

Restaurant News

NATIONAL COVERAGE REGIONAL FOCUS \$5.95



FRANCHISE REPORT P.12

MTY goes on buying spree **P.5**

More cash for local food **P.9**

Ottawa considers mandatory safe food handling certification

By Mike Deibert, Contributing editor

OTTAWA—Ottawa Public Health staff are considering whether the city should require foodservice workers to be certified in safe food handling.

The Ottawa health authorities have been studying other municipalities where certification is mandatory.

Sherry Beadle, Ottawa's program manager of food safety, told reporters recently that Ottawa Public Health is looking at "trends and lessons learned."

A report to Ottawa's Board of Health says eight of 36 municipalities in Ontario have such certification, which requires that any kitchen

preparing food outside the home must have at least one certified food handler on the premise during working hours.

Currently, the city offers a day-long course in safe food handling, which costs \$45 and is given in English, French and Cantonese. People who take the course must pass an exam to be certified.

Course registration has gone from 1,268 in 2008 to 1,830 in 2010, and the number of people certified has risen to 1,435 from 996 in that period.

The Board of Health is looking at a recommendation that food safety staff prepare a report for early next year about mandatory food handling training.

Single servings

By Leslie Wu, Editor

TORONTO—In the wake of the single item restaurant craze in New York, Toronto chefs are taking a good long look at the benefits of being single.

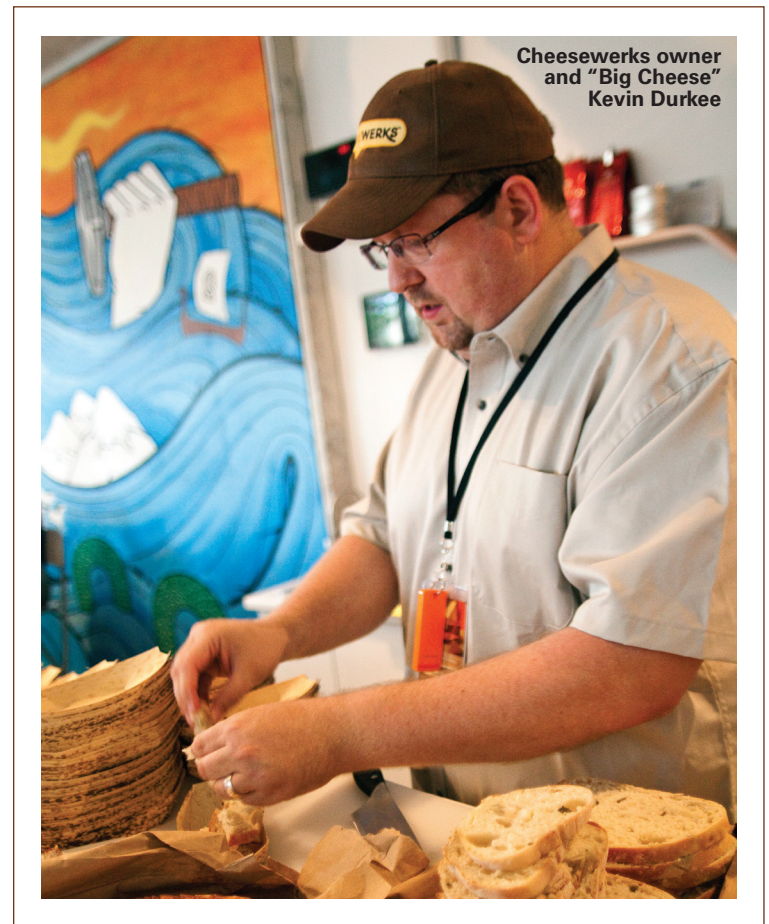
With a great potential for profit and the ability to spotlight the best source ingredients, an eatery that serves only one thing offers, paradoxically, a new sort of freedom to chef/owners by limiting the menu down to the bare bones.

