

Spur buys majority share in niche dining brand

The Spur Corporation (Spur) is set to acquire a 51% stake in RocoMamas, a Gauteng-based niche brand, fast developing a following for its customised but casual and affordable menu.



The concept was launched by Brian Altriche in July 2013, who is already one of Spur's longest-standing franchisees with two Spur-brand restaurants and a third on the way. In less than 18 months, he has grown RocoMamas to four restaurants in the greater Johannesburg area, with another three in the pipeline for this year.

In terms of the deal with the Spur Corporation, expected to come into effect by March 2015, Altriche will continue as CEO of RocoMamas.

Concept dining

RocoMamas offers hand-made "smash-style" burgers, ribs and wings, with all orders prepared fresh, on site.



The smashed-to-order burger is made from three different fresh mince specifications to optimise taste and texture. Diners also get to co-create their dishes from a wide range of freshly made add-ons, including all the gourmet sauces. RocoMamas provides full service, sit-down and take-away options with burgers starting at R35.

Altriche, who lived in Los Angeles during the late 1980s and early part of the 1990s, where he specialised in brand development, saw an opportunity to introduce South Africans to the novel dining concept at a time when there is a growing appetite for hand-made foods and more personalised experiences.

"The RocoMamas's positioning of 'we're not normal' highlights our differentiation from the mainstream fast-food dining experience. Our menu is small but can be individualised, so it becomes more interactive, with guests collaborating in the outcome of their dishes. To accent our hand-made approach, we also offer craft beers in addition to the more mainstream brands."

Overwhelming interest

Like all the brands in the Spur group, RocoMamas is run on a franchise basis, and Altriche says he receives as many as

15 queries a day from interested entrepreneurs, keen to participate in the dining concept.

Spur Corporation's CEO, Pierre van Tonder, says the RocoMamas concept is ideal for the current market with the public hungry for new flavours and new ways of enjoying them. "The response rate from potential franchisees, who recognise this, has been overwhelming, with interest being shown well beyond the country's borders. Our expansion strategy will also benefit from the group's relationship with an extensive network of property owners and landlords.

"We have a very strong, long-standing relationship with Brian Altriche and believe that together, we can grow this exciting brand to reach its full potential. With Spur's infrastructure, financial and marketing resources we are well placed to take RocoMamas national, with the capacity to add another 30 to 40 outlets in a relatively short time."

Spur network

Just over a year ago, the Spur Corporation acquired The Hussar Grill franchised network of eight premier grill houses, all in the Western Cape.

In addition to The Hussar Grill, the Spur owns Spur Steak Ranches; John Dory's Fish Grill Sushi; Panarottis Pizza Pasta and Captain DoRegos. The group's presence is predominantly in South Africa with a total of 503 outlets, but extends to Australia, the UK and Ireland, as well as Africa, with branches in Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Mauritius.

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