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Pair turns over many new leaves

They operate Saladworks in Toms River, the sixth Shore restaurant in the chain

Posted by the Asbury Park Press on 05/18/07

BY **MICHAEL AMSEL**
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

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TOMS RIVER — When Colleen and Bryan Mading were thinking about getting into the franchise restaurant business, they knew that buying a franchise of a well-known restaurant chain such as McDonald's or Burger King would be much too expensive and it didn't fit into their healthy food approach, either.

Then, they learned about Saladworks and its \$35,000 franchise fee and the pieces began to come together.

"The franchise fee was very reasonable," Colleen Mading said. "You are also responsible for the buildout of the store and the lease, which is where the big bucks came in. But when we evaluated everything, it was just what we were looking for."

The Madings opened their Saladworks restaurant at 1311 Route 37 on April 9. There are now 35 locations in New Jersey, including two in Ocean County and four in Monmouth County.

Saladworks features a range of freshly-prepared salads made to order with an option to add or delete ingredients. The salads can be mixed with any of 14 different salad dressings, many of which are low-fat or fat-free.

Colleen Mading said the thing that makes Saladworks stand out is the meals are prepared fresh in front of the customers.

"We make the salads for the customers just as they want it. There is no salad bar here," she said. "The customer can say, 'A little more of this, a little less of that.' We pride ourselves in making it a personal experience."

John Scardapane, chief executive officer of Saladworks, started the chain in 1986 with one store in Cherry Hill. Over the past two decades, the chain has grown to 82 locations in New Jersey and Philadelphia as well as Maryland, Delaware, Florida, Illinois and Washington, D.C.

Saladworks plans to have more than 200 locations open in the next five years.

Jena Feret, marketing manager for Saladworks, said the company has had "amazing growth" over the past five years because it takes great pride in making the customers satisfied.

"John (Scardapane) instituted six core values to hire the internal staff and use for evaluating franchisees," Feret said. "A couple of the core values, for example, are 'together everyone achieves more,' and 'have the passion to be the best.' These core values have become an important part of our strategic model, and it has really helped propel our growth."



(STAFF PHOTO: BOB BIELK)

Colleen Mading and her husband, Bryan, are the operators.

SALADWORKS CONSHOHOCKEN, PA.
The chain has 82 locations, 35 of them in New Jersey. Saladworks plans to expand to more than 200 locations within the next five years. Locally, there are Saladworks restaurants in Brick, Eatontown, Holmdel, Marlboro, Red Bank and Toms River.

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The Atlanta Bread Company and Panera Bread are Saladworks' chief competitors, Colleen Mading said.

Saladworks' restaurant seats 86 people and is 3,000 square feet. There are currently 24 employees.

Colleen Mading said that when the rest of the strip center on Route 37 is built, she expects business to really improve.

"The strip center is mostly unfinished, and it has only a few stores open," Colleen explained. "There is going to be a coffee shop, a bagel place and a movie theater in the future. That will really improve foot traffic in the area and help the merchants."



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