

Chef-Inspired US Brand to Exhibit at Gulfood

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HOUSTON – Chef Anthony Russo, the creative culinary mind, founder and CEO of chef-driven concepts Russo's New York Pizzeria and Russo's Coal-Fired Italian Kitchen, is attending the Gulfood Show upon announcing a growth strategy to expand both brands' international footprint across the Middle East, specifically targeting the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Israel and Egypt.

This bold growth phase is reflective of the brands' ever-growing presence in the region, with locations already in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Likewise, the first Russo's Coal-Fired Italian Kitchen is scheduled to open later this year in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia joining the Russo's New York Pizzeria already in the market. The brand plans to add 30 franchise locations to the Middle East region in the next three years.

As part of this effort, Chef Anthony Russo will be meeting with interested and qualified investors while at the Gulfood 2018 food show (Booth #S3-D10). The event will be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre and runs February 18 – 22.

Additionally, Chef Anthony Russo will be hosting a Discovery Day from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. February 23 – 24 at the Russo's New York Pizzeria Green's location (Panorama Building, Dubai, UAE 04-4561229). Prospective franchisees are welcome to sample Russo's Italian cuisines and authentic, New York-style pizza while touring the restaurant's old-world charm, modern design and innovative hospitality. Interested guests will need to RSVP for this event by emailing franchise@nypizzeria.com.

"When it comes to increasing our global presence, expansion in the Middle East is quickly heating up," said Russo, who has 40 years of culinary expertise featuring fresh, homemade Italian cuisine using family recipes since 1978. "We've seen incredible development in the UAE and Saudi Arabia thus far, but the demand for family-friendly, Italian dining continues to grow. Russo's is dominating the classic pizza and Italian scene and we're thrilled to award more international business teams an opportunity to be a part of this exciting franchise growth."

Menu innovation has been at the heart of the Russo's Restaurants brands for more than 32 years, blending generations of the Russo's family Italian recipes. Through Chef Anthony's handpicked ingredients and a commitment to research and development, the brands have continued to stay ahead of culinary trends. A prime example is the restaurants' full line of gluten-free pizzas and pastas – a sincere response to the request for great-tasting, gluten-free menu selections from health conscious families and thousands living with Celiac disease, worldwide. Also, since the company has gone international, local flavors of the Middle East can be found in many of the recipes, connecting the local culture to authentic New York style pizza and classic Italian cuisine.

Russo's Restaurants offers a rare franchise opportunity for entrepreneurs interested in proven brands that are entirely chef driven. Beyond consumer convenience, Russo's is leading the Italian dining category by creating a business model that offers:

*A smaller footprint (1,200-4,000 sq. ft.) for less overhead

* A low-cost entry into the restaurant business with an initial investment starting around \$395,000 in select markets

Average food costs and labor costs are 21.8% and 25.4% respectively

Average sales volume per unit is \$1,020,383 million

Russo's Restaurants is a national and international franchisor of the fast casual and casual dining brands Russo's New York Pizzeria and Russo's Coal-Fired Italian Kitchen. Based in Houston, Russo's Restaurants is composed of a mix of corporate and franchised locations across Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Florida. Russo's has entered international markets as well, with locations in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates. Chef Anthony Russo created Russo's Restaurants by applying his unique, family recipes featuring New York-style pizza, and by developing a broad variety of handcrafted pasta dishes, calzones, salads, sandwiches, soups and desserts. At its heart, Russo's Restaurants reflects Chef Anthony's commitment to his New York roots where food and family come first. — SG