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IT'S SHOW TIME!



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Chefs Jim Shirley and Michelle Bernstein to receive prestigious awards at the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Show

Congratulations to Chefs Jim Shirley and Michelle Bernstein who will be honored at The 2021 Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show with the Torch and Beacon Awards, respectively. These two restaurant industry leaders will be recognized for their outstanding achievements and commitment to the Southeast restaurant industry during the convention taking place on Sunday, September 19 and Monday, September 20, 2021 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. Each chef will present a culinary demonstration following the presentation of their award.

"The prestigious Torch Award was created to honor a chef and/or restaurateur who embodies outstanding knowledge and leadership, philanthropic and community efforts, extraordinary talent and creativity, innovation and inspiration. We are thrilled to be able to present this award to **Jim Shirley** who is an accomplished chef and restaurant owner and also the Chairman of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA)," said Rita Ugianskis, Vice President for the Clarion UX Food & Beverage Group. "We also look forward to presenting The Beacon Award



Chef Michelle Bernstein

to **Chef Michelle Bernstein**. This award recognizes a woman leader who has truly served as a Beacon for the industry through her leadership, contributions, and inspiration. The word Beacon symbolizes many things including a person that illuminates or inspires, which truly defines Chef Bernstein."

The **Torch Award** will be presented to **Jim Shirley** on Sunday, September 19, 2021 at 12:45 pm on Center Stage by The Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show and The Florida Restaurant & Lodging



Chef Jim Shirley

Association. Jim is a chef and restaurateur in South Walton, Florida, owning Great Southern Café, 45 Central Wine and Sushi Bar, and b.f.f. in Seaside, Florida, as well as The Bay Restaurant and Farm & Fire Southern Pizzeria in South Walton. He is also co-owner of Meltdown on 30A in Seaside.

Jim was previously the president of the Northwest Florida FRLA chapter and president of the Escambia County chapter. He is currently the treasurer of FRLA's Educational Foundation. Jim sits on the board of the Children's Home Society and was formerly on the Seaside Neighborhood School board for three years. Jim represented Florida in the 2015 Great American Seafood Cook-Off. In addition, Jim has been invited to cook at the James Beard House in New York City four times. He is the author of the cookbook, "Good Grits! Southern Boy Cooks," a compilation of his best recipes along with entertaining stories. Jim is the 2020 Van Ness Butler Jr. Award recipient. In 2020, For more info on previous Torch Award Winners, visit <https://www.flrestaurantandlodging-show.com/torch-award-recipients>

Chef Michelle Bernstein will be presented with the Beacon Award on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 12:45 pm on Center Stage. Chef Bernstein, a Miami native of Jewish and Latin descent, who has dazzled diners and critics alike with her sublime cuisine and a personality as bright and vibrant as the Florida sun. A **James Beard Award winner** (Best Chef South 2008) and author of Cuisine a Latina (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2008), Bernstein and her husband/business partner David Martinez) own/operate **MBC Michelle Bernstein Catering Company** in addition to their newest endeavor, **Café La Trova**, a Cuban-inspired bar and café located in Little Havana combining innovative and traditional Cuban-style and technique.

See FRLA SHOW page 6



Capriotti's expands with another 15 Tampa area units

Tampa, FL - Capriotti's Sandwich Shop (Capriotti's), the fast-casual sandwich franchise, has started the process of expansion of its footprint in Florida after inking a signed development agreement for the Tampa Bay area. This first-of-its-kind deal in Tampa Bay will bring 15 stores to the market and add roughly 20-25 jobs per location – bringing a total of more than 300 new jobs to the area. Two of the new stores are set to open this summer in Starkey Ranch in Odessa and W illow Bend Towne Center in Lutz, while additional shops will be

located in Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk and Pinellas counties.

Developing the award-winning sandwich brand in an untapped market is what initially inspired the interest of new Capriotti's multi-franchisee partners, Scott Crawford and Stephen Poletta. The franchisees were also drawn to the Capriotti's franchise opportunity after learning about the exceptional support system and their mouth-watering menu options.

"After our initial communication with the Capriotti's leadership team,

See CAPRIOTTI'S page 14

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Appell Pie

Obesity, restaurants and neighborhoods

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

Let me begin by stating that no restaurant has or ever will be responsible for anyone being obese. Any lawyer who ever tried to win a case based on this premise should take a good look in the mirror and ask himself if he still believes in the principles of law and the moral high ground which hopefully led him to the profession of law.

Obesity is a choice made by an individual not by a menu item being forced on him or her. The choice is yours to order the double cheeseburger with bacon and large fries and jumbo milk shake. The restaurant is not responsible for your choices. Obesity has many causes one being wrong choices and some are psychological in nature rooted in deep feelings but still the individual has the choice to do something about the problem other than suing a restaurant.

We had no choice but to go out into our neighborhood and play, computers were not part of the society yet.

Living through the COVID 19 "Lockdown" led me to remember my childhood and how none of my childhood friends were "obese". I lived in a 6 story apartment house with three wings all connected by a common hallway in Brooklyn NY. Beneath the ground floor was what seemed like a maze of basement hallways with different rooms for storage, laundry, boilers and the Super's (Superintendent) apartment. Outside of the building was

a sidewalk with a narrow swath of grass, which ran the length of my building, and the next building, which was separated by an alleyway. What I have just described was our playground. We played punch ball, stickball, football, tag, hid and seek, ringa-leaveo, chased the ice cream truck and just plain ran around. Coming home from school did not mean sitting down in front of a computer or X-Box to play games, we were outside running and being physical.

We had no choice but to go out into our neighborhood and play, computers were not part of the society yet. The only television show I remember watching in the afternoon was The Mickey Mouse Club. We watched it in friend's houses and then went out to play until our parents called us up for dinner. In the summer we went back out after dinner to play again. We couldn't get enough physical activity.

Today we live in a society where both parents work, in some cases there is only one parent. Grandparents and other family members are spread out all across the country. Parents have given up control of their children to the television, computer and the video game. It's not the fault of the children and it certainly is not the fault of the restaurants if our children are becoming less physical fit. Parents have to take back control of their children's lives.

The restaurant and hospitality industry has to be on the cutting edge of changes in society to maintain its customer base and I believe that the industry as a whole has done a good job. Many new menu items are being presented to allow customers an alternative healthy choice but there will always be a place for the old standards. It's up to the individual to make the proper choices and accept responsibility for doing so.

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What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

Prakas & Co. Real Estate News – “Prakas & Co. is pleased to announce that the new owners of RESTAURANT ROW, Pebb Enterprises, have named us exclusive brokers for this exciting project. We have already signed leases with El Camino and PubBelly Sushi. Look for some exciting news soon. This is P.B. Counties' only exclusive restaurant development.” Said Tom Prakas. Prakas & Co. is located at 1800 NW 1st Ct. in Boca Raton and covers the state. They have been in business over 21 years. The company can be reached at prakascompany.com.



As the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission (NCSPC) blows out its 60 candles, their birthday wish is that the produce industry and diners alike will join them in using the scientific one-word spelling of their state vegetable. The North Carolina SweetPotato Commission deliberately spells sweetpotato as one word unless directly quoting a source where it is spelled as two words i.e., sweet potato). The one-word spelling was officially adopted by the National Sweetpotato Collaborators in 1989 and is recognized as one word by the International Potato Center located in Peru. “There are many exciting things planned to mark our 60 years,” said Michelle Grainger, executive director of the NCSPC. “In the coming weeks we will be sharing more of our story with our commodity friends, that North Carolina is the nation's largest producer and exporter of sweetpotatoes and of course educating them that Sweetpotato is one word! There's plenty more to come throughout this year and we encourage the community to follow us on our social media channels to stay in the sweet loop to learn more about North Carolina sweetpotatoes, their health benefits, versatile recipes and new and exciting ways to prepare them.”

in the country, with a 350 member team combining to distribute top-performing brands, including Budweiser, Corona, Essentia Water, Modelo, Michelob Ultra, and Cutwater Spirits. Notably, the additions of Copa Di Vino and SALT Tequila enhance Great Bay's ability to meet marketplace demand for unique, premium quality brands. SALT Tequila is now represented by six Anheuser Busch distributors in Florida. Anheuser Busch distributors are actively building their spirits portfolio, with an emphasis on representing exclusive premium brands that have strong market penetrating potential. Online at Splashbeveragegroup.com.



Wilson Electronics, an industry leader in cellular signal booster technology, just announced a new cellular signal booster product line for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) such as restaurants. With best-in-class, commercial-grade boosters custom-designed to meet the unique needs of SMBs, this new product line is the ideal solution for indoor businesses and fleets struggling to stay con-

nected due to weak or nonexistent cellular coverage and want to ensure seamless cellular connectivity for their business.



Splash Beverage Group, Inc., a portfolio company of leading beverage brands, has announced its SALT tequila is now distributed by Great

Bay Distributors Inc., Florida's largest independent Anheuser Busch products distributor. The agreement complements the representation of Copa Di Vino, a premium single-serve wine that gained national attention on the investment television show Shark Tank. Great Bay is one of the top independent distributors



Where's Jubes is opening soon in St. Pete. In partnership with award winning Australian Brewer, Brian Watson, owner Josh Cameron has spent the last year importing and perfecting the malts, hops, and barleys using SmartBrew technology. He plans to open with eight to twelve varietals, brewing eighty to a hundred kegs a week. Paying homage to Australia, Cameron branded his beers

See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 8



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How to motivate and coach employees for success

John Tschohl ♦ Restaurateur and founder of BellyMelly

I talk to lots of people each day and what I hear is a lack of love, support, motivation, and recognition from their direct manager or supervisor. Too many people in management positions think the only reason someone works is for money. Many managers believe that the paycheck is why people work and there is no reason to tell anyone thanks for doing a great job. We knit pick things they

are doing wrong and fail to recognize and celebrate what they are doing right.

These people I am talking to are ready to leave, want to leave or are waiting for the job they really want. When you lose an employee today it is much harder to finding a replacement. Especially someone good.

Each day you can motivate your staff or turn them off. When you put

employees down, they get depressed and their effectiveness disappears. A manager's job is to coach up your workforce and bring out the best in everyone you manage to help foster theirs and your success.

When organizations treat their employees well, coach them effectively, and continually work to motivate empowered performance ... everyone wins. The typical supervisor and manager have had virtually no training on leadership, management, and coaching skills. It is critical that you spend time and money each year developing these skills.

Coaching focuses on proper motivation, teamwork, expectations, and corroboration rather than a command and control approach. The modern manager as coach works as a team leader as well as a team member. Employees think of managers as paper pushers, number crunchers, or administrators, while coaches are teachers and mentors who have their interests in mind in addition to the organization's business goals.

Managers are standoffish and reticent. In the eyes of employee's coaches are approachable. They are open-minded and accessible. Employees want to work with someone who is willing to see them as the people they are. They want to impress them and do their part to help the entire team succeed.

Employees want to feel wanted

We're human: we want to feel wanted – by everyone in our workplace. This is especially true of you, their coach. When you or a co-worker doesn't want an employee around, it is obvious to everyone. They will process that standoffishness consciously or subconsciously to the detriment of the team's performance.

Employees want to feel needed

Employees want to know that their skills and talents are being put to use by their team and by the organization. Many of your employee's toil for years honing their skills and improving their experience. They want to feel

like they are using what they have learned and that those skills are being utilized appropriately.

Employees want to feel like they belong


Employees want to feel like there is a place for them not only within the organization, but within the team as well. An employee will spend more time at their job than any other single place during their lives except at their home. As humans we thrive on creating and subsisting within our interpersonal relationships.

Employees want to feel valued

Employees desire recognition for the effort and performance from you, your organization, and from their co-workers. Not only do employees want to feel like they are using their skills, they want to feel like the organization appreciates their talents and values them when they meet and exceed expectations. Providing recognition is a way you can show employees that they are valued.

An employee who feels wanted, needed, and valued feels secure and supported in their job. This can lead to positive outcomes, including:

- ♦ Employees make more empowered decisions
- ♦ Employees work better with their customers and their co-workers
- ♦ Employees are unafraid to take risks

Keeping employees and motivating them for greater success is critical. Employees are 10 times more fragile than you think they are. Your success is their hands. 

About the Author: John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute (the global leader in customer service) with operations in over 40 countries. John is a self-made millionaire traveling and speaking more than 50 times each year. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, coaching, service recovery, success, empowerment and customer service in the world. His new book, *Relentless* was recently released. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. www.customer-service.com He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

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America's Oldest Brewery to open restaurant and entertainment destination

Tampa – The story of America's Oldest Brewery began when David G. Yuengling arrived from Wuerttemberg Germany to settle in the sleepy, coal-mining town of Pottsville, Pennsylvania. The rest is history!


At the present time, Yuengling, is in the construction phase on the revitalization of its Yuengling Tampa Campus. The new campus, slated to open in early 2022, marks Yuengling's continued commitment to the Greater Tampa Bay community and the area's growing tourism and love for great beer.

Since 1999, Yuengling Brewery has been part of the greater Tampa Bay community, when it expanded and moved to the former Stroh's brewery. "It's an exciting time to invest further in the community by giving Floridians and tourists an immersive experience that brings to life our unique history as America's Oldest Brewery."

