

Today's Restaurant

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Uno Dué Go franchise deal largest in Texas

Boston, MA – In the largest franchise deal in its 68-year history, Uno's announced plans for the opening of 30 locations of Uno Dué Go, its fast-casual concept, throughout Texas by FGR Food Corporation. The units will be built in multiple trade channels including suburban locations, airports, hospitals and stadiums. This expansion represents substantial growth for Uno's as the first major franchise deal of the successful, three-year-old, fast-casual concept.

Founded 14 years ago, Dallas-based FGR owns and operates multiple franchise concepts in Dallas, Texas. FGR opened the first two franchise Uno Dué Go restaurants in December of 2008 in the Dallas Fort-Worth airport and has seen tremendous success from both locations. Since then, another major franchisee, the Compass Group, opened two college locations at the University of Wisconsin Whitewater and Cleveland State University.

"We took a chance on Uno Dué Go because we had faith in the concept and in the intelligent strategic business partner we had in Uno's," says Rob Goldblatt, COO of FGR. "This time around, it's a proven concept for us. It is a strong return on investment – we have seen three years of double-digit growth and excellent operating results since the day we opened. We are thrilled to be introducing more of Texas to the great tastes and hospitality of Uno Dué Go."

Uno Dué Go is a unique experience with a focus on organic, natural and locally-sourced ingredients. While it serves Uno's famous flavorful deep dish,




thin crust and gluten-free pizza, it is a brand unto itself with most of the menu unique to Uno Dué Go. Some of the more distinctive menu items include a prosciutto, fig and Vermont cheddar sourdough bread panini, the Tum Yum chopped vegetable salad, a vegetarian black bean burger wrap and what the Uno's team has dubbed the world's best grilled cheese sandwich. A handful of the menu items are interesting twists on

Uno's favorites with a flavor all their own, such as the multi-grain harvest pizza and the seasonal apple, bacon and Vermont Cabot @ cheddar pizza.

Because of Uno's focus on nutrition and caring for guests with food allergies, a comprehensive guide to all menu items and ingredients will be available on an electronic kiosk in each location.

FGR is already identifying locations and will be building within the year.

Uno's is talking to additional franchisees and expects this to be the first in a series of Uno Dué Go franchise announcements. The FGR deal is just a piece of Uno's overall growth story. Uno's has new full-service restaurants opening both domestically and internationally, and is gaining momentum in its quick service concept, Uno Express, and its consumer packaged foods line, Uno Foods. 

Mama Fu's 'woks' further into west Texas and San Antonio

Austin, TX – While consumer interest in Asian food continues to sizzle, Mama Fu's is confirming what it saw happening a few years ago and anchoring itself as the segment leader.

With 13 locations already open and operating throughout the United States, Mama Fu's recently increased the number of restaurants it has in various stages of development to 29, having signed an 11-store development agreement in West Texas and San Antonio.

"It's an exciting time for Mama Fu's as we continue to build on the success of the brand and increase momentum towards our national expansion goals," said Randy Murphy, President and CEO of Mama Fu's. "We look forward to feeding the local appetite in West Texas, San Antonio and beyond."

The most recent development deal has been signed with franchise veterans Ken and Steve Howard. The brothers possess a combined 65 years of experience in the franchise industry with such brand giants as Sonic Drive In and Buffalo Wild Wings. They currently own 15 Buffalo Wild Wings units in West Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

The agreement arms the Howards with the rights to open 11 Mama Fu's restaurants. They have their sights set on Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, Amarillo,




San Angelo and Wichita Falls in West Texas, as well as San Antonio.

"When we saw the activity with Panda Express, Pei Wei and now Chipotle, we wanted to do this quickly," said Ken, noting the growing number of chains currently carving out a new fast-casual Asian niche. "Mama Fu's has a

fresh new look at the Asian market segment and we look forward to taking it to the next level."

Mama Fu's offers consumers convenience, value and unique flavors with its high quality, made-to-order Asian-inspired food. With a contemporary and user-friendly menu that allows customers to navigate their options more easily, guests can choose between a rice dish or noodle bowl, as well as their protein of choice, from a selection of Chinese, Thai, Japanese, Vietnamese and Korean menu options. More health-conscious customers can order a Steam Bowl or salad, or try an extensive Gluten Free menu or just have any traditional menu item prepared wok-seared, a cooking method that reduces oils and starch.

