



February 22, 2010

### **Taco Bueno Gearing Up to Add 60 Restaurants**

After putting the brakes on development for the past couple of years due to the recession, Farmers Branch-based Taco Bueno is shifting back into drive. The Tex-Mex fast food chain has hired Fort Worth customer analytics firm Buxton to help decide when and where to add more restaurants. It plans to add about 60 eateries during the next four years, said John Miller, president and CEO. About half of those will be franchises and the other half will be company stores. Taco Bueno now has 161 company stores and 24 franchise locations in nine states, including 76 restaurants in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The 41-year-old chain closed seven locations over the last two years as the recession took a bite out of sales at some locations, and it sought to shed unprofitable stores, Miller said. Most of Taco Bueno's restaurants are in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Abilene and Kansas City metro areas.

Source: Dallas Business Journal

### **McCormick & Schmick's Opens First New Restaurant in a Year**

McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurants Inc. has opened its first new restaurant in a year. The Portland-based chain of upscale seafood restaurants opened a new location in West Palm Beach, Fla., the 94th restaurant for the company and its fourth location in Florida. The formerly fast-growing chain last opened a new restaurant in St. Louis, Mo., in February 2009. The company deliberately halted its expansion plans when the recession started taking a toll on tablecloth dining. Following its 2004 initial public offering, the company went on a spree, opening seven locations each in 2005 and 2006 and 12 locations each in 2007 and 2008. Company officials weren't available to comment on the decision to start opening new locations now when the recovery has yet to hit the hospitality industry. "As one of the top visitor destinations in Palm Beach County, CityPlace provides a vibrant location for McCormick & Schmick's with its mix of dining, retail and entertainment options," said Bill Freeman, CEO, in a press release. "We look forward to bringing our fresh seafood offerings to the area and becoming an integral part of the local community." The West Palm Beach restaurant seats more than 300 guests, and boasts a casual lounge area, patio bar, covered outdoor dining and private dining space for groups from 10 to 80 guests.

Source: Portland Business Journal

### **Crave Owners Betting on New Markets**

Crave isn't letting a struggling economy stymie its plans to grow. The Minneapolis-based restaurant company announced last week that it is opening restaurants in Orlando and Omaha within the next six months and plans to enter three or more markets before 2012. Crave owner and CEO Kam Talebi said in a statement that he's planning "an aggressive, yet cautious expansion into several new markets." The first

Crave opened in Edina's Galleria in 2007. Last year, locations opened at the Mall of America in Bloomington and the Shops at West End in St. Louis Park. The restaurant is known for sushi and American fare such as pizzas cooked in wood-fired ovens, served in an upscale environment at reasonable prices. Continuing with the formula that has worked in Minnesota, the two new restaurants will be in a higher-end shopping center and a mixed-use development. Orlando's Mall at Millenia is anchored by a Neiman Marcus and features Chanel, Tiffany & Co. and Jimmy Choo stores. In addition to retail, the Midtown Crossing at Turner Park in Omaha features condos, a movie theater, a fitness club and several restaurant concepts -- from an Irish pub to the Loft 610, a Dallas-based restaurant and nightclub that describes itself as "dressed up and laid back." Talebi has not shared the additional locations he is scouting, but they are focused on the East Coast and additional sites in Florida, according to the company's news release.

Source: Star Tribune.com

### **National Restaurant Association Announces 2010 Public Affairs Conference Dynamic Lineup of Speakers Include Former Speaker Hastert, Political Pundit John Mercurio, Industry Leaders**

The National Restaurant Association today announced that the 2010 Public Affairs Conference will be held April 14-16, and will host a dynamic lineup of prominent political experts, including current and former elected officials, political pundits, as well as industry leaders. Hundreds of restaurateurs from across the country will gather in the nation's capitol to meet with their members of Congress, advocate for the restaurant industry and discuss issues affecting their businesses. The conference will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C. "The Public Affairs Conference presents an opportunity for restaurateurs from across the country to join together as one strong voice advocating for the restaurant industry," said Dawn Sweeney, President and CEO of the National Restaurant Association. "As the nation's second largest private-sector employer, the restaurant industry is a significant player in our nation's economic recovery. It is critical that our policymakers understand the challenges that our industry are facing, but also the restaurant industry's role in job creation and economic growth." Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Dennis Hastert will be a keynote speaker at the conference. Hastert was the longest-serving Republican Speaker in history. Political pundit John Mercurio will also provide an inside account of the political leaders and events in the coming year that will shape the state of our industry. Mercurio is the Executive Editor of The Hotline, Washington's premier daily online resource for American politics.