The revitalization will feature an array of first-class amenities which will appeal to the Greater Tampa Bay community and tourists from around the country, including:

- ◆ State-of-the-art microbrewery
- ◆ Restaurant with private dining and local cuisine
- ◆ Digital Interactive museum, artifacts and advertising memorabilia from Yuengling's 191-year history
- ◆ Expanded gift and coffee shop
- ◆ Multi-use concert and entertainment pavilion
- ◆ Outdoor Recreation gaming area and beer garden
- ◆ On-site hotel
- ◆ Design character that reflects Yuengling's history as America's Oldest Brewery

To lead the new Yuengling Tampa Campus, Yuengling has named Brent Wertz as Vice President of Hospitality. Brent brings 30 years of extensive experience in food and beverage and is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America.

Located at 11111 N. 30th Street, Yuengling's Tampa Campus is less than two miles from Busch Gardens and the University of South Florida and the Yuengling Center. 

FRLA Show from page 1

Bernstein dedicates time to **Common Threads**, an after-school program for underprivileged kids, and regularly appears on an array of national TV shows, from Top Chef to Good Morning America. Bernstein continues to host the Emmy award-winning PBS weekly television series, Check, Please! South Florida. Now in its fifth year, Bernstein also hosts the Emmy award-winning weekly TV series on Channel 10, SoFlo Taste that celebrates the food of South Florida. Bernstein has also worked with **Memorial Cancer Institute (MCI)**, a part of Memorial Healthcare System, to provide oncology patients with a variety of food alternatives to help ease their way through treatment. For more information about the Beacon Award, and past recipients, visit <https://www.fl-restaurantandlodgingshow.com/beacon-award-recipients>.

Both awards will be presented on Center Stage on the show floor which will also feature culinary demonstrations, the Rapid Fire and Hip Sip Competitions with local chefs and bartenders and other panel discussions. The **exhibit hall** will offer the American Culinary Federation Culinary Competitions, Food Trends Experience, Bar Innovation Pavilion, TechBytes,

Coffee Fest Marketplace and the Healthy Foods Expo and new products and innovations from 350 exhibiting companies. Registration is now open for the 2021 Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show and Healthy Food Expo. Both events are produced and managed by Clarion Events, and sponsored by the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association. For more info visit the website at www.flrestaurantandlodgingshow.com.

Clarion Events produces 37 events across 13 sectors of both trade and consumer events. The Food & Beverage Group includes the International Restaurant & Foodservice Show of New York, The Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo, the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show, Healthy Food Expo, CoffeeFest and The NGA Show. Clarion Events, backed by The Blackstone Group, has become one of the fastest growing event companies in the U.S. with aggressive growth through both acquisition and launch. Clarion acquired PennWell in early 2018, bringing 4 Tradeshow 200 events into the U.S. portfolio and super-charging the already rapid growth. Clarion Events has offices in Trumbull, CT; Kennesaw, GA; Boca Raton, FL; Tacoma, WA, and Fairlawn, NJ. 



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What's Going On

from page 3

with tributes to his birthplace. The Australian Brewpub is located at 277 Central Avenue.

◆ SoCal-based craft superfood chain **everbowl™** has arrived to help the Orlando and University of Central Florida community beat the heat with light, healthful bowls. The recently opened franchise at 12101 University Blvd. is everbowl's first of many in Florida. The company plans to open several other outlets in Miami by the end of the year. "The power-packed ingredients everbowl features are known to boost energy, improve concentration and spur productivity," said company founder and CEO Jeff Fenster. "everbowl provides the nourishment you need whether you're preparing for a study session, hiking the Flatwoods or cheering on the Knights." Online at everbowl.com.



and delivery segments," said Penny Klingler, President Carpigiani North America. "Restaurant and foodservice operators are seeking new profit centers within their concepts as we evolve through the market changes of the last year. We can help identify simple, cost-effective, innovative solutions and provide training to serve profitable and delicious frozen desserts and treats that will entice customers to return time and again." Visit carpigiani.com/us for all details.

Gordon Ramsay is opening a restaurant in Orlando.

Gordon Ramsay Fish & Chips slated for August to debut at ICON Park on International

Drive From Gordon Ramsay Fish & Chips: "Fast-casual, British-style eatery serving fish & chips, shrimp, chicken, hand-crafted shakes like the Sticky Toffee Shake, and fresh-squeezed lemonades made with fresh, sustainable ingredients."

◆ The Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers (CHART) announced a new sponsor relationship with Restaurant Playbooks, a restaurant industry eLearning provider focused on helping operators attract, onboard, and retain 'Hospitality All-Stars' with mobile-friendly microlearning. "Restaurant Playbooks is dedicated to supporting the post-pandemic needs of hospitality operators seeking to leverage technology for developing their workforce," said Serah Morrissey, CHART President and Senior Director of Human Resources of the InterContinental Hotel MSP in Minneapolis, MN. "Our CHART trainers will appreciate the results-focused implementation support of Restaurant Playbooks, which will allow them to quickly and cost effectively implement an effective eLearning program." Visit restaurantplaybooks.com for more info.



