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Two Innovative U.S. Food Service Franchises Eye Australia

Rita's Italian Ice® and The Melting Pot® will hold licensee candidate meetings in Sydney 5-6 February and in Melbourne 7-8 February.

The franchised food service market is saturated in Australia. Two American franchisors are out to disprove this myth with a couple of niche food concepts that remain undiscovered in the Australian franchise community.

Fondue Makes a Comeback

To many people the word "fondue" conjures memories of shag carpets and disco balls. However, The Melting Pot has led the modern revival of fondue as a fun, interactive and surprisingly upscale dining experience. While fondue can be found as a quick dessert or a specialty menu at independent restaurant, The Melting Pot has taken fondue to the next level by franchising the ultimate four-course fondue dining experience.

The first Melting Pot opened in 1975. Today, with more than 150 locations across the US, Canada, Mexico, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, The Melting Pot is the world's premier fondue restaurant franchise. With some its most successful restaurants in such markets as Florida, Southern California, and Las Vegas NV, The Melting Pot clearly debunked the notion of fondue as simply a "cold-climate comfort food."

The Melting Pot's cuisine is highly rated, including multiple awards from the American magazine, *Wine Spectator*. The Melting Pot combines unique recipes, quality ingredients, diverse flavors and highly-trained staff to create an entertaining fine dining experience that breaks the mold of American chain restaurants. Drawing a wide range of loyal guests, including couples, families, "group nights-out" with friends and private events, The Melting Pot has earned wide market appeal.

At The Melting Pot, fondue truly becomes a memorable four-course dining experience where guests can dip into something different - and discover all the ingredients for a unique dining experience in

a relaxed atmosphere, with private tables, attentive service, fine wines and signature fondue dinners.

The meal begins with a cheese course with a selection of six types of cheeses, which is followed by a salad—the only non-fondue course. Five types of salads are prepared with delicious dressings made in-house.

Guests then pick the perfect combination of quality meats, seafood and vegetables prepared with four different cooking styles, to dip in specialty sauces. Diners make the food right at the table, cooked in a broth based cooking style with choices of ingredients (Burgundy wine, citrus fruit, garlic, etc.), or in cholesterol-free oil with batter options such as tempura.

The meal ends on a chocolate high, with The Melting Pot's famous chocolate fondue, which includes a selection of dessert options with names such as Cookies & Cream, Flaming Turtle and Yin & Yang.

As a franchise concept, The Melting Pot does not require owners to have restaurant experience. Since all food is prepared by the guests at their tables, the restaurant requires no ovens, grills or deep fryers. The Melting Pot is seeking an exclusive Area Licensee for Australia. Initial capital requirements for a 5-unit Area License ranges from about AUD \$2 million - \$5 million up.

[For a fun 3-minute tour of The Melting Pot dining experience, click on this link.](#)

[For photos of The Melting Pot restaurant and fondue dishes, click on this link.](#)

What You'll Really Find on the Jersey Shore

The next time you're walking down New Jersey's Ocean City Boardwalk, or taking in a Broadway show, or touring Independence Hall in Philadelphia, ask a local person for a recommendation on a quick dessert place. It's a good bet that they'll point you to a small shop or kiosk with a large queue running down the street. That would be Rita's Italian Ice®... and don't worry, the queue moves along as a brisk rate.

There's a good reason for that queue. In the 2012 **Zagat's** Fast Food Survey, Rita's Italian Ice ranked #1 in the Top Food quality category, edging out Ben & Jerry's and Haagen-Dazs. Their signature dessert is Italian Ice, known to their customers simply as "Rita's Ice." It is a unique alternative to ice cream and frozen yogurt that remains relatively undiscovered in markets where Rita's Italian Ice has no presence.

Rita's Italian Ice is much smoother than a snow cone and combines ice with real fresh fruit; made fresh daily at each location and served within 36-hours of mixing, and boasts over 30 diverse flavors for customers to explore. The special ice consistency and proprietary flavors taste just like ice cream without the cost and calories. Adding to its popularity is the fact that it's a much more health alternative to ice cream and most other frozen desserts, including a sugar-free Rita's Italian Ice, with about half the calories of traditional ice cream.

Rita's Italian Ice also offers a range of other dessert options including frozen custard, milkshakes, gelati, cakes, as well as Rita's Italian Ice unique trademarked desserts *Misto*®, *Blendini*® and *Slenderita*®.

Rita's Italian Ice successful franchise growth is due in large part to their wide range of unit configurations, which scale from mobile carts to food court concessions to full-service stores. Rita's Italian Ice easily fits into many venues, including retail shopping areas, malls, entertainment parks, sports stadiums and even private events.

This enables Rita's Italian Ice franