

Lifestyle | Features

NEW YORK'S FRENCH CHEF DANIEL BOULUD VOTED WORLD'S BEST



French chef and restaurateur Daniel Boulud works in the kitchen of his restaurant 'Daniel', in Manhattan, New York city. —AFP

French chef Daniel Boulud, who has been living in New York for almost 40 years, was named best restaurateur in the world by Les Grandes Tables du Monde on Monday for his flagship restaurant "Daniel." The association of 184 top restaurants worldwide said that the Lyon native, who moved to New York in 1982, "embodies, for many North Americans, French gastronomy, or even gastronomy, period." Boulud, 66, defines his cuisine as French in its cooking and textures but with American products and flavors. Besides "Daniel," which has two Michelin stars, in New York, the chef has other restaurants in the United States, Canada, Dubai, Singapore and the Bahamas.

Boulud told AFP after the news broke that this latest in a long list of honors represented a "professional dedication and

really a sign of friendship and support from colleagues" in an environment widely seen as extremely competitive and high-pressure. Like all New Yorkers, Boulud took a big hit in the COVID-19 pandemic that killed at least 34,000 people in his adopted city, which bore the brunt of the first wave of the virus in the United States in early 2020.

Some of his establishments closed, but "Daniel" kept going, setting up a terrace of covered shelters on the sidewalk "with heating in the winter and air conditioning and music in the summer" for die-hard fans. Emerging from the pandemic, Boulud thinks New York will remain "one of the five most attractive cities in the world" and will always enjoy a prominent place in French gastronomy. The economic and cultural capital of the United States and a cultural mosaic of 8.5 million inhabitants,

New York is home to 183 French restaurants, according to the French consulate.

"In love" with New York and now an American citizen, Boulud still boasts of being "the most French of all French chefs in the United States" thanks to a "cuisine which has its French references" but which "never stops innovating." The price of one of his "exceptional" dinners runs to about \$300 a head including wine and service, according to the restaurateur. "Customers want to have fun, to splash out on wines, they go out a lot. We see them with a regularity and a loyalty that reassures us", said Boulud, who is now looking forward to the return of visitors from Asia and Europe —AFP

Aniston 'can't imagine' more Morning Show yet

Jennifer Aniston "doesn't know" if she could make another season of "The Morning Show". The 52-year-old actress is still digesting the eventful second season of the Apple TV+ drama and she admitted the idea of returning to play Alex Levy again is currently "so hard to even imagine" as it was such a grueling run of episodes for her and her character. Asked about doing more, she said: "It's so hard to even imagine it right now. You know when they say mothers almost have a block: 'I could never do that again!' I'm a little bit in that moment of, 'I don't know if I could ever do that again!' So, we'll see." The two seasons have seen Alex expose her co-anchor Mitch Kessler (Steve Carell)'s sexual misconduct, divorce, retire, make a comeback, be praised as a hero before facing being "cancelled", suffer a near-breakdown and then contract COVID-19, and Jennifer admitted her character's trials felt "relentless. She joked: "It was relentless! Honestly, I did think at one point the writers were trying to kill me! "I was like, 'Oh my gosh. You guys! Literally crawling to the finish line here.'" If she does return for a third season, Jennifer hopes Alex has more "fun". Asked what she'd like to see happen next to her alter ego, she told The Hollywood reporter: "Oh, just a lot of love and fun



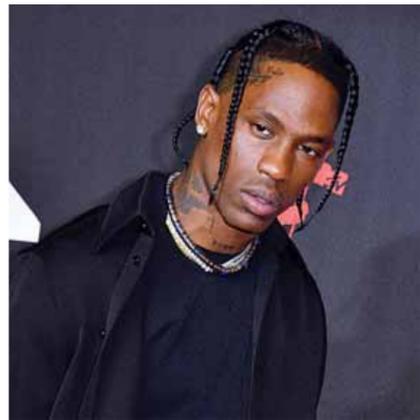
and dancing and playing and something with a lot more levity!" While a third season hasn't officially been commissioned, showrunner Kerry Ehrin doesn't want to

pick up where the season two finale left off, in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, and admitted she could take the program to a different time period entirely. She said: "I think it's going to have been done, done, done. So, it wouldn't be my instinct. You could [jump into the future]. You could go backwards. It's such an interesting little universe. You really can put it anywhere in time, and I think the challenge of the show is coming up with that big subject." And Reese Witherspoon admitted she'd like to see the show depict a world after the "shift" of the pandemic. She said: "If #MeToo was the centre of season one and season two has so many issues but really tackles the impending pandemic, I would love to see how the world realigns post-quarantine. "Even though that seems optimistic to say at this point, with people still dealing with the complexity of COVID and really what it's doing to different industries. But just, how the whole world has culturally shifted in so many ways: the way we communicate and work, the way we talk to each other - there's definitely a lot to talk about and tackle."