Toronto already plays host to some of this type of restaurant, such as sausage hall WVRST, Kensington-based The Grilled Cheese, Mother's Dumplings and others.

ORN takes a look at two newcomers to the scene that are putting their eggs in one basket, and finding innovative ways to fund their outlets: one that's bringing cheese to the community, and another that wants to take local country-wide.

"Most consumers want something specific, and they've made up their minds when they decide to go out to eat—then, they just look for a restaurant that fits that desire," says Cheesewerks owner and "Big Cheese" Kevin Durkee.

"Whether it's soup or cupcakes, it's all about dealing with that craving, not blending the item into a 60 item menu," he says. "And if someone has committed to saying that their shop serves only one item, such as hot dogs, then they'd better



Cheesewerks owner and "Big Cheese" Kevin Durkee

be the best at what they offer."

Durkee has local foodies sharing the love (and some of the start up costs) of his artisan-product focused eatery and retail store, set to open in mid-September.

The opening expenses of the grilled-cheese focused restaurant are offset by microdonations from its "Board Members" program, says Durkee, who re-

searched microcharities and investment opportunities at places like kickstarter.com to come up with innovative funding models for his operating capital.

Durkee also took inspiration from the cooperative models of some restaurants in Ottawa and Montfort Dairy in Stratford.

Continued on page 5

UNIFORMS IN ACTION:

From the buttoned-up style of yesteryear's uniforms to the feel-good casualness of today's togs, uniforms are constantly evolving. Turn to *ORN's* uniform report on page 10 to find out how staying on trend can put a smile on everyone's face.



P.10

Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 40010152



introducing...

squirrel professional

The latest POS system from Squirrel!

- PCI-Certified
- Scalable for both single and multi-unit operations
- Easy to learn and use
- 24/7 Squirrel EasyCare Support



Smaller operation?

Looking for an affordable, all-in-one solution? Ask about...

squirrel in a box

For more info on Squirrel Professional, Squirrel in a Box, and Squirrel EasyCare, contact your Squirrel Authorized Reseller:

MATRIXPOS.COM

905-752-1200 or 866-752-2200

Making one item count

Continued from cover

"The money fills the gap between the funding that we already have and the last minute gaps that all restaurants have when opening up," Durkee told ORN in mid-August.

"In the day of social media, I wanted to mobilize the food media and our neighbours. When we decided to move ahead with the foodservice business, it was important for us to build it socially, in terms of community," says Durkee.

Durkee estimates that 15 to 20 per cent of the startup cost of Cheesewerks comes from the board members, who can invest either \$250, \$500, \$750 or \$1000 in funds that can be spent over three years on in-store items and discounts. Board members in the higher levels are also offered perks such as a custom designed and personalized cheese board stored at the restaurant for individual use and private member rental space for free.

Durkee says that future board member fees will be put towards tastings, culinary events and product launches to foster the idea of Cheesewerks as a "community foodie hub." "We want to be a champion for artisan products," says Durkee. Half of the restaurant's 1,455 square foot space is designed as a culinary stage for artisans of edible products to showcase their wares. The space can include 30 seats inside and 12 seats outside.

The menu is anchored by six or seven artisan grilled cheese sandwiches named by city, says Durkee. To celebrate Toronto's melting pot of cultures, the Toronto-based sandwich is a mini stack of individual sliders, encompassing flavours of Koreatown, the Danforth, etc. Some of the sandwiches are derived from Durkee's past experiences, such as the Beijing pulled pork creation based on his honeymoon at the Olympics.

Durkee is looking to expand the concept to four locations in the GTA within the next few years. "We're looking to the Chipotle model of premium counter service," says Durkee, who adds that the suburbs are not out of the question. He's looking at the Yonge/Eglinton area, North York, and Richmond Hill/Newmarket. He also has ambitious plans to take the concept across the country, with potential to go international in airports, capitalizing on the city-specific theme.