Source: The National Restaurant Association

### **Darden Discusses Growing Beyond US**

Florida based Darden Restaurants has had early discussions about opening restaurants beyond North America. The parent of Olive Garden and Red Lobster has some locations in Canada, but the vast majority is in the US. "International's something that has really been off the table for us for quite a while," Darden CEO Clarence Otis said during an analyst conference Wednesday in New York City. "We think the time has come." Otis added that Mexico and the Persian Gulf would be the most likely markets in a joint-venture approach, but discussions are early enough that there wouldn't be any openings next year. Meanwhile, Darden plans to build between 58 and 74 restaurants next year, mostly Olive Gardens and LongHorn Steakhouses.

Source: The Orlando Sentinel

### **Cheesecake Factory Names Jannini President**

The Cheesecake Factory Inc. has named former Marriott International Inc. executive Michael E. Jannini as its president. The casual dining chain said that Jannini will be in charge of its restaurant operations, marketing, purchasing and quality assurance. Jannini most recently served as executive vice president and

general manager of global brand strategy and innovation at Marriott. The company also promoted David M. Gordon to chief operating officer of its restaurants and Dina R. Barmasse-Gray as senior vice president of human resources. Gordon previously served as senior vice president of operations for Cheesecake Factory restaurants. In his new role he will still handle the operations of the company's namesake restaurants but will also be in charge of Grand Lux Cafe. Barmasse-Gray started with Cheesecake Factory as vice president of talent. Last week Cheesecake Factory, whose brands also include RockSugar Pan Asian Kitchen, reported a fourth-quarter loss on impairment charges and flat sales, but its adjusted results topped analysts' expectations.

Source: Investors.com



### **Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc. Announces Promotion of Two Senior Executives**

Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc. announced the promotion of two senior level executives, currently serving as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Ruth's Chris Steak House and Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Mitchell's Fish Market, to President and Chief Operating Officer for their respective brands. Effective March 1, 2010, Kevin Toomy will assume the role of President and Chief Operating Officer of Ruth's Chris Steak House and Samuel Tancredi will serve as President and Chief Operating Officer of Mitchell's Fish Market. "These restaurant veterans have demonstrated great leadership and have had significant, positive impact since joining the company in 2008 in one of the most difficult environments for our industry," stated Michael P. O'Donnell, Chief Executive Officer and President of Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc. "I am proud to have these very talented, proven leaders on our team and I am confident that they will continue to drive their brands forward in their new roles."

Kevin Toomy has more than thirty years of operations experience and successful leadership in the restaurant industry. He started his career serving as a General Manager for Steak & Ale Corporation, and shortly thereafter, joined two former Steak & Ale executives to grow the now nationwide Houston's restaurant brand. Sam Tancredi also has more than thirty years of restaurant operations experience, including serving as Franchisee and President of six Paradise Bakery and Cafes in Indianapolis, IN, and Franchisee and Joint Venture Partner of nine Bonefish Grills.

Source: Ruth's Hospitality Group, Inc.

### **P.F. Chang's Signs Philippines Deal**

P.F. Chang's China Bistro Inc. announced a deal with Global Restaurant Concepts Inc. to develop eight restaurants in the Philippines over the next five years. Founded in 1997, Global Restaurant Concepts Inc. has focused on casual dining service and premium pizza in the Philippines. Its first location for the Scottsdale-based Asian restaurant chain is scheduled to open in Manila in first-quarter. P.F. Chang's began its international push last year signing an agreement with Middle East retailer M.H. Alshaya, to develop 34 Bistro restaurants over the next 10 years. The first restaurant was scheduled to open in Kuwait City during late in 2009. Chang's also signed a development agreement with Alsea S.A.B. de C.V., a quick service restaurant operator in Mexico, to for 30 restaurants over the next 10 years.