Travis Scott is sued by Astroworld security guards

Travis Scott is being sued for \$1 million by Astroworld security guards. The 30-year-old rapper - who has been subjected to multiple lawsuits in the wake of the tragedy, which saw hundreds injured and 10 dead after a crowd surge - has been hit by more legal action after Samuel and Jackson Bush claimed they have been left permanently scarred by what they witnessed at the event in Houston, Texas, on 5 November. According to documents obtained by TMZ, the pair - who were hired to work at the festival by AJ Melino and Associates - claimed 50,000 people had bought tickets but many more were in attendance, which contributed to the problem. Jackson told how he saw several lifeless bodies receiving CPR and even pulled a body from the crowd as thousands of fans surged towards the stage. As well as Travis, the security guards also want Live Nation, AJ Melino, Cactus Jack Records, and more, to be held accountable for the tragedy. Last week, a \$2 billion lawsuit was filed on behalf of 280 concertgoers, while many other fans have also lodged legal action. Travis was performing during the surge and his lawyer recently insisted the rapper "truly did not know what was going on" in the crowd until the following day. His attorney, Edwin F. McPherson, said: "Obviously was a systemic breakdown that we need to get to the bottom of before we start pointing fingers at anyone. "But clearly the important thing is that [the news] never got to Travis, it never got to Travis' crew. He's up there trying to perform; he does not have any ability to know what's going on down below, certainly on a mass level. "Travis didn't really understand the full effect of everything until the next morning. Truly he did not know what was going on. "Understand that when he's up on the stage and he has flashpots going off around him and he has an ear monitor that has music blasting through it and his own voice, he can't hear anything, he can't see anything." The news comes after Edwin previously accused law enforcement of making "inconsistent messages" about the tragedy. He added: "Houston Police Chief Troy Finner was quoted in the

New York Times as saying 'You cannot just close when you got 50,000 and over 50,000 individuals. We have to worry about rioting, riots, when you have a group that's that young.' "Yet, just a short time later, Chief Finner states the responsibility to stop the show falls on Travis." The chief said local officials didn't have the power to end the performance, insisting the "ultimate authority to end the show is with the production and the entertainer" - although he later said he didn't want to "point fingers" until the on-going investigation had concluded. But Travis' lawyer added: "It was reported that the Operations Plan designated that only the festival director and executive producers have authority to stop the show, neither of which is part of Travis' crew. "This also runs afoul of HPD's own previous actions when it



shut down the power and sound at this very festival when the performance ran over five minutes back in 2019. "Investigations should start proceeding over finger-pointing so that together, we can identify exactly what transpired and how we can prevent anything like this from happening again." Travis will play for the funerals of those who died, while he and his Cactus Jack Foundation are also teaming up with BetterHelp, an online portal providing mental health support, to offer free one-on-one virtual therapy sessions for anyone affected by the tragedy.

said: "In my memoir, I talk about how when I was a little kid, growing up with no money, growing up being mixed, not understanding, having identity issues, and then going through my career and the different things that have happened, that I never even talked about to even some of my best friends. "When I wrote about Christmas, I was like, 'Oh wait, I don't want to bring people down,' 'cause this seemed like depressing stuff that happened. "But that's the reason that it motivated me to really go all the way in every Christmas, every year. I just want my kids to have the best time, and honestly, a lot of it is for me." While Mariah is best known for her festive single 'All I Want for Christmas Is You', she admitted it wasn't always her favorite but she has grown to "love it" since it was first released in 1994. She told 'Entertainment Tonight': "I have to learn how to let myself live with mistakes I would have changed and stuff like that, but now I love it, it's part of my life. I feel like I grew up with it, and shared it with the world, and hopefully you will listen to it this year." And the 'Fantasy' hitmaker was taken aback when her record label first suggested she penned a Christmas track. She recalled: "When I wrote 'All I Want for Christmas Is You,' the label was like, 'OK, why don't you do a Christmas record?' And I'm like, 'Really, now?' Like, second album, two albums in. "And I was like, 'Well, I do love the holidays, let me try.' So, 'All I Want for Christmas Is You' is the first Christmas song I ever wrote, and then I worked on it with my then-writing partner, Walter A, and we just wanted to make it feel like a modern classic."