The sandwiches are between \$7 to 10, with soup, sides and treats from \$3 to 5. The restaurant is also licensed and has Canadian artisan beers.

When it comes to the sandwiches, Durkee considered cheese first, reaching out to local



cheese companies.

"My grilled cheese is a conduit to a beautiful piece of artisan cheese. The rest of the sandwich is almost a condiment," says Durkee. "You should be able to appreciate the terroir of the cheese. People want more connection to the ingredient and we've just cut out the middleman."

Slow food, fast-food style

"It's easier to teach someone to roll a meatball than teach them the integrity of food," says Rod Bowers, whose new quick-service concept, Hey Meatball, rolled out at the end of August.

Bowers, who was behind Toronto restaurants The Rosebud and The Citizen, is moving out of the upscale arena and into the world of QSRs, but bringing his farm-to-table aesthetic with him.

"I want to change the way that people think about fast food," says Bowers. "I want to do farm to table quick service."

After he sold his restaurants The Citizen (to chef Lynn Crawford) and The Rosebud a few years ago, Bowers had wanted to try a QSR concept with locally sourced hamburgers, but "my wife and I had a baby and got sidetracked," he says. When he found a space at 719 College Street this past winter, the idea was reborn as a meatball restaurant. Inspired by kofta houses serving little lamb meatballs with bread, salad and pickled peppers in Turkey when on his honeymoon, Bowers wanted to bring a similar concept to Toronto, but felt that the Turkish aspect wouldn't translate well.

He also points to Chipotle's customization options as a model for his store, but, true to his aesthetic, is sticking to making everything in-house, including a variety of sodas such as ginger ale, sparkling lemonade, cream soda and seasonal

brews, as well as fresh baked cookies and pasta. One of his prized possessions in the kitchen is the soft-serve ElectroFreeze ice cream machine, which he plans to use to make all-organic frozen treats.

Meatballs were influenced by a variety of cultures including Italian, Vietnamese and others, and are available in beef, pork, chicken or vegetarian options. Customers can choose their own sauce, pasta, vegetable or salad.

Bowers plans to keep all menu items under \$10 (the price of the largest sandwich, the Hero.) Beer and wine will be available by the glass.

Targeting families throughout the day, Hey Meatball's late opening hours (until 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday) also aims to attract College St. residents and Bowers' fellow foodservice industry members.

"We want it to not be over the top," says Bowers. "We don't want it to be McDonalds."

The 1,500 square feet space was designed by Melissa Davis from YDF (Your Designer Friend), with 30 seats and bar rails, and is also geared to takeout business. Bowers wants to sell his product in cryovac packaging to bars in areas that don't serve food. He also plans to sell retail within a year, and also expand the idea.

"I've never had a vision in the long term before, just opening restaurants and wanting them to be the best they can," says Bowers. "We can take this philosophy, and do it right across the country by using local purveyors."

Ultimately, Bowers thinks that the single restaurant concept fits right into the movement towards people caring more about the components and sourcing of their food.

"Sometimes, people just want one thing done really well," he says.

MTY goes shopping for Korean and subs

By Mike Deibert, contributing editor

MONTREAL—MTY Food Group was on a buying spree in August with two major purchases planned. The company will gain an entry into the submarine sandwich business and a larger presence in Ontario with the purchase of Mr. Submarine Ltd. for \$23 million cash.

The Montreal-based franchisor of 26 quick-service brands has signed an agreement to buy the sandwich chain, with annual sales of \$100 million at its approximately 335 Mr. Sub units, in a deal expected to close before the end of October.

Led by its founder and 26 per cent owner, Stanley Ma, publicly-traded MTY is continuing a growth by acquisition strategy it has been following for several years. Mr. Sub is its largest purchase so far.

