

The world's best burgers could be your business

Burger Wisconsin, the self claimed "home of the world's best burger", this year aims to open approximately eight new franchises, giving people who are passionate about producing top quality gourmet burgers an entry level into their owning their own business.

About two years ago Burger Wisconsin founder, Mick Davenport, sold the business to Wellingtonians, Steve Hanna and Tim Stewart.

"We bought Burger Wisconsin because it was a magnificent brand and it was New Zealand's first gourmet hamburger brand. We knew the product well but it had dropped off people's radar's in recent years due to very little store marketing."

Since taking over the business both men have used their past award winning foodservice/business experiences to redefine how Burger Wisconsin is marketed and to redevelop its franchise system.

Steve says: "We've got our feet under the desk; and being new to Burger Wisconsin we've taken some very robust advice from franchise consultants in New Zealand. From that advice we have looked to consolidate and solidify the base of stores that are here now by giving them more support and instituting a marketing fund."

Working with all the stores, Burger Wisconsin has now formalised its national marketing fund, which guarantees uniform marketing through New Zealand. Previously stores had concentrated on local marketing.

"And we're adding franchising best practice

which means a lot more assistance from the support office; we've added national marketing and we are adding the power of comparison between stores. That is summed up as Burger Wisconsin Best Practice Franchising."

Steve says that since Burger Wisconsin launched its franchise option in the late 1980s franchising has improved enormously. Franchisees today generally receive more support; more business and marketing structure and franchisers encourage contact between other same store franchise owners.

With its new disciplines, best practice and national marketing, Burger Wisconsin is now ready to invite new franchisees to be part of its successful gourmet burger business.

Locations of the new franchises are being kept under wraps, but Steve would say, that they look for suburban-based areas where there is a cluster of fast food outlets and where households are earning above average incomes.

Once a franchisee is found for the location, the way they buy into the business will depend on a number of factors.

"We can offer a mixture of buy-in opportunities. At the moment we have some franchisees taking the lease and some where the support office takes the lease. We work with the franchisee to find the best business arrangement."

Burger Wisconsin can offer a preferential banking package from trading banks and it is also able to help people that may be a little short of capital,

through a sweat equity loan.

And although Burger Wisconsin does look for new sites, it will consider converting an existing fast food site into a Burger Wisconsin outlet.

In return, Burger Wisconsin is looking for franchisees that have a passion for the brand, a passion for hospitality service and adequate capital. "Essentially for someone to start a franchise with us and set up a store would cost around \$150,000 and we would call that an entry level, possibly a steeping stone."

New franchisees receive two weeks intensive in-store training including food preparation and food hygiene, front of house/customer service, and book keeping support. From production to management, "in all aspects of running their business."

All franchisees get a list of authorised suppliers who create most of the products specifically for Burger Wisconsin.

Steve says most of the ingredients for making the burgers are supplied ready to use. Burger Wisconsin only uses Angus Pure Beef and authentic sourdough buns. For its lettuce, two varieties of spray-free fancy lettuce are delivered, still growing, to its stores throughout New Zealand.

For the sauces, freshness means great taste. Franchisees are provided with recipes to make their own sauces. "So they can add the likes of fresh garlic, fresh lime, fresh coriander at store level which gives the burgers a superior taste. After all we are the home of the world's best burgers," says Steve. ■