◆ Garner Foods, makers of Texas Pete® and Green Mountain Gringo® products, has recently finalized terms to purchase property to begin construction on a new facility in the Winston-Salem, NC area.

This new facility has been an ongoing project for nearly four years and is a key part of Garner Foods' growth plan. "We are grateful to be finalizing the details to bring this important project to fruition," says Heyward Garner, COO for Garner Foods. "It's been a long time in the making, and we've had a lot of incredibly supportive partners in the Winston-Salem area that have helped us find the right property to give us some much-needed room to grow." To learn more visit www.texaspete.com online or www.greenmountaingringo.com.

◆ ITW Food Equipment Group has announced the launch of the Hobart SmartConnect™ app - smart-connect365.com - the first in ITW Food Equipment Group's SmartConnect365™ suite of apps designed to connect end-users to various WiFi-enabled commercial kitchen equipment across ITW Food Equipment Group brands such as Hobart, Baxter, Traulsen, Vulcan, Foster, Bonnet and more. SmartConnect is the smart way to stay connected to the kitchen. Simply download the SmartConnect app and connect to any WiFi-enabled ITW Food Equipment Group devices using your existing WiFi network. The app gives power to the user to monitor kitchen equipment remotely, providing real-time access and analysis to machine data right from the palm of your hand. Users will be able to gain important insight into how equipment is being used, monitor sanitization status and water and energy consumption,



See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 14



TechTable and Culterra Capital release 2021 Restaurant Tech Ecosystem Map

New York, NY - The last several years have seen a vast proliferation of tech within the restaurant and hospitality industries, and it is an understatement to say there has been a massive shift in operations over the past 18 months due to the pandemic.

The Map highlights over 225 tech start-ups and veterans operating in the primary segments of the sector.

In an effort to categorize the variety of technology players transforming restaurant operations and the guest experience, TechTable, a platform and annual summit dedicated to innovation at the intersection of hospitality and technology, and Culterra Capital, an investment and advisory firm focused exclusively on tech-driven innovation across the food supply chain, have partnered to update and present the 2021 Restaurant Tech Ecosystem Map. The map is sponsored by Back Of House, a platform to help independent restaurateurs find, filter, and save on the solutions their businesses need to succeed.

The Map highlights over 225 tech start-ups and veterans operating in the primary segments of the sector. The map may be viewed or downloaded online at: www.techtable.com, or www.culterracapital.com.

Among the numerous segments in the ecosystem, TechTable and Culterra Capital expect the following areas to experience growth and momentum through 2022: voice / bot technology, robotics automation, shared / ghost kitchens, food safety / quality, ordering

and payments will continue to evolve, marketing analytics / CRM, and order / delivery (both B2B and consumer-facing marketplaces) will continue to consolidate.

The 2021 Restaurant Tech Ecosystem Map breaks down the industry into the following key segments: search / discovery; reservations / event management; corporate meals / catering; order / delivery marketplaces (B2C); marketing analytics / CRM; point-of-sale; order / delivery (B2B); on-premise ordering / payments; voice / bot technology; robotics / automation; shared / ghost kitchens; food safety / quality; food waste management; human resources / staffing; operations / business intelligence; and purchasing / inventory / back office.

The Restaurant Tech Ecosystem Map is meant to change as the industry changes, and as such depends on the ongoing insight of the community. For feedback, suggestions, or questions, please email: hello@techtablesummit.com or brita@culterracapital.com.

About TechTable: Founded in 2014, TechTable creates dialogue between tech, hospitality and investing. Through our annual summit and by producing industry relevant content, we connect the products and systems being developed with the industry they serve. By bringing together leaders, visionaries and entrepreneurs across these industries TechTable helps build solutions to power hospitality with ideas and technology that enhance human experience and drive the industry forward. Online at www.techtablesummit.com

About Culterra Capital: Culterra Capital provides investment and strategic transaction advisory services to Food Tech, AgTech, and Food Supply Chain Tech innovators and corporates. We work with startups, investors, C-Suite and corporate development teams to help develop and implement strategic and financial priorities which capitalize on emerging tech innovations. Online: www.culterracapital.com