Recently, MTY also announced an agreement to buy Calgary-based Koryo Korean BBQ Franchise Corp., with 20 units in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec, for 1.8 million dollars cash. Koryo started in 1997. The

deal is expected to close Sept. 30, subject to regulatory approvals and closing conditions.

An MTY release in August said, "The addition of 20 Koryo outlets will strengthen (MTY's) Korean food operations by complementing its Kim Chi Korean food banner, and enhance the company's growth potential in this rapidly emerging segment of the quick-service food industry. It will also strengthen MTY's position as a dominant player in mall food courts, where all of Koryo's outlets are located."

Koryo owner Jin Lee will continue to head the company under its new owners.

MTY Food Group owns 22 of the chains it operates, and runs the four others under exclusive licence agreements. MTY has more than 1,700 units in chains that include Country Style, Tiki-Ming, Vanellis, Cultures, TCBY and Thai Express.

MTY is also in the process of closing a deal to purchase Calgary-based Jugo Juice, a franchise operation with 133 units in seven provinces, mostly in Western Canada.

Currently MTY has about 1,700 units in Cana-

da, nearly all franchised. Its banners include Country Style, Tiki-Ming, Vanellis, Cultures, TCBY and Thai Express. Its restaurants rang up \$461.9 million in sales last year.

About 80 per cent of Mr. Sub restaurants are in Ontario, with the rest located in six other provinces. MTY, which operates mainly in food courts, will be taking a step out into the street with Mr. Sub—three-quarters of its units are street front locations.

MTY vice-president of finance Eric Lefebvre told *The Canadian Press* that no decisions had been made on whether any substantial changes would be made to the privately-owned, 43-year-old Mr. Sub business.

Lefebvre said MTY will continue to take over other companies. It is in good shape to do this since it is debt free.

MTY said in a release in August that the acquisition of Mr. Sub restaurants will bring MTY's holdings to more than 2,070 units. Most are in Canada, with some in the Middle East and North Africa.

CANADA'S HOTTEST NEW MENU ADDITION!!!

Donair pizza!

From Canada's Favourite/Largest Supplier

- Donair Meat
- Donair Sauce

We supply recipe guides

100% Canadian Quality

LES ALIMENTS **Bonté** FOODS

1-888-859-7222
FEDERALLY INSPECTED
www.bontefoods.ca

NEWS BRIEFS

Mall dining goes upscale

TORONTO—An upscale makeover for the Eaton Centre's food court was unveiled in early September.

With designer furniture, greeters and eco-friendly containers, Cadillac Fairview spent \$48 million dollars to shock and awe mall-goers.

Lai Toh Heen closing

TORONTO—Lai Toh Heen, the north Toronto sister restaurant to downtown Chinese fine dining temple Lai Wah Heen, will close Sept. 18.

Owner Metropolitan Hotels announced the closing in press release August 24.

The 130-seat restaurant opened in May 2006 on Mount Pleasant Road, a couple of blocks south of Eglinton Avenue.

Mickey Cherevaty retires

JORDAN STATION, ON—After 11 years in sales in marketing with Moyer Diebel Canada, Mickey Cherevaty heads into semi-retirement this November.

But his tenure with the company is not completely over as he heads up a new consulting role as vice president of business development for Moyer Diebel and the Ali Group, which owns the Canadian operation.

Taking over Cherevaty's old sales and marketing role is his son, Scott Cherevaty.

A statement from the company said Mickey Cherevaty would "utilize his extensive experience and industry relationships to explore new opportunities for Moyer Diebel, specifically within certain market segments that Moyer Diebel has not yet penetrated within the Canadian marketplace."

Cherevaty has more than 40 years experience in the foodservice and hospitality equipment sector.

Battle of the izakayas

TORONTO—A new izakaya is set to take on Guu in a head-to-head battle for patrons of Japanese pub fare this fall.

The 4,500 square feet, 151-seat restaurant is backed by the owners of Sushi Time, and will be licensed, said chairman Anthony Phang to ORN in August.