

Lebanon corners the Kuwaiti F&B market

Shaikh Nawaf Mubarak Abdullah Al-Jaber Al Sabah, currently the chairman of Standard Arabian Business and Enterprises Company (SABECO), talks of his future projects with Lebanese brands.

How would you describe the current F&B market in Kuwait?

The market is energetic, competitive, creative, aggressive, and demanding. However, it lacks restaurants with high standards that offer both a pleasant ambiance and good cuisine. We aim to achieve that perfect combination of food and mood in our future restaurants.

What brands are you introducing into the Kuwaiti market?

SABECO is currently preparing for early 2012 the opening of Margherita Pizzeria Del Quartiere Dal 1959, which will introduce to Kuwait wooden baked pizza and fresh Italian food. Margherita Kuwait will reproduce experience of the original outlet located in Gemmayzeh, Beirut. It will offer its signature pizzas in addition to classic favorites, as well as new creations for the Kuwaiti market.

At the same time we will also open Semsom, a trendy Lebanese restaurant that will serve in addition to all the cuisine classics, 40 innovative and signature dishes found only at Semsom. The International Herald Tribune dubbed Semsom an "unmissable hotspot in Beirut" and Semsom Kuwait will definitely be the place to visit.

Margherita and Semsom will cater to the mid to low-end market



segments. Our target will be people looking for delicious food and good atmosphere.

How are Lebanese born brands faring on the Kuwaiti F&B market?

Today, Lebanon has become the Middle East reservoir of new restaurant concepts locally born and bred. Lebanese people have created successful restaurants in Beirut and were able to successfully franchise their restaurants in Kuwait and the GCC by properly transferring their knowledge and know-how.

Lebanese cuisine is very much appreciated here, and major Lebanese food franchise restaurants are present in Kuwait. Additionally, several Lebanese franchise restaurants, not serving Lebanese food, have challenged international competition.

The success of Lebanese born brands is also due to the similarity in taste between the Lebanese and the Kuwaiti people. For a long time, Lebanon and its restaurants have been well known to Kuwaitis, due to frequent travel to and continuous presence in Lebanon.

What are the challenges of investing in franchised brands?

The main challenge is to maintain a solid and efficient business relationship with the franchisor. Another one is to offer identical dishes with identical tastes using the exact same ingredients. Also to convince the franchisor to adapt and tune their concept to meet the local taste should the need arise, without of course changing the concept's core values.

What is in the pipeline today?

In the second half of 2012, SABECO is preparing to open four new outlets offering easy-eating food, which will cater to a wide segment of Kuwait's population. This project is being finalized now.

Kuwait news by

hodema
consulting services
h o d e m a . n e t

The Danish Bakery



Based in Kuwait, the Danish Bakery has recently reshuffled its corporate image, and moved to larger premises close to its original location with a state-of-the-art kitchen, a retail area and a café with a private outdoor garden. Gurli Al Hajery created the Danish Bakery in Kuwait's area of Al Yarmouk in 1991. She began by preparing cakes, coffee, sweets, fatayer and savories. As its reputation spread, by word-of-mouth, the bakery developed its offering. With 200 items on the menu, it also caters for private functions and special events with a multinational staff of more than 50. In close collaboration with the owners, Beirut's Design Workshop created the Danish Bakery's new look.
danishbakery.com

Is Kuwait the next destination for an ice structure?

After the successful launch of the Magic Ice Museum in Turkey, the GM of the Norwegian developer Lofoten Trading believes Kuwait could soon be the first to host ice structures in the GCC. "We are close to a deal with a Kuwait-based investment company. This company sees a big potential in taking the concept to the Middle East," he states. Today, Lofoten is planning on building a hotel in Istanbul including an ice restaurant and an ice bar.

lofoten.info



Nestlé Toll House

Nestlé Toll House Café by Chip, a premiere bakery and dessert bar, launched its first restaurant in Kuwait in Abu Al Hasaniya's The Village. This is the second café opening, in a short time, for Royal Food Services Company, which is planning to set up a minimum of 48 cafés in the UAE, Jordan and Kuwait.

nestletollhouse.net

Smashburger

The Denver-based burger chain with 118 stores in the United States will open its first international location next year in the Middle East. Smashburger has signed agreements to open 17 stores in Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

smashburger.com

Al Shaya partners with Teavana

Teavana is a specialty tea and tea accessory retailer based in Atlanta, Georgia. It currently operates over 150 company-owned stores in 35 states in the U.S. and Mexico. Teavana International announced it has signed a franchise development agreement with the Al Shaya group of companies for the development of its stores in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, KSA, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar and UAE.

alshaya.com