Maria Gomez-Laurens

Senior Director, Global Account Management | HelmsBriscoe
Past International President, Les Dames d'Escoffier International
Past President, Les Dames d'Escoffier International San Diego Chapter
Founder, Les Dames d'Escoffier International Mexico Chapter
Founder, Flavors of Mexico

Maria Gomez-Laurens is a hospitality professional, global meeting strategist, and passionate advocate for culinary, cultural, and community engagement. With more than 30 years in the hospitality and meetings industry, Maria has built a distinguished career grounded in service, relationships, and excellence.

Maria is deeply engaged with Les Dames d'Escoffier International, where she has held multiple leadership roles at the chapter and international level. She served as President of the San Diego Chapter, helping strengthen membership engagement and expand philanthropic initiatives.

In 2015–2016, Maria had the privilege of serving as International President of Les Dames d'Escoffier International, leading an organization of more than 2,400 women across multiple chapters worldwide. During her presidency, she focused on strengthening global collaboration, expanding international engagement, and supporting the organization's mission of education, mentorship, and philanthropy within the food, beverage, and hospitality industries.

Maria also founded the Mexico Chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International, further expanding the organization's global footprint and fostering cross-cultural collaboration among women leaders in hospitality, culinary arts, and food industries.

In addition, Maria is the Founder of Flavors of Mexico, a signature culinary and cultural program designed to celebrate Mexico's rich gastronomic traditions while supporting meaningful cultural exchange and community engagement. The program has grown into a highly regarded experience that brings together culinary leaders, hospitality professionals, and travelers to experience Mexico through food, history, and culture.

Maria was born in Mexico City and moved to San Diego in the early 1980s. Her father served as a diplomat for the Mexican government, and her mother was an entrepreneur. As an only child, Maria was privileged to travel extensively throughout the world, gaining exposure to diverse cultures and global perspectives. Attending diplomatic and cultural events with her father sparked her early interest in hospitality, event production, and creating meaningful experiences, an interest that would ultimately shape her professional path.

Initially, Maria pursued a degree in journalism, advertising, marketing, and design. However, shortly after graduation, she chose to follow her passion and transitioned into hospitality and event planning, beginning what would become a 20-year career with Hilton Hotels.

During her tenure, Maria earned Hilton's prestigious Circle of Excellence Award three times, recognizing her as a top national sales producer within the top 5% of performers one of the highest honors within the organization worldwide.

After nearly two decades in hospitality operations and sales, Maria joined HelmsBriscoe, where she currently serves as Senior Director, Global Account Manager. In this role, she manages global accounts and specializes in sourcing complex meetings and events worldwide, with particular expertise in Latin America. Her extensive experience allows her to guide clients through strategic sourcing, contract negotiations, and event planning across global destinations.

Maria is consistently recognized among HelmsBriscoe's Top Producers, having earned President's Club honors for ten consecutive years a distinction that reflects her commitment to excellence, client advocacy, and outstanding production performance. Her collaborative approach, deep industry relationships, and strategic insight have made her a trusted advisor to organizations seeking seamless, high-impact meetings and events around the world.

Maria's passion for hospitality remains at the center of her work. She is known for her attention to detail, strategic negotiation skills, and commitment to delivering exceptional client experiences. She believes the true measure of success in hospitality is the ability to adapt, listen carefully, act with compassion, and maintain integrity in every interaction.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Maria is deeply committed to giving back to her community. She actively volunteers with Helen Woodward Animal Center, supporting animal welfare and community outreach initiatives. In addition, Maria volunteers at her synagogue, where she helps plan and coordinate gatherings and special events that bring together and strengthen the beloved Jewish community she is proud to be part of.

Maria's career reflects her lifelong passion for hospitality, cultural connection, and service. Whether working with global clients, leading culinary initiatives, or volunteering in her community, Maria continues to bring warmth, professionalism, and excellence to everything she does.