Source: Phoenix Business Journal

### **Dairy Queen® Continues International Expansion. QSR Treat Leader Announces First Locations in Macau and Egypt**

Dairy Queen® has announced plans for international expansion in 2010 that will include the opening of its first locations in Macau and Egypt. “It was more than 50 years ago that we first expanded beyond the U.S. and Canada,” said John Gainor, president and CEO of International Dairy Queen, Inc. “Since then we’ve always viewed the international marketplace as a huge opportunity for our brand. We look forward to introducing great Dairy Queen products, including our signature Blizzard® Flavor Treats to our friends in Macau and Egypt.” In Macau, which along with Hong Kong makes up the two special administrative regions of China, the Hon Hoi Group (International) Co. Ltd will open two Dairy Queen locations within the year. The first is expected to open this spring. The Hon Hoi Group has multiple restaurants in Macau, China and Canada, including Chinese, Japanese and Thai food concepts. Macau is the most densely populated region in the world with an economy that is tourism-driven. The move into Egypt marks the 20th country where Dairy Queen will have a presence. Boraie Development, an Egyptian, family-run company with businesses in New Jersey and Egypt, will open the first DQ® Grill & Chill® restaurant in Cairo this summer, which will serve the same delicious food and treats found on Grill & Chill menus in North America, with some local menu options as well. In addition to Cairo, there is the potential to open 40 to 50 restaurants throughout four to five additional Egyptian cities. With an estimated population of 83 million, Egypt is widely regarded as an important political and cultural center both in Africa and the Middle East and is enjoying a rapidly developing economy. “International consumers are very open to trying new brands and are looking for high-quality food options,” said Rose Nichols Zinkel, Director of International Development for International Dairy Queen, Inc. “Macau and Cairo are two markets where consumers eagerly are awaiting the opening of these Dairy Queen locations.”

Source: International Dairy Queen (IDQ)

### **O.C. Restaurant Executive Resigns**

Scott Barnett, founding president and chief executive of San Clemente-based Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., resigned last week, the company announced. Barnett headed the company’s various concepts, which include Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. restaurants and markets, the Mai Tai Bar nightclubs, Capi’s Italian Kitchen and The Rusty Pelican in Newport Beach. “This was a difficult decision. The team here has achieved great results, particularly in the last couple of years,” said Barnett said in a prepared statement. “The people who work here are second to none in the industry.” Barnett helped launch the now world-famous Bubba Gump brand in 1996. The flagship chain is positioned in tourist cities around the globe, including locations in Anaheim, Hawaii, Japan, Mexico and Florida. “Scott is the most gifted restaurant executive I’ve met,” said Bubba Gump Chairman Gordon Miles. “We’re extremely sorry to see him go.” The company did not disclose why Barnett left. Executives Tim Busald and Gail Taggart will share his duties until a new president is appointed.

Source: The Orange County Register

### **Burger King to Sell Seattle’s Best Coffee**

Seattle’s Best Coffee said it’s signed a deal with Burger King Corp. that will see its coffee on sale at 7,250 Burger King locations in the U.S. by September. Seattle’s Best, a subsidiary of Starbucks Corp., of Seattle, will replace Burger King’s current BK Joe coffee program. Seattle’s Best Coffee will be available hot or iced, with optional vanilla or mocha flavorings and whipped topping, at prices between \$1 and \$2.79. “We are thrilled to be partnering with Burger King to complement their breakfast program,” said Michelle Gass, president, Seattle’s Best Coffee, in a statement.