Further differentiating itself from other concepts in the fast-casual Asian segment, Mama Fu's recently evolved its concept by introducing a new, smaller prototype that reduces building costs by over 10 percent. This improvement came on the heels of a complete brand overhaul that included a 20 percent start-up cost reduction, implementation of a delivery service and a Flex-Casual™ in-store service model that features counter ordering during lunch and full service at dinner. 

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Appell Pie

Service with a smile

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

After fourteen years of writing this column a new topic is sometimes hard to come by. The one topic that remains constant is that this industry is hospitality driven and if you don't like people and dealing with them, you're in the wrong business. A smile or caring about your customers could make or break your next sale.

*Thank you
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for going the
extra mile for our
troops and vets.*

As an owner of a restaurant or any other business you must take a step back every once in a while and take a look at your staff and see how they interact with your customers. During this economic recession or depression, you pick, people are stressed out and can choose to buy from many companies offering the same product. Something as simple as answering the phone or greeting a guest could be the cause of turning customers away. Always train your staff to be friendly, helpful and well-informed.

Keeping up with current events and the mood of the public is a very important component to presenting your business in a positive light. Recently we celebrated Veteran's Day and many restaurants including Applebee's, Golden Corral, Denny's and Olive

Garden were honoring Vets and current servicemen and women by offering them free meals for their sacrifices in defense of this country.

My cousin Bob who was responsible for me joining the Army many years ago asked if I would join him at Olive Garden for dinner with our wives. I never have considered my military service as special but looking back on it I guess I did make a substantial commitment of time to the military so I decided to accompany him and celebrate our service.

Upon entering the restaurant I looked around the waiting area and saw men and women of many generations waiting patiently for a table. I have no idea how many were veterans but I guess there were quite a few. We were seated and Bob and I were presented special menus with five or six entrees to choose from. We all ordered and enjoyed our dinner together.

As we were finishing our coffee a manager came to our table and introduced himself. I thought he may have recognized me from my picture in this column but that was not the case. He extended his hand to shake our hands and said "Thank you for your service" He then handed both of us a Thank You card with a \$10.00 Gift Card included for our next visit to Olive Garden. How nice was that? How smart was that? Thank you Darden Restaurants for going the extra mile for our troops and vets. By the way the Chicken Parmigiano was delicious.

As our troops from Iraq begin to come home they are going to need civilian jobs. Many military jobs transfer well to the hospitality and restaurant industries so give them a good hard look when hiring and show them the hospitality we are known for.

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(561) 620-8888 ♦ Fax (561) 620-8821
howard@trnusa.com ♦ www.trnusa.com

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR Wesley Paul
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Joe Dunbar
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Hotel Happenings

A new hotel **Four Points by Sheraton Round Rock** will be opening in 2013 in January. The new hotel will be located at the Intersection of Hesters Crossing and Rawhide Dr.



A new **Four Points by Sheraton** opened in October at 8818 Jones Maltsberger Road in San Antonio. The hotel is a full-service hotel. Attractions like the Alamo and River Walk are just minutes away.



Almond Breeze®, America's #1 Almondmilk1, is now available in foodservice. This rich, creamy dairy alternative delivers the consistency of milk, with less fat and fewer calories2. Almond Breeze® is the fastest-growing almond-milk1 and a good choice for today's "skinny" menus. Almond Breeze® can easily be used across the menu instead of milk or soymilk. Simply substitute in a 1-to-1 ratio, for specialty coffee drinks, smoothies, milkshakes, oatmeal, dry cereal, cream soups, Italian sauces like Alfredo and more! The neutral flavor of Almond Breeze® makes it ideal for both sweet and savory menu applications. Almond Breeze® is perfect for operators looking to expand their health and wellness offerings. For more information on Blue Diamond products, visit www.sugarfoods.com or www.foodservice.bluediamond.com. Since 1948, Sugar Foods Corporation has built loyal, long-term relationships with its customers by providing an extensive line of quality food products.

contributing spicy, sweet, tart and savory flavors to dishes, and operators are taking advantage of the flavor recognition from these beverages when used as ingredients. "Chefs have long been using flavored drinks in various preparation methods, but the way beverages are being used on today's independent menus is helping to redefine the boundaries between comfort food and gourmet cuisine," says Technomic Editorial Manager Laura McGuire. "Using soda or beer as part of the preparation adds casualness to the dish, even when the proteins or other ingredients are uncommon. These independent restaurants are revisiting comfort food and putting contemporary twists on old themes."



