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◆ Plymouth



Gene Walsh/Staff Photographer

Saladworks chairman and CEO John D. Scardapane stands with Hillary Andes in front of her new franchise location in the Plymouth Meeting Mall on Wednesday. The new site, which opened on St. Patrick's Day, is Andes' second. She and her husband, Bill Andes, opened their first franchise four years ago in East Norriton.

Going green grows green

Saladworks working for couple

By CARL ROTENBERG
Staff Writer

PLYMOUTH — Following the success of their East Norriton location, Bill and Hillary Andes have opened a franchise in the Plymouth Meeting Mall food court.

The Marlton, N.J., couple opened their first Saladworks four years ago in East Norriton with a \$300,000 investment for renovations and start-up costs. A family friend had opened a Saladworks in Gateway Shopping Center in Tredyffrin, Chester County, that was successful, Hillary Andes said.

"It was an opportunity that came up," said Hillary Andes, who had 20 years of food service experience, including five years at a New Jersey McDonald's and 15 years as a waitress, to prepare her for the ownership of a Saladworks.

The couple opened the Plymouth Meeting Mall food-court location on St. Patrick's Day, and served 325 customers the first day.

The three most popular entrees in Plymouth are the create-your-own-salad, the chicken mandarin salad and the buffalo chicken salad, Hillary Andes said.

"The buffalo chicken is very flavorful from the spices," she said.

Hillary Andes prefers the create-your-own-salad with carrots, green peppers, cheddar cheese, broccoli, egg and ranch dressing. Her husband likes the turkey club

salad with balsamic dressing.

The first Saladworks was created in the Cherry Hill Mall by John D. Scardapane, the chairman and CEO of Saladworks, in 1986. He had to convince mall management, that salads would sell in a mall location, Scardapane said.

With a conceptual concession — to add cold sandwiches to the menu — Scardapane opened the first Saladworks with a \$150,000 investment. After two months, he dropped the sandwiches and finished the first year at Cherry Hill Mall with more than \$1.2 million in sales. His salad experiment was the top food-court seller by more than \$200,000 that year, he said.

The early success preceded a rapid rollout of 12 Saladworks locations in the next three years. However, an inexperienced family-based management team hampered continued growth, he said.

A switch to franchising the salad concept in 1989 led the company to grow to 26 locations by 2000. There were just three corporate-owned locations at that time.

With the addition of the Plymouth location, Saladworks has grown to 68 stores.

Saladworks will open 22 new locations this year. A second Plymouth Saladworks will open in early April in the Plymouth Square Shopping Center. Another store will open this December in the General Hancock Shopping Center in

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John D. Scardapane
Saladworks CEO

Montgomeryville.

The obvious appeal of salad as a lunchtime meal is it promises fewer calories than a typical fast-food meal, Scardapane said. The average calorie count for all the Saladworks' salads with regular dressing is 480. The 100-calorie regular dressing can be replaced with 14-calorie fat-free dressing or 30-calorie low-fat dressing. The Saladworks roll is 175 calories.

By comparison, a major fast-food chain's sandwich and fries comes in at 840 calories. That calorie count does not include a medium-size soda at 350 calories.

"Saladworks has taken a dish once reserved exclusively for appetizer menus and turned it into one of the hottest tickets in franchising," Scardapane said. "We offer healthier and lighter menu items without sacrificing flavor or convenience."

Carl Rotenberg can be reached at crotenberg@timesherald.com or 610-272-2500, ext. 350.