About Back Of House: Back Of House is a platform to help independent restaurateurs find, filter, and save on the solutions their businesses need to succeed. Part publication, part solutions marketplace, Back of House is a leading destination for restaurant operators seeking unbiased reviews, peer advice, and cutting-edge content about restaurant technology. Online at backofhouse.io

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The Dolly Llama begins national expansion with deals inked for Florida & Texas

The Dolly Llama, the popular waffle and ice cream concept that currently dominates the Los Angeles dessert scene with its own unique take on Hong Kong's iconic Bubble Waffle, has announced that two franchise deals have been inked for Tyler, Texas and Jacksonville, Florida. The two deals are the first for the newly franchised concept, which was founded in 2017 by French restaurateur and entrepreneur Samuel Baroux and real estate leader Eric Shomof, since partnering with DCV Franchise Group in late 2019 as its strategic franchising team to help expand the unparalleled brand to major media markets across the country.

The Tyler, TX deal includes one brick and mortar location with locals Trenton and Joy Judson, a husband and wife team who combined boast more than 25 years of experience in the restaurant and food service industries. In addition to having lived in the Tyler, TX area for more than six years, they chose this particular market due to Tyler's swift business and economic growth resulting in the community becoming a hot spot for families in the heart of East Texas.

The Jacksonville, FL deal was inked with husband and wife team Josh and Wendy Popkin, both of who have had previous involvement in restaurant and bar ownership, including Josh's 20 years of experience in restaurant




development, daily operations, and management. The couple moved their family to Ponte Vedra Beach in June 2021 and will be establishing roots in the community with one brick and mortar location of The Dolly Llama planned to open in early 2022.

Designed to serve as a destination for families, shoppers, students, and tourists of all ages, The Dolly Llama has established itself as a dessert destination in Los Angeles with an iconic logo and flair. The brand has also distinctively engineered a lucrative business for a modern market and established three different franchising models to accommodate a range of store

footprints including brick-and-mortar, kiosk, and mobile trailer. This versatility has proven an especially attractive detail to operators looking to franchise multiple units in formats which cater to different audiences.

"Announcing franchising right before the COVID-19 pandemic hit was disappointing. Much like everyone else in the industry, we weren't sure what the future would hold for our business," said Shomof. "We were pleasantly surprised by the incredible support of customers during that time, and more recently by the franchise interest in the concept as the industry has begun to bounce back. We have observed the

popularity of the brand first hand in Los Angeles, one of the most competitive markets in the country, and are thrilled to have officially signed on such skilled and experienced teams to help take The Dolly Llama to new heights."


The concept offers a menu of desserts including its unique take on the Bubble Waffle, Hong Kong's #1 street food, and other waffle styles including the OG Liege and Bubble Waffle Jr. 'Top Picks' include waffle & ice cream combinations like the Sugar N' Spice, which features horchata ice cream, speculoos cookie, cinnamon toast crunch cereal, and a caramel sauce drizzle on a waffle of choice. 

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Überrito's ambitious franchise expansion plan

Houston, TX – On Durham Drive in the heart of Houston's Durham Park neighborhood, stands an old wood paneled building with a covered patio and tin roof overhang. There's a simple spirit to it. Today, it's gone through some remodeling and upgrades, but atop it all still hangs an iconic Überrito sign. For nearly a decade, this inventive Überrito location has known that when it comes to flavor - fresh, quality ingredients are the building blocks of a great meal. Since day one, this iconic Überrito location has been serving up above-and-beyond authentic Mexican favorites – ultimate fresh-made burritos, tacos, bowls, salads, and nachos to guests of all ages who consider Überrito their quintessential and authentic fast casual Mexican spot.

From the time Überrito Fresh Mex was launched in 2014, the brand has been engrained in the tradition of quality, variety, and experience. Today, that set of core values still determines the restaurant concept's direction and has kept the brand on solid footing, even during the height of the pandemic, without sacrificing it's from-scratch cooking roots.

"Almost everyone can relate to a freshly made burrito or taco because people are driven by an emotional connection to authentic Mexican food – it's very strong and powerful," said Pete Pascuzzi, CEO of MRI Heritage Brands, Inc. "We've remained true to who we are as a brand since day one, but as the restaurant industry evolves, we're doing the same – both with our menu and now with our franchise offering. While Houstonians have known and loved us for many years, we're excited to introduce our fresh-is-first Überrito approach to more cities and neighborhoods across the Lone Star State and the country."

Überrito's story began nearly a decade ago. Over the years the Überrito brand has grown, introducing new products while refining its scratch-cooking operations and recently added beer, wine, and margaritas to its menu mix to become even more relevant to today's evolving customer. The investment paid off – 2021 sales trends are on track to hit \$1.5 million.