Source: Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle)



### **T.G.I. Friday's Chooses New President and COO**

After an extensive search process, Nick Shepherd, president and chief executive officer of Carlson Restaurants Worldwide, named Ian Saunders as president and chief operating officer for T.G.I. Friday's International and a member of the Carlson Restaurants Worldwide executive team. In his new role, Saunders will be responsible for all aspects of T.G.I. Friday's International business, leading the International management team, and continuing to refine and execute an aggressive growth strategy. He comes to Friday's with extensive global food service experience and a track record of driving and sustaining aggressive business results in the global marketplace. Prior to joining Friday's, Ian was with Papa John's International Inc. where he most recently served as regional vice president for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Prior to Papa John's, Ian spent six years in general management roles within the UK-based Geest Ltd., a leading manufacturer and distributor of produce and fresh prepared foods to the food service and retail sector, and 15 years in various leadership roles at Yum! Brands, Inc. Ian's formative years were spent working in the casual dining sector with London-based Grand Metropolitan PLC and Whitbread PLC. "Adding Ian to our international business and our executive team is a huge win for us," Shepherd says. "Ian's extensive global knowledge and innovative thinking, combined with his successful track record of driving and sustaining aggressive business growth in the global marketplace, make him the ideal candidate for this key role in our business." Saunders, who received his Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Catering Management from the University of Surrey and his Master of Business Administration from United Kingdom's Cranfield University, will reside in the United Kingdom. Saunders first day in his new position is March 1.

Source: QSR

### **Dawn Hudson Joins P.F. Chang's Board of Directors**

P.F. Chang's China Bistro, Inc. announced the appointment of Dawn E. Hudson to its board of directors, effective February 11, 2010. Ms. Hudson, who brings substantial management experience in business strategy, marketing and executive leadership, will also serve as a member of the Company's compensation and executive development committee. "I am delighted to welcome Dawn to the board of directors of P.F. Chang's. Her wealth of knowledge, including her significant experience in food service and marketing, will continue to enhance the strength of our board," said Rick Federico, Chairman and Co-CEO. Ms. Hudson currently serves as Vice Chairman of The Parthenon Group, an advisory firm specializing in business strategy consulting, since March 2009. She was President and Chief Executive Officer of Pepsi-Cola North America (PCNA), the multi-billion dollar refreshment beverage unit of PepsiCo, Inc. in the United States and Canada, and Chief Executive Officer of the PepsiCo Foodservice Division. Ms. Hudson currently serves as a board member of Lowe's Companies, Inc., where she is a member of the Compensation Committee and the Governance Committee, and Allergan, Inc., where she is a member of the Audit and Finance Committee and the Organization and Compensation Committee. Additionally, she serves as Chairperson of the Board for the Ladies Professional Golf Association, or LPGA. In 2006 and 2007, Ms. Hudson was named among Fortune Magazine's "50 Most Powerful Women in Business."

Source: P.F. Chang's China Bistro Inc.



### **GE Capital, Franchise Finance Provides Growth Financing to Taco Bell Franchisee, Taco Bill, Inc. Funding Allows the Acquisition of Seven Taco Bell Units in the Baltimore Area**

GE Capital, Franchise Finance recently provided a multi-million dollar credit facility to Taco Bill, Inc., whose owners, William Mullin and Christopher Walsh, operate multiple Taco Bell franchise units in California and Maryland. The loan helps Taco Bill acquire seven new units throughout the Baltimore area. Funding was provided through GE Capital, Franchise Finance's bank affiliate, GE Capital Financial, Inc. "As leaders in franchise finance, we're thrilled to expand our relationship with Taco Bill," says Chris Poppe, vice president at GE Capital, Franchise Finance. "We are continuing to help them grow and we look forward to working together in the future." Taco Bill, based in Auburn, Calif., currently owns and operates 23 Taco Bell units, including the new acquisitions from this funding. GE Capital, Franchise Finance has a long-standing relationship with Taco Bill's operators from past work with their affiliate company, Cross Country Ventures, who own 18 Long John Silver's in Pennsylvania. "We appreciate doing business with the industry leader in franchise financing because of the expertise they bring," says Bob Volbert, chief financial officer at Taco Bill, Inc. "While already working with our 10 units in Baltimore, GE Capital was a willing participant and allowed us to locally acquire an additional seven more." Taco Bell is a national, Mexican-style, quick service franchise with more than 80 percent of the units owned and operated by independent franchisees.