Carey explains Christmas obsession

Mariah Carey "goes all the way in" at Christmas because of her difficult upbringing. The 52-year-old star always wants her eight-year-old twins Moroccan and Monroe - who she has with ex-husband Nick Cannon - to have the "best time" over the festive season but admitted she's driven to make it a magical occasion because it helps her forget about the "depressing stuff" that's happened in her life. She



Dr Dre wanted his divorce to be 'classy and fair'

The music mogul split from Nicole Young in March 2020 after 24 years of marriage and despite his intentions for an amicable break-up, the 56-year-old producer cut off all communication with his former spouse after she "falsely" accused him of abusing her. According to a declaration filed in court by Dre - who is fighting Nicole's request for more than \$4 million to pay her legal fees - and obtained by RadarOnline.com, the 'I Need a Doctor' hitmaker told his ex-wife he wanted to keep things "classy and fair" and he "did not want to turn it into an expensive fight." And Dre's last text to Nicole, which was sent in early August 2020, ended with him saying: "Let's keep it friendly and peaceful. Over and Out. I love you." But days later, the 'Forget About Dre' rapper alleged Nicole falsely accused him of abuse during their marriage in legal documents. He stated: "This is a complete lie. Nicole is now also trying to get out of our Premarital Agreement by claiming that I supposedly forced her to sign the Premarital Agreement. This too is false." The pair have had no contact since, except in early January when Nicole voluntarily visited her former husband in hospital after he suffered a brain aneurysm. Dre's account of the visit is that Nicole hugged and kissed him and told him she loved him before leaving - but a few months later, the former lawyer filed for a domestic violence restraining order, which was denied by the court, and which he insisted there was no basis for. He wrote: "There were never any domestic violence claims made by Nicole before or during our marriage, formal or informal. At no time were the police ever called during our marriage. "I was present for Nicole's deposition. She testified that there are no witnesses to the alleged abuse and she admitted that she never told anyone, including her mother or siblings or other family or friends about any alleged abuse. There are no texts, no emails, no photographs, no videos, no police reports, no domestic violence filings, or other documents evidencing abuse and no witnesses to her offensive allegations. "After learning last August of Nicole's false accusations of abuse, I realized then that I did not know the woman I had married and loved." Dre explained this was why he has "not seen Nicole or communicated with her or spoken to her since August 2020 (except when she choose on her own to visit me when I was hospitalized)." The producer branded Nicole's allegations of abuse and claims he forced her to sign a pre-marital agreement "appalling". He added: "[They are] in my view nothing but an effort to attempt to obtain more money than that to which she is entitled and to what she agreed in our Premarital Agreement."



Charlotte McKinney attends the Stella McCartney "Get Back" Capsule Collection and documentary release of Peter Jackson's "Get Back" at The Jim Henson Company in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

Peter Jackson's 'Get Back' finds joy in final days of the Beatles

"The Beatles: Get Back," the eagerly awaited new Disney+ documentary from Peter Jackson, aims to dispel persistent myths about the Fab Four's breakup, offering a more positive take on their final months as a band. The three-part series finds John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr in January 1969, preparing for their first concert in more than two years. Using hours of unseen archive footage, it charts how the Beatles had set out to write and record 14 new songs for the occasion, giving themselves a deadline of just three weeks.

The time period is familiar territory for viewers of "Let It Be," the 1970 documentary from British director Michael Lindsay-Hogg that famously emphasized tensions and acrimony within the band, which split that same year. But Jackson - best known for his "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, and an avowed Beatles obsessive - does not dwell on arguments and creative disagreements among the Liverpool quartet. "Get Back" attempts to reshape the popular image of their later years as a time of resentment and fracture, instead showing the bandmates joking around and spontaneously creating classics that are still played regularly today.

"The best bit of us always has been, and always will be, when we're backs against the wall," says a young McCartney in the film, which hits Disney+ from Thursday. Jackson's series contains the Beatles' final public appearance together, a 40-minute concert on the roof of their company building on London's Savile Row - shown here for the first time ever in its entirety. That company - Apple Corps - granted Jackson some 60 hours of archival video that had remained under lock and key for decades.

"I think there's always been this misconception that my father was the cause of the Beatles breaking up, and he wasn't," McCartney's daughter Stella told AFP at a Los Angeles event for the series. "You can see it very clearly through this amazing insight of unseen footage." Her father remained "heartbroken" over the Beatles' breakup for "most of my life," as is clear from the series, she added. "You just see him desperately wanting to keep this alive and wanting to make this work and his brotherhood to stay intact." —AFP