Anyone who runs a restaurant knows that it is essential to promote their establishment. Many successful restaurants give out promotional pens for their advertising and marketing needs. These pens are relatively low cost items and ensure that a restaurant's name and logo are prominently displayed. Promotional pens are one of an

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◆ **Apple harvest season and National Apple Month** (September-November) offers chefs and operators the perfect opportunity to highlight apples, a nostalgic American comfort food. Established fruit-grower owned cooperative **Knouse Foods** highlights how foodservice professionals can appeal to customers' growing desires for more seasonal menu offerings with an assortment of recipe ideas



for all dayparts. Fall is the most important time of year as it kicks off harvest for our growers and National Apple Month," said Todd Michael, Director of Foodservice Sales for Knouse Foods. "It's also when diners return to their favorite comfort foods. Developing menus that feature classic dishes is essential to capturing customers during this special time of year, and Knouse Foods' apple products and recipes offer an easy way to highlight the traditional meals that people love." Knouse Foods is an established grower cooperative and food processor for apple and fruit

related products. For more detailed info visit www.knousefoodservice.com.

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◆ **A new report released by Technomic examines the menus of 100 independent restaurants across the U.S. to identify new food and beverage trends currently taking shape.**

The report finds these restaurants preparing dishes in innovative ways, one of which involves the use of cola or other beverages as a primary ingredient. Coffee, tea, beer, soda and spirits are all being featured on independent restaurant menus in new and unique ways. These beverages are



ing needs. These pens are relatively low cost items and ensure that a restaurant's name and logo are prominently displayed. Promotional pens are one of an

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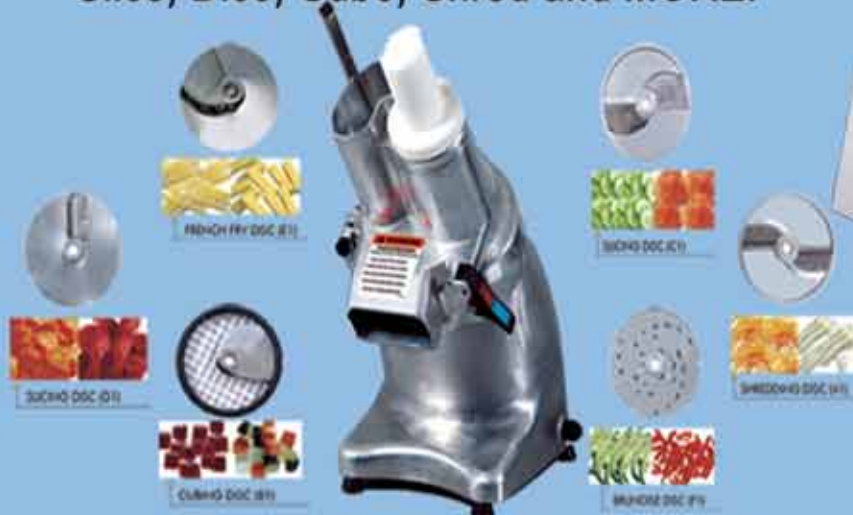


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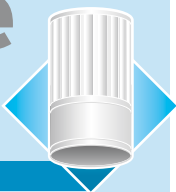
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Chefs Emmett and Lisa Fox

Under the Toque

Chefs Emmett and Lisa Fox



FINO Restaurant Patio & Bar ♦ Austin


Emmett's fascination with food began in Memphis, TN at the age of 18 working at John Grisanti's. After graduation from The Culinary Institute of America, he worked at Cafe Annie in Houston. In 1985 Emmett moved to Boston, MA as chef of The Wild Goose in Fanueil Hall. During his tenure at BNU and Arturo's Ristorante, he discovered his niche for Italian cooking. It is also where he met fellow chef and wife to be, Lisa.

Cooking has been a passionate hobby for Lisa since she received her first cookbook at age 8. After college she decided her commitment was in the restaurant business and opened her own catering company. She turned her interest to restaurant cooking and was educated at Boston's famed, Icarus. It is here that she gained her confidence and creativeness in all areas of cooking.

Emmett and Lisa moved to Austin in 1992. Emmett's jobs included

Executive Chef overseeing BitterEnd, Mezzaluna and Granite Cafe, and serving on the board for the Hill Country Wine & Food Festival. Lisa gained a reputation as one of Austin's top pastry chefs while working at 612 West, Coyote Cafe and Sardine Rouge.