Source: Taco Bill, Inc.

### **David Acheson Appointed to the Board of Directors of the International Food Protection Training Institute**

The International Food Protection Training Institute, a non-profit organization delivering career-spanning, standards-based food protection training to state and local food safety officials, announced the appointment to its Board of Directors of Dr. David William Kennedy Acheson, Managing Director, Food and Import Safety, Leavitt Partners, a firm founded by former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary and EPA Administrator Michael O. Leavitt to provide strategic input and counsel to clients in matters involving health, the environment and trade. Prior to joining Leavitt Partners, Dr. Acheson served as Associate Commissioner of Foods of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a role in which he provided agency-wide leadership on all food and feed issues, including health promotion and nutrition. "IFPTI is dedicated to improving public health through the creation of a fully integrated national food safety system," said Stephen Benoit, president and chief operating officer of the National Center for Food Protection and a founding Board member of IFPTI. "As such, we are extremely pleased to have Dr. Acheson as a member of the Institute's Board of Directors given his long standing recognition of the essential role state and local agencies play in assuring the safety of the nation's food supply, and the critical importance of training to assuring capacity, competency, and equivalency within state and local agencies as part of an integrated food safety system." To date, working in partnership with the Association of Food & Drug Officials, and in collaboration with the FDA, IFPTI has trained more than 300 food protection professionals from more than 30 states.

Source: The International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI)

## **Chipotle Pushing To Build On 2009 Momentum**

Fresh off announcing an unusually strong Q4 and full-year 2009 (particularly by current restaurant industry standards), Chipotle Mexican Grill is looking to build on the momentum with a new marketing campaign to launch in Q2, a new rewards program and new packaging -- not to mention expansion into Europe. For 2009 overall, the fast-casual chain reported revenue up 14% (to \$1.52 billion), net income up 62% (to \$126.8 million) and diluted EPS up 67% (to \$3.95). The sales gain reflected both revenue from 121 new stores opened during '09 and comparable-store sales growth of 2.2% (including a 2% gain in Q4). Like other chains, Chipotle saw some traffic fall-off, but comp-store sales grew as a result of menu price increases instituted in 2008. The price increases, combined with labor efficiencies and decreased marketing/promotional expenses, resulted in restaurant-level operating margin growth of nearly 25%. Based on the '09 results and Chipotle management's indicators about current-year plans, the marketing expenditures conservatism seems to reflect strategic emphasis on ensuring bang for the buck via high-exposure, relatively low-cost channels. In reporting the company's financials, co-CEO Steve Ells confirmed that Chipotle will continue to focus on its "Food with Integrity" positioning. He described that mission as changing "the way the world thinks about and eats fast food" by "providing the best dining experience we can and serving food made from the finest ingredients, which were raised with respect for the animals, the environment, the farmers and ultimately our customers." Ells also announced that Chipotle will open its first London location in May, and is actively searching for more locations in London, Paris and Germany. In total, the chain expects to open 120 to 130 new locations this year.

Source: MarketingDaily

## **National Restaurant Association Announces 2010 Kitchen Innovations Award Recipients**

The National Restaurant Association announced the recipients of its prestigious 2010 Kitchen Innovations™ (KI) Award, which recognizes the most groundbreaking equipment on the global foodservice market as selected by an independent panel of experts. This year's awardees will provide restaurant and foodservice operators with new solutions to serve their guests the highest quality meals and service while increasing productivity, safety, cost-efficiency and environmental sustainability. All the KI products will be showcased in an interactive demonstration area at the 2010 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show at Chicago's McCormick Place, May 22-25. "Each member of our panel of judges has the hands-on experience to recognize true innovation, which is what makes our KI program so exciting. These products will make restaurants run faster, smoother and more efficiently, which will result in better customer service and higher quality food," said Ira Cohn, Convention Chair for NRA Show 2010 and President of ARAMARK Business and Industry Group. "Selecting the right equipment for a restaurant kitchen is crucial to creating and serving safe, nutritious and delicious meals."