Today, Überrito has several locations spread across greater Houston and its revamped model, upgraded training and support, state-of-the-art technology and new operational efficiencies are credited for igniting the brand's surge into franchise development.

"Our longstanding history of operating multiple restaurant brands across several states provided us with the runway and experience to position Überrito for franchising success," said Pascuzzi.

"There was a fundamental shift happening in consumer dining habits prior to 2020, which the pandemic accelerated. Überrito is a fresh, fast and friendly environment that has adapted to today's guest, which will allow our franchise partners to take full advantage of dine-in, take-out, delivery, drive-thru, and pick-up lane options."

A reduced footprint and hyper-efficient operations are enabling Überrito to enter new territories that were previously untouched. Furthermore, smaller, and more proficient restaurants lower the barrier to entry into ownership yet still give new franchisees the experience, purchasing power, training and support that Überrito affords. Through the end of 2021, the brand is targeting four to six new franchise agreements and several new openings.

"That's part of the magic of our growth potential – we're very realistic about how fast we want to grow, and we are going to make sure we're as much of a fit for our franchisees as they are for us," said Pascuzzi. "Nearly 30 years of restaurant operations experience and proven success have allowed us to be very strategic about how and with whom we want to grow. Other brands don't have that luxury."

With its strategic 2021 growth plan, Überrito is laying out opportunities in areas with huge development potential such as South and Central Texas, Colorado, North and Central Florida, and Georgia to name a few.

"As we move forward, it will be critically important that we continue to lay out our foundation for development over the next few years – this means increasing our awareness for franchise growth as a means for investment. While we are well known throughout Houston, there are plenty of people that have yet to be introduced to Überrito and our authentic, from scratch, fast casual Mexican centered around community," Pascuzzi said. "With the help of our growing franchisee base, our strong culture and our commitment to craftsmanship, straight talk and exceptional food that builds on classic styles and new flavors, we know the future is bright for our brand."

About Überrito Fresh Mex: Überrito Fresh Mex is a Mexican fast casual concept dedicated to craft cooking highly customizable burritos, bowls, salads, and nachos made with fresh ingredients and toppings. This allows Überrito owners to honor traditional Mexican cooking excellence while simultaneously elevating tradition to create better opportunities for growth and profitability. True to its name, Überrito's signature dish is a burrito, but restaurants also offer a complete menu of Mexican favorites, sides and more. Überrito is part of MRI Heritage Brands, Inc. Online at www.mricorp.com.

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How to identify the right new revenue streams for your restaurant brand

By Tom Sacco

CEO/Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream

Throughout the pandemic, restaurant brands had to dig deep to create new revenue streams. But now, as we're starting to see that brighter days are ahead, it's a good time to take a closer look at which offerings have staying power. As we look to the future, these are the channels that will likely continue to resonate with guests and boost profits.

"At Happy Joe's, we've been leaders in menu innovation since our brand's inception in 1972. We're committed to keeping guests engaged through best-in-class products, and this makes us stand out among competitors. Our franchisees are well-versed in creating and serving our delicious, inventive pizzas, so we continue to create new revenue streams that are aligned with this significant characteristic of our brand. And guess what? It's been our secret sauce for almost half a decade!"

Here are three things to consider when identifying the best new revenue streams for your brand:

Additional day parts can bring in the dough.

We offer brunch on the weekends and have a breakfast lineup available every day of the week. Yep, you read that right ... We have an Omelet Pizza menu for the most important meal of the day! Our breakfast day part has proven to be a huge differentiator for Happy Joe's in the pizza space because our guests love that it's such a unique, egg-cellent start to their day. While adding a new day part complete with new menu items impacts several aspects of your bottom line, the long-term sales benefits of

adding a late-night menu or brunch menu has the potential to largely increase your sales. And, for bonus points, adding a day part may be easier and more affordable than you think!



Operationally, you don't have to pull in additional staff because current employees are already there in the morning starting prep for the day. And, breakfast menus are typically less complicated and don't require much, if any, additional equipment to facilitate. Breakfast staple items are cost effective as they don't require special orders from mass distributors and are inexpensive, making them an opportunity to be sold as one of your highest margin items.

If you can create a one-of-a-kind item to set yourself apart, do it.


