



Tim Stewart and Steve Hanna, frontmen of Burger Wisconsin, have focused on the strength of their franchisers since buying the New Zealand gourmet chain about 18 months ago.

One of the first things the two Wellingtonians — and burger addicts — did was look to revitalise New Zealand's 25 outlets, including the store in New Plymouth.

"Burger Wisconsin was the original gourmet burger in New Zealand and has always been a great brand," Mr Hanna said. "But it was languishing in the face of competition and had drifted off people's radar."

Mr Hanna (48) is a former money market dealer who was part of group that established a fresh pasta and sauces brand with Pasta Fresca.

This was later bought by Frescarini.

Mr Stewart comes from a career in marketing, finance and regulatory analysis in the telecommunications and energy sectors.

"We knew a little knowledge could be dangerous so we decided to do the job well by investing in advice from the best people in their sectors," he said.

The advice from Franchise Consultants was clear — support

under-performing stores, tidy up existing franchise agreements and focus on marketing to extend market penetration.

A marketing campaign is due to start in February.

Mr Hanna says franchising as a concept has come a long way in the past decade.

"It is no longer regarded as a way of making a quick buck by rolling out stores under a franchise," he said.

"Franchising has powers that individual businesses don't in creating a greater pool of resources for marketing, bulk buying and learning from each other."

Photo: SUPPLIED