The 2010 Kitchen Innovations Award recipients are:

Activeion Cleaning Solutions, LLC - The Ionator EXP™

A hand-held, on-demand power cleaner that converts tap water into ionized water—a powerful dirt-removing, bacteria-killing agent. When used as directed the Ionator EXP kills 99.999% of harmful bacteria without the use of toxic chemicals.

Alto-Shaam, Inc. - The Alto-Shaam CombiTouch™ An intuitive pictorial and video graphic touch screen control. CombiTouch commands all the basic and advanced cooking functions for 250 standard and customized recipes and training, without operators having to read text.

Champion Industries - E2series Flight with Quad Rinse

A unique linkage between the conveyor and the water flow control conserves water and energy use, as hot water input is reduced proportionately, when the speed of the conveyor is slowed.

Champion Industries - Heat Recovery Unit with Temp-Sure system

This innovation eliminates the need to pre-heat the final rinse water, to conserve energy, while the temp-sure system continually monitors outlet temperature and adjusts airflow to maintain the proper rinse temperature.

Ecolab- Scrub N Go™ - Cordless Floor Scrubber

This compact scrubber replaces the daily mop and bucket. It cleans, scrubs, vacuums, and dries, all in one

pass. With its rapid-recharge lithium battery, Scrub N Go scrubs at 1045 rpm and the powerful vacuum leaves floors virtually dry and safe.

Henny Penny Corporation – iControl™ for Evolution Elite®

The Gas Evolution Elite Open Fryer now offers the new iControl, which monitors all fryer activity. iControl provides the operator with data to improve oil usage, meet product quality standards, and continuously optimize frying operations.

Hobart Corporation - Ventless AM Warewasher

The Hobart AM Ventless eliminates the need for purchase and installation of a hood. It's the first ventless door-type that recaptures water vapor, and condenses it, to heat the incoming cold water inlet for the final rinse cycle.

Irinex USA, LLC - Multi Fresh Blast Chillers

Multi Fresh brings it all together - blast chill, shock freeze, rapid thaw and proofing - controlled by its Dynamic Fresh System®, which allows you to cook, hold and serve optimal food freshness to the table.

Manitowoc Beverage Systems/Manitowoc Foodservice – TRUfill™ Beverage Dispensing System

This unique system dispenses beverages, most notably draft beer, in 84% less server time. It delivers the "perfect pour" via a nozzle that engages through a one-way resealable valve in the bottom of the cup.

Merrychef / Manitowoc Foodservice – eikon™ Accelerated Cooking Oven

The new eikon series of speed ovens, offer an icon-driven touch screen operation enabling instant menu management with archive capacity,

ethernet updates, operator training and service maintenance instructions.

Middleby Corp. - Middleby Marshall Mini WOW Oven

This high speed conveyer oven with the Middleby Marshall patented energy-eye and motor sleep mode technology automatically powers down between uses and saves 30% in energy versus prior models.

Middleby Corp. - Southbend Ultimate Range

The Ultimate Range is completely configurable to customers' needs. Design your own range, using its dedicated website, offering an array

of options like gas tops with electric ovens, front sauté burners with high output back burners, and many more.

Multiplex/Manitowoc Foodservice - Blend In Cup Smoothie Machine

This small footprint, refrigerated Blend In Cup machine produces a wide range of quality smoothies and dairy based beverages. All ingredients are onboard, including the ice machine, and its touch screen allows operators to manage inventory and operational procedures.

Oliver Packaging & Equipment Company - Mini Chip Slicer

This countertop slicer is designed to safely and efficiently create healthy snack chips from day old bakery ... bagels, baguettes, and buns. The blade frame guard makes cleaning safe. Easily replace blade cartridge: no service call required.

Perfect Fry Company - Spin Fresh Centrifugal Fryer

Perfect Fry's countertop fryer uses Spin Fresh technology with a built in spinner basket. After cooking it spins off the excess oil during a finishing convection cooking step, to provide reduced calories and enhanced taste experience.

