elegant and unexpected. You notice the 3, but something’s off. It’s sliced at the top. It makes you pause, look

again, and think. That moment of curiosity is exactly what we set out to capture.

This was never just a cosmetic update, it was a creative reset. A bold, elegant, and contemporary new chapter for a brand that continues to redefine excellence.

### What was the timeline for this rebrand? From brief to delivery, how long did the process take and how did it evolve along the way?

The entire process took about six months. Research took time. Exploration took time. And so did the countless late nights at the office, those moments when you think you’ve landed on something great, only to wake up the next day knowing you can push it even further.

This wasn’t about refreshing a logo. It was a complete rebrand. We redefined the brand’s strategy, messaging, verbal identity, and visual language. Every element was reconsidered, rebuilt, and refined to align with where Le43 is heading, not just who they’ve been.

### In a luxury F&B context, there’s always a temptation to show off. What was the tone of voice you crafted for Le43 and why?

Le43 doesn’t need to shout to be noticed. Their work speaks volumes, so our role was to create a verbal identity that mirrors that quiet excellence. It’s a tone that evokes sophistication through simplicity, one that invites you in, rather than overwhelms. We wanted every word to feel deliberate, tasteful, and aligned with the experience they deliver: thoughtful, precise, and unforgettable.

**This wasn’t about showing off. It was about showing why Le43 is in a league of its own.**

### Was there a moment of creative breakthrough, something that clicked and made everything fall into place?



During the Le43 rebrand, yes, a creative breakthrough did happen. It's in those moments, when logic meets instinct, that's when everything begins to click. **You can't force it, but with experience, you learn how to create the right conditions for it to happen.**

I still remember it clearly: we were reviewing the logo and brand applications. The concept was strong, but something didn't fully convince us. It was close, but not quite there. Then, a subtle shift in the typeface changed everything. That single adjustment brought the entire identity into alignment and led to the refined, elegant outcome we had been aiming for.

**Let's be blunt: AI is reshaping the design landscape. Could AI have done this job faster or cheaper? And what do you say to clients tempted by that route?**

Let's be clear, AI can do impressive things. It can generate visuals quickly and often deliver something that looks aesthetically pleasing. But branding isn't just about looking good. It's about meaning, emotion, context, and experience. And that's where AI falls short.

You can feed AI all the prompts in the world, but can it feel a brand? Can it walk through a central kitchen, attend a royal event, taste the food, or sense the energy of a team that's obsessed with excellence?

AI is a powerful tool, and we use it where it makes sense. But when it comes to shaping a brand with depth, intention, and lasting emotional resonance; there's no shortcut. **Design, at its core, is human. It's what you feel first. That's something no algorithm can replace.**

**UPSCALE's portfolio seems rooted in refinement, minimalist, elegant, often understated. Would you say your agency has a signature style— is there such a thing as an "UPSCALE aesthetic"? UPSCALE is, by nature, upscale.** The outcome should always feel elevated—whether that means elegant, bold, or even playfully disruptive.

Do we have a signature aesthetic? Not in the traditional sense. What we have is a signature approach. If we're working on a luxury brand, we know how to translate elegance into every detail. If we're branding a street food concept, we can be unapologetically witty and loud. That adaptability is our strength. We shape our creativity around the soul of each project, not the other way around.

What remains constant is the passion, the precision, and the belief that every brand, no matter its category, deserves to feel elevated.

**Do you consider yourself sector specialists? Are F&B, hospitality, or luxury lifestyle brands your natural habitat—or are you industry-agnostic?**

We've worked across the board—from insurance and FMCG to automotive, Consultancy, Education, Fashion, IT, Retail, NGOs, and of course, F&B. So no, we're not sector specialists in the narrow sense but we do have a soft spot for F&B and luxury lifestyle brands. There's something about creating experiences you can taste, feel, or live that speaks to our team's creative instincts. But regardless of the industry, our approach is always the same: dive deep, understand the brand, and deliver something truly elevated.

**What role does a Lebanese identity play in your creative DNA, especially when working on brands meant to launch or relaunch in the GCC?**

Despite everything Lebanon has been through, there's a certain magic in its resilience—the chaos, the nightlife, and the beauty woven into everyday life. That's where our creativity is rooted: in lived experiences, layered cultures, and a deep sense of purpose.

Our Lebanese identity plays a powerful role in shaping our creative approach, especially when working on brands launching in the GCC. We know how to balance cultural nuance with contemporary thinking. And with an established presence in the UAE - a country we deeply admire and feel closely connected to -we're able to offer both local insight and regional relevance. That duality is what gives our work its distinctive edge.

**Do you consider your branding work closer to design, storytelling, or business strategy? Or do you believe it's all the same now?**

To me, a successful branding project lives at the intersection of three essential elements: design, storytelling, and strategy. You can't separate them if you want to create something truly meaningful and lasting.

We believe that strategy is the blueprint that guides our creative teams to excel in both design and storytelling. Strategy is not just for business or marketing. **Even art needs a strategy. Without it, you're just decorating. With it, you're building something with purpose.**

That's why I don't see it as one or the other. Design gives form, storytelling gives emotion, and strategy gives direction. All three are essential.