

RESTAURANTS ROUNDUP

KABABJI PLANNING MORE OUTLETS WORLDWIDE



Kababji, a Lebanese restaurant and grill, is expected to open four new outlets across the region before the end of the year, said Yousef Khoury, owner of the concept.

Two outlets are scheduled for the UAE, one of them will be under the new 'Express' line of the brand. The UAE has already welcomed two outlets, one of which opened at the end of 2013, and the other that opened last month. Another two are planned for the KSA.

The new outlets are franchised with Eathos, a private equity hospitality and F&B company, whose CEO is Fayal Younes Khoury and said that some of the outlets will be standalone, offering fully-fledged dining services, and others will be located in compounds and malls.

Khoury added that further expansion is planned for Kababji in London before the end of this year. Investment in the outlet

is individual, and not through franchising. "We will have more than one outlet in the city," he said. The investment in the diner is GBP 2 million (approx. USD 2.9 million).

Lebanon will also have three more Kababji branches, including one in Byblos. "We will be testing the market there since it is still new for us. Jbeil (Tybriou) has at least 200,000 residents and benefits from high footfall during weekends and holidays. It is turning into a great destination," Khoury highlighted.

The other branch will be located in Sin El Fil, close to Hilton Beer at Harbour Grand Hotel, while the third location will be in Achrafieh. "We are relocating from our old location to a new one in Sodeco," he said.

The average investment per outlet in Lebanon is between USD 700,000 and USD 900,000. kabaqj.com

SECTEUR: THE SPIRIT AND THE TASTE



Nabil Hayek, the founder of Secteur bistro and cocktail bar in Beirut and **Hadi Hazim**, head chef of Fusion Cult, and the man behind Secteur's gourmet flavors, reveal the secret blend behind this nightlife destination.

How influential do you believe your various F&B and nightlife ventures are?
NH: As head of business development at MoodLab SA, I believe that our combined brands offer unique experiences across different outlets, whether in the food or nightlife industries. We are always conveying high standards of quality in the most unusual ways, set up and locations, all under one common goal.

What is the competitive edge for each of your concepts?

NH: Overall, it seems that all our brands have certain similarities or even compete each other. We have tapped into a certain segment of the market that is looking for value, quality and a simple good time, out without being necessarily pretentious or too sophisticated.

How big of an impact has your family played on the success of your business? (Nabil's mother is Mireille Hayek, the founder of Elm Sherif.)

NH: Working with the family for close to four years has helped me acquire the basics of the industry and attention to detail, and further develop them to reach the desired possible level of great service and client satisfaction. These skills have taught me a lot over the years and are continuously projected over the outlets we manage.



The cuisine you believe is a hit at Secteur is...

NH: It is difficult to pick a favorite. The project in which I collaborated with Secteur proved to be more exciting every week. However, if I had to pick a favorite, I would probably go with something from the Brazilian-themed diner. The Amazonian Fish was a personal favorite that I enjoyed experimenting with. It consists of a black cod fish steamed in a banana leaf stuffed with lemongrass, caramelized onions, Peanuts and Pico De Gallo.

Your favorite ingredient and why?
NH: I have a fascination with onions simply because of their versatility. This sauce can vary drastically according to how they are tackled. Raw, charred, baked or fried, they add a different flavor to the meal every time.

secteur.com

CELEBRITY CHEF JOE BARZA EXTENDS HIS EXPERTISE IN THE REGION



Lebanese chef Joe Barza is sharing his know-how beyond borders. His recently opened restaurant, La Bocca, in Qatar, reflects his gastronomic flair. Specialized in Argentinian food, the restaurant serves signature grill, beef and lamb. It seats almost 150 customers. The property is owned by Souk Waqf and has an approximate investment of USD 2 million. Barza has also created the menu of a new concept slated for Riyadh, AlDiyas. It will specialize in pisco and has a seating capacity of almost 150 guests. The concept is expected to have multiple branches within the upcoming months. For the time being, Barza is renovating the menu of Abu Dhabi's Cafe da Rio, he will also be opening a restaurant in Cairo. At a later stage, Barza will be targeting Europe, with restaurant projects scheduled for Budapest and Serbia. "My future plan is to maintain the customers' satisfaction and to keep the consistency and leadership of Joe Barza Culinary Consultancy in the market," he stressed.

joebarza.com

OHI BAKEHOUSE GLUTEN FREE BAKERY IN BEIRUT

Ohi Bakehouse is a fusion between gourmet taste and healthy nutrition, opening early spring on Minouk Street, Achrafieh, Lebanon. Chef Yousef Akki introduces a bakery and patisserie shop offering bread and desserts, gluten free, lactose free and without other allergen including ingredients, such as sugar, grains, oil, yeast and eggs. It is a byproduct of a self-taught baker, Rima Dagher, who has a personal family history of gluten intolerance along with the executive chef of Burgundy restaurant in Beirut, Yousef Akki.



CIPRIANI, NOW OPEN IN DUBAI

Cipriani, one of this year's most anticipated restaurant openings, has opened its first venue in Dubai, located at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). Cipriani was brought to Dubai by Bullfinch Group and is the brand's second site in the Middle East, following the Yas Viceroy restaurant in Abu Dhabi. Designed by Florentine architect Michele Bonan, Cipriani comprises of two split-levels, with a bar on the lower floor and the restaurant area on the upper deck. Next month, Cipriani Dubai will launch a separate lounge area called Socialista. This



private space at the rear of the restaurant will offer a laid-back, upscale vibe, allowing guests to continue the Cipriani experience deep into the night.

cipriani.com

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Umm Building - Mankar / P.O. Box 95240
 Bin El Fa, Lebanon
 T +961 1 884 134 / M +961 78 444 990
 E sales@mg-supplies.com