Vegawatt - Vegawatt™ Cogeneration System

Vegawatt is a fully automated and work-flow integrated energy cogeneration (CHP) system that generates on-site electricity and hot water for foodservice operations by using the waste vegetable oil from their fryers as a fuel source.

All Kitchen Innovations Award applicants were judged by an independent, expert panel of industry leaders consisting of Dan Bendall (principal, FoodStrategy, Inc.); Martin Cowley (senior manager design & standards, Walt Disney Parks & Resorts); William Eaton (chairman of the board, Cini-Little International); Robert Forrester (principal, Restaurant Industry Solutions); Foster F. Frable Jr. (founding partner, Clevenger Frable LaValee); Aaron LaMotte (director, Sodexo Performance Interiors); Robert Marshall (V.P., U.S. operations, McDonald's Corp.); George McNeill (vice president, culinary and corporate chef, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company LLC); and Kathleen H. Seelye (managing partner, Ricca Newmark Design).

Source: The National Restaurant Association



### **McDonald's Closing 430 Restaurants in Japan**

McDonald's Japan, a 50-percent-owned affiliate of McDonald's Corp., will be closing about 430 restaurants over the next 12 to 18 months while the Oak Brook, IL-based fast-food company reviews its operations in Japan. The affiliate, McDonald's Holdings Co. (Japan), has 3,700 stores. At the same time that it was announcing the closings, the company also is opening 90 new restaurants and refurbishing 200 others in Japan.

Source: The Real Estate Channel

### **Ritz-Carlton to Close 5-Diamond Las Vegas Hotel**

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co will close its five-diamond property in Las Vegas this May, after the hotel struggled with a slide in demand and revenue. "It's nothing the hotel did. It's a simple lack of business and a decline in the tourism industry," said Ritz-Carlton spokeswoman Vivian Deuschl. The owners of the 348-room property, Village Hospitality LLC, an arm of Deutsche Bank, will stop funding the Ritz-Carlton Lake Las Vegas day-to-day operations on May 2. "That was the owner's decision and we reluctantly agreed to go along with it," Deuschl said. Village Hospitality, a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank's German American Capital Corp, acquired the hotel in a non-judicial foreclosure sale in February 2009. "The unprecedented economic downturn has had a significant impact on the hotel's operations," said Deutsche Bank spokesman Scott Helfman. "As a result, Village Hospitality LLC concluded that continuing to fund operations was no longer economically viable and consequently decided to close the hotel effective May 2, 2010." Ritz-Carlton is a division of Marriott International. "The whole demonization of luxury meetings and companies' pulling back on having their high-end meetings in luxury hotels -- this has had a tremendous impact on Las Vegas," Deuschl said. "I can't think of another destination that has had to defend itself more against comments from politicians." Deuschl did not comment specifically on the hotel's occupancy level, but said it was lower than the company would have liked.

Source: Reuters

### **Ben & Jerry's CEO Resigns**

Ben & Jerry's CEO and Vice President of Global Brand Development Walt Freese is resigning, the ice cream company announced recently. Freese joined the company, now owned by Unilever, which is based in the Netherlands, more than 8 years ago, according to a company statement. He plans to pursue other business and investment opportunities but will continue to lead the Vermont company through March. "Walt has done an outstanding job," John LeBoutillier, Unilever's senior vice president of foods in the U.S.

Source: The New York Times

### **Aramark Launches Pizza Brand in Colleges**

When students go off to college, one of the first places they look to find is a neighborhood pizza shop that reminds them of home. ARAMARK Higher Education, a world leader in providing professional services to more than 600 colleges and universities throughout North America, is bringing the local pizza shop to campus with TOPIO'S, a new brand offering old-world style pizza that can be customized with modern flavors and spices. "TOPIO'S was created based on extensive, proprietary research with "Gen-Y-ers" around the country," said Naala Royale, vice president of marketing, ARAMARK Higher Education. "Our customers want a pizza concept that stays true to old-world tradition in terms of great dough, sauce and cheese, but brings an element of new-world customization with the infusion of modern flavors and spices. After multiple tastings with students, TOPIO'S was the clear winner in terms of taste, value and the overall experience." The TOPIO'S brand is loosely based on a fictional family pizzeria that has pursued pizza perfection for generations. Sal Topio, current proprietor and son of the original owners, took over the business, and regularly updates his family's old-world pizza tradition with modern twists. Customers and fans are invited to follow Sal on Facebook and experience his pizza making art. TOPIO'S is now open at University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and American International College in Springfield, Mass., and will roll out nationally to ARAMARK-managed campuses throughout 2010-2011. Each location will feature the character of a neighborhood pizzeria with modern influences, such as digital menu boards and lighting. TOPIO'S is the fifth proprietary brand launched by ARAMARK Higher Education in the last four years, joining Burger Studio, P.O.D. Provisions on Demand Market (convenience store), Zoca Fresh Mex to the Max! (Mexican), and Bleeker Street (bakery café).

Source: PizzaMarketplace.com

### **Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. Extends Tender Offer to Acquire Diedrich Coffee**

Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc. announced that Pebbles Acquisition Sub, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of GMCR, has extended its previously announced \$35.00 per share cash tender offer to purchase all outstanding shares of common stock of Diedrich Coffee, Inc. In accordance with the terms of the merger agreement among GMCR, Purchaser and Diedrich Coffee, the tender offer has been extended 20 business days (the maximum number of days permitted under the merger agreement) to expire at midnight, New York City time, on Monday, March 8, 2010, unless further extended. The tender offer previously was scheduled to expire at midnight, New York City time, on Friday, February 5, 2010. All other terms and conditions of the tender offer remain unchanged.

Source: Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc.

### **U.S. Foodservice Creates New Digital Resources for Restaurants and Consumers**

U.S. Foodservice has launched two new websites to help restaurant operators improve sales and efficiency by leveraging industry best practices. Foodsight™ ([www.usfoodsight.com](http://www.usfoodsight.com)) and Beyond the Plate™ ([www.beyondtheplate.com](http://www.beyondtheplate.com)) offer articles, tools, testimonials, product solutions and interactive features created to assist foodservice professionals in building their business. The digital resources inform, educate, inspire, train and connect restaurant operators with peers and consumers. "Foodsight is based on our 150 years of experience in the industry and offers insightful, incisive and inciting information for the foodservice professional," said Mark Eggerding, senior vice president, Street Sales, U.S. Foodservice. "The Web site includes the most insightful research in the industry and incisive recommendations that will incite restaurant owners to pursue a higher level of success." The site has six main sections: Featured Category: In-depth articles on a different product category each quarter; Market Insights: All the latest industry trends and research; Business Solutions: A wealth of management tools; Operator News: Operator profiles and success stories; Additional Products: Information on other U.S. Foodservice exclusive brands, products and supplies; and Resources: Valuable partner links and program information. Beyond the Plate is an on-line, interactive resource center where foodies and professionals can learn about and discuss new products,

marketplace trends and the art and enjoyment of good food. Visitors can access a wide range of food information, including recipes, training videos and interesting articles about food, dining and the culinary lifestyle. There is also a special "Ask the Chef" feature where visitors can get answers to their questions from U.S. Foodservice expert chefs. "Whether you are a home cook, food enthusiast or own a restaurant or catering company, you will find tips that will help you become the most knowledgeable person out there when it comes to food," Eggerding says. This quarter, both Foodsight and Beyond the Plate are focusing on disposables and environmental sustainability. On [www.usfoodsight.com](http://www.usfoodsight.com), restaurant operators learn how to increase sales from their takeout menu, how to profit from their catering business in the new economy and the benefits of going green. Plus, visitors have access to the latest in sustainable packaging, and sell sheets as well as rebates for U.S. Foodservice disposable products. Visitors to [www.beyondtheplate.com](http://www.beyondtheplate.com) can take a survey on their use of and feeling toward disposables, and get recipes and other information on food and related products that are environmentally sustainable and perfect for entertaining. Content is updated regularly to keep both sites fresh and relevant.

Source: Foodservice Central.com

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