Consider working with vendors and distributors, or even franchisees, to explore menu addition opportunities and provide your guests with innovative offerings that no one else can replicate. In

1974, a new taco joint opened in Wisconsin. While tacos and pizza don't seem like competitors, the restaurant was taking away from Happy Joe's business. So, we decided to marry the two,

and that's when our acclaimed Taco Joe Pizza was born. Now, it's one of our most popular menu items! In a recent consumer survey, when Happy Joe's customers were asked what things they like about our restaurant, 13% said it was the Taco Joe Pizza. We're successful because we offer something for everyone. Think you need to bring a birthday cake to your own party? You don't – Happy Joe's has a birthday cake pizza with sprinkles and more that's perfect for the occasion! Feel like celebrating Mardi Gras but don't want to book a flight to New Orleans? No problem – we feature a limited-edition Mardi Gras pizza throughout February and March. Want a sweet treat after your mouthwatering pizza? We have an indulgent dessert lineup, which made up 3.7% of Happy Joe's overall sales in 2020.

Maximize your space.

Restaurants really began making the most of their space when dining rooms were closed by adapting their business models. Think about how you can best leverage your dining room or patio space. If your sales are comprised mostly of carryout, does your restaurant have a large, dedicated area optimized for to-go orders? How can you make it easiest for guests to receive the food they love? In a previous Happy Joe's survey, guests responded that a key barrier to more frequent visits was convenience. So, we rolled out a limited-time buffet Monday through Friday during lunch to cater to the on-the-go consumer. Operational costs on the buffet may be higher, but by maximizing our space, we leveraged a model that targets an entirely different guest. After the buffet launch, we saw an overall sales increase of 11% for our lunch day part. Additionally, offering games at your restaurant is an upsell. If your brand serves as a gathering place for families or friends, then removing a few tables to make room for a dedicated arcade, yard games or table games could be worth the small upfront investment.

To have longevity, restaurants need to consider not only who they are serving now, but who they could have the potential to serve and how they can best serve them. Developing additional revenue streams is no longer a means of survival, it's an expectation. Our industry reached a whole new level of creativity over the past year and a half, and amplifying that innovation is a must if you want to be the big cheese now and well into the future! Happy Joe's was founded in 1972 by Happy Joe Whitty. 

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What's Going On from page 8

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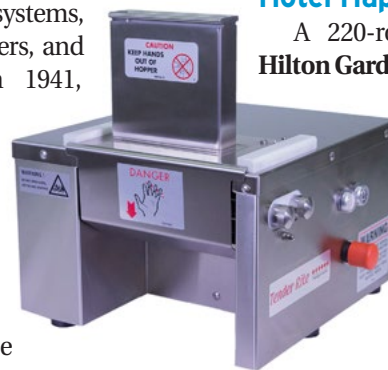
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Capriotti's from page 1


we were incredibly impressed with not only their industry experience but the compassion and support they offer to franchise partners," said Crawford. "This coupled with the opportunity to bring an award-winning brand to the Tampa Bay area and satisfy local consumers craving for extraordinary food made our decision to invest a no-brainer."

Crawford's background includes experience in the food-distribution industry and ownership of other franchises in the fast-casual and quick-service restaurant space. Throughout his career, he has seen and understands the importance of how the franchisor-franchisee relationship goes a long way in determining long-term success. The support from its leadership team no doubt a deciding factor for Crawford and Poletta, but so too was Capriotti's food.

"During my first visit to the Kennesaw shop in Georgia, the first thing I noticed were the amazing sights and smells," added Crawford. "I saw the giant roasted turkeys coming out of the big ovens and was met with these tantalizing smells as soon as I walked in. Then, I tried 'The Bobbie.' That first taste sent me back to when I was 14-years old waking up on Black Friday, making a Thanksgiving

leftover sandwich. I saw myself in my mama's kitchen, all of us eating together. Right then I knew Capriotti's was something special."

In reference to its support system, while the COVID-19 pandemic put some service industry offerings on hold, Capriotti's didn't miss a beat. There were various aspects about Capriotti's business model that made the franchise competitive during a tough time. This included initiatives like partnerships with DoorDash and Grubhub along with introducing drive-thru and contactless pickup options.

Additionally, while the franchise made strategic moves to set its current owners up for success, Capriotti's was also able to stimulate its growth pipeline in 2020 – receiving 30 signed agreements and experiencing a significant jump in same-store sales growth. 

About Capriotti's Sandwich Shop: Founded in 1976, Capriotti's Sandwich Shop is an award-winning national franchised restaurant chain that remains true to its 40-year tradition of slow-roasting whole, all-natural turkeys in-house every day. Capriotti's cold, grilled and vegetarian subs, cheese steaks and salads are available at more than 125 locations across the United States. Capriotti's signature sub, The Bobbie®, was voted "The Greatest Sandwich in America" by thousands of readers across the country, as reported by AOL.com.

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