

FOOD and DRINK

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King's Fish House plans for national expansion while remaining focused on high-quality, affordable seafood.

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MAID-RITE
CORP.

WWW.MAID-RITE.COM
HEADQUARTERS: DES MOINES, IOWA
EMPLOYEES: 35
SPECIALTY: LOOSE-MEAT SANDWICHES
BRADLEY BURT, CEO: "WE WANT OUR
RESTAURANTS TO BE KNOWN
AMONG CONSUMERS AS THE
AFFORDABLE CHOICE."

Maid-Rite's signature sandwich is a combination of seasonings and fresh ground beef served loose.

The 'Rite Way'

Maid-Rite Sandwich Shoppes looks to expand based on friendly customer service and its unique loose-meat ground beef sandwiches. BY CHRIS PETERSEN

A RESTAURANT CHAIN CAN'T SURVIVE 80 YEARS IN BUSINESS without inspiring a lot of loyalty from satisfied customers who keep coming back and time again to enjoy its menu. Maid-Rite has been in business for exactly that long, and CEO Bradley Burt says the chain's unique fresh ground beef sandwiches have created customer loyalty since the very beginning when the restaurant chain was founded in 1926.

Maid-Rite Sandwich Shoppes, as a quick-serve regional franchise, serves its unique made-to-order sandwiches in diner-style restaurants to a following of loyal customers who enjoy their fresh ground beef sandwiches that are seasoned with Maid-Rite's secret seasoning recipe.

Burt relates a story about one of the chain's long-time customers, a World War II veteran, who told Burt about how much he enjoyed eating Maid-Rite sandwiches. Burt says the customer told him that he ate a Maid-Rite sandwich the day before shipping out for his tour of duty as an Army paratrooper serving in the South Pacific theatre, and that overseas he

thought every day about eating a Maid-Rite when he got home. He said the first thing he did when he got back home was to have a Maid-Rite.

"I don't think there are many restaurants in America today that can have such a wonderful testimonial from a loyal customer like that. [We have] withstood the test of time in the success Maid-Rite has experienced for our one-and-only fresh ground beef loose-meat sandwich that is the signature menu item that we serve to our customers in our Maid-Rite Sandwich Shoppe restaurants," Burt says.

"That loyalty has made Maid-Rite a Midwestern institution, if not an icon, with more than 70 current franchise locations and 16 new franchise restaurants currently opening across the Midwest," Burt says. The chain's unique quick-service menu, quality of its menu and respect for its customers have helped build that customer loyalty, he adds.

The chain's first Sandwich Shoppe opened in Muscatine, Iowa, in 1926. Maid-Rite's signature menu item was created by ▶

► the chain's founder, a respected local butcher, Fred Angell. Angell developed the special combination of seasonings and fresh ground beef blend that, unlike hamburgers, was and still is served loose, similar to a sloppy joe but without the sauce. The company says the sandwich and restaurant received their name from a local mailman, who commented that his first loose-meat sandwich served to him by Angell was "made right."

The chain is celebrating its 80th anniversary with a special on its original Maid-Rite sandwiches and an advertising campaign that focuses on the theme of "Proudly Serving Our Customers for 80 Years." Maid-Rite is the second-oldest fast-food franchise in the nation, after A&W, which was founded a year earlier. True to the chain's friendly atmosphere and hospitality, the chain's restaurant managers and employees personally thank their customers for their patronage when dining at Maid-Rite.

"We know it is important that our managers and employees go around talking to all of their customers, in thanking them for their business. Our customers deserve to be appreciated," Burt says.

ONE-OF-A-KIND SANDWICH

Burt says Maid-Rite stands out in the quick-service casual dining market thanks to the unusual nature of its sandwiches. "Our position in the industry is one that is rather unique since there is no other sandwich in the quick-serve, casual-dining industry like a Maid-Rite," he says. "Our sandwich competitors serve burgers, most of which are frozen before being

cooked. We [have] a fresh ground beef sandwich that comes from Midwest-fed-and-raised fat cattle [that] the heartland of America is famous for. Our customers expect the best, and that's what we serve."

In addition to its Maid-Rite sandwiches, the chain also serves other fast-casual staples such as its breaded Tender-Loin, home-maid chili, french fries and its thick, hand-scooped Blue Bunny malts and shakes.

"Maid-Rite strives to give its customers quality food at a reasonable price," Burt says. "We want our restaurants to be known among consumers as the affordable choice in having our sandwiches and our other menu items fit the budget for families and individuals alike."

"For example, our customers can get a Maid-Rite basket with a Maid-Rite sandwich, including french fries and a fountain drink, for just \$5.79."

Burt says Maid-Rite follows HACCP programs and its own stringent guidelines for food safety and cleanliness to ensure the health and well-being for its customers who know they can trust in the quality of its food and in its preparation. These include requiring all employees to wear plastic gloves when handling food.

"In today's competitive, casual-dining, quick-serve restaurant market, customers will not go back or continue to be repeat customers if the restaurants they are frequenting are not spotlessly clean and are not food-safe," Burt says. "This also includes having spotlessly clean restrooms maintained at all times in our restaurants." ☺

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Congratulations MAID-RITE on your 80 year anniversary

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