Opening ASTI Trattoria in 2000 was the sweet culmination of twenty years of culinary passion. Emmett and Lisa continue their love of travel and frequent trattorias, vineyards, bistros and 4-star restaurants all over the Mediterranean. FINO opened in 2005 to reflect the culinary experiences from their travels. The concept favors their style of dining, offering small plates for the sharing and experiencing of different flavors.

Emmett and Lisa's restaurants are: FINO Restaurant Patio & Bar, located at 2905 San Gabriel Street in Austin and can be reached at 512.474.2905 and also ASTI Trattoria also in Austin at 408 C East 43rd St. 

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essential part of every successful restaurant's marketing plan to help restaurants grow into the future. Promotional pens are one of the most effective promotional tools in the restaurant industry. Rick Thomas, manager at one of the largest restaurant franchises across the U.S. recently purchased 200,000 promotional pens from **BIC Promo Pens**, for him "these promotional pens are a great way to spread the word and remind customers of their dining experience." Restaurants can choose that are in line with their color scheme and with their logo imprinted. They are easily handed out to people who are passing by, can be sent in the mail and also given to customers after they have dined or provided to serving staff to use when guests sign their credit card receipts. The company can be reached at www.bicpromopens.com.

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LIG Assets, Inc. Jeff Love, CEO and President LIG announced that its **newly created Entertainment Division** has

entered into a contractual relationship with an established operator of fine dining restaurants and lounges in the DFW area. "I believe we are well positioned to tap into the competitive sub-market of upscale lounge and restaurant business in the Metroplex. Ultra-chic still



◆ This fall, **Didriks -www.didriks.com** - will introduce the **Schott-Zwiesel-Barware-and-Stemware** lines of glass stemware, bar glasses and drinking glasses. Schott Zwiesel glassware is exceptionally well designed and proportioned. The glasses are manufactured in Zwiesel, Germany using patented Tritan technology, where titanium is substituted for lead to create wine glasses and other glassware of strength and clarity. Schott Zwiesel has years of experience meeting the demands of top international hotels and caterers, and its products are well suited for everyday use. Jonathan Henke of Didriks said, "The introduction of Schott Zwiesel wine glasses and bar glasses provide an excellent alternative in weight, form and price to the other glassware lines we carry by Simon Pearce.



AisleBuyer, a leader in mobile self-checkout solutions for retailers, brands and now restaurants, announced AisleBuyer mDine, a smartphone application that leverages AisleBuyer's mobile commerce platform to enable customers to place food orders and pay in real-time from an iPhone, Android or BlackBerry. With mDine, the restaurant industry can now provide a faster, more personalized dining experience for patrons. Restaurants pride themselves on delivering quick and consistent service to customers. Unfortunately, long lines and lack of menu information can deter patrons from dining at their establishments and drive loyal customers to the competition. With smartphone adoption growing at a rapid rate, consumers are looking to use these devices for convenience when choosing a dining establishment and ordering meals. As these trends continue, additional pressure will be put on restaurants to provide consumers with a new level of convenience.


sells," noted Mr. Love. With two locations already settled and several others under consideration, LIG anticipates first launch in October. "LIG's speed to market comes from its plans to rebrand and repurpose spaces with current and appealing concepts that combine fine dining and innovative beverage service. A multi-venue approach is in right now and we are moving to fill this niche," said Mr. Love. This company can be reached at www.ligassetsinc.net".



◆ **Pollo Campero**, the world's largest Latin chicken restaurant chain, will be launching a modern iteration of its world class brand. Designed with the US

consumer in mind, the new look and menu will fuse traditional Latin flavor with American culinary staples. The restaurant chain will debut the new concept, by opening three stores in the Houston, Texas area.



Pollo Campero's famous fried and grilled chicken will remain the "stars" of the menu. Founded in Guatemala in 1971, the restaurant still uses the same secret family recipe for its marinated and hand-breaded fried chicken and its flavorful grilled chicken. 



Maines plans 100 hires for new Terrell location

Terrell, TX - Maines Paper & Food Service, Inc., one of the leading independent foodservice distributors in the country, plans to hire more than 100 employees when in full operation, and plans to begin shipping operations at their new Terrell distribution center in April 2012.

The official groundbreaking was Oct. 21, 2011 at the Terrell Airport Business Park. Texas Agricultural Commissioner Todd Staples was the guest speaker.

The distribution center is further evidence of Maines' commitment to excellence in customer service. The 100,000-square-foot facility will service 196 restaurants spanning across the states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Oklahoma. This facility will be LEED-certified and their first distribution center west of the Mississippi River. At full build out, the facility will be in excess of 400,000 square feet and employ up to 400.

"Having a company like Maines expand their operations in Terrell's Airport Business Park is great news for our city, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and the State of Texas," states Mayor Hal Richards.

Terry Walsh, Maines' Executive Vice President and COO, said the company relocated one of its best managers to Terrell. "Jeff Warren, General Manager, will manage the construction and then oversee the operations starting in April 2012."

"Terrell is the perfect place for our new center," explained Chris Mellon, President and CEO of Maines. "It is an ideal strategic distribution location. The Terrell area offers an impressive incentive package and a superb workforce."

"We are excited to be in Texas as we continue our national expansion,"
— Bill Maines,
Maines Chairman

With over 100 positions to fill, including CDLA drivers, warehouse associates and customer service associates, all positions will be filled in March. "We are excited to be in Texas as we continue our national expansion," said Chairman, Bill Maines. "We're impressed with the business-friendly leadership, led by Terrell Mayor Hal Richards. Terrell is a first-class town and we are thrilled to be a part of it."

Maines - www.Maines.net - is one of the largest independent foodservice distributors in the country with a 90-year history of helping restaurant owners and managers maximize the performance.

Increase restaurant profits with holiday press releases

A very under used method of getting attention for small local restaurant businesses is submitting Press Releases. Submitting a press releases about your restaurant during the holiday season can be a great way to create buzz, awareness, and even increase your profits.

If you follow most PR experts, they will tell you that anytime you can tie you story into current events is a great time to release a press release.

'The Holidays' are an excellent opportunity for a restaurant to be creative with a campaign that is worthy of publishing in local news events.

One of the best ways to get your events noticed by news channels is to submit press releases. We recommend using a service from www.prweb.com which releases their PR's into Google News and Yahoo News, where many news channels, (offline and online) are scouting for their next news story.

Sidenote: It is usually easier if you cater your press release to being related to a local event or cause because your chances of being picked up in one of the local news channels is greater as opposed to trying to get recognition nationally or internationally.

We wanted to get a list started of some great Holiday Press Release Ideas for Restaurants:

- ◆ Tie a day of your sales into you local Food Bank like the way Cobre's did

with their Corazon Day where 100 percent of its net food revenues to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank.

- ◆ Get involved in a give-a-way like Restaurant.com's Feed it Forward program or create your own give-away program.
- ◆ Have a Christmas Party and donate the funds raised from the party to worthy local cause like the way Johnny D's Restaurant in Boston does for the homeless.
- ◆ Create a special "holiday menu" the way Hart House at Deer Lake did, it scored them a write up in UrbanDiner.ca.
- ◆ Stage an event the way Charleston Restaurant with their Annual Progressive Dinner, Dickens Dinner, where they take visitors by horse-drawn carriage to several historic inns and restaurants for different dinner courses. What a great way to network with your local restaurateurs too!
- ◆ Create a special item for the holidays like Swirlz's in Chicago did if is a remarkable item it is worthy of a press release.

Now we gave some great examples of ways to use holiday press releases to create some local buzz about your restaurant, but we know there are many other great ideas floating around out there.

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Austin, TX ◆ www.usarice.com

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18-21 ◆ **Manufacturers' Agents Association for the Foodservice Industry**
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Las Vegas Convention Center ◆ 3150 Paradise Rd ◆ Las Vegas, NV ◆ www.ncb-show.com

12-15 ◆ **Seatrade Cruise Shipping Miami**
Miami Beach Convention Center ◆ 1901 Convention Center Dr ◆ Miami, FL ◆ www.cruiseshippingmiami.com

May

5-8 ◆ **NRA Show**
McCormick Place ◆ Chicago, IL ◆ 312.853.2525

June

15-17 ◆ **International Franchise Expo**
The Javits Center ◆ New York, NY ◆ 201.881.1666

24-25 ◆ **Southwest Foodservice Expo**
Dallas Convention Center ◆ Dallas, TX ◆ 800.395.2872 ◆ www.swfoodexpo.com

February 2013

7-9 ◆ **NAFEM**
Orlando, FL ◆ info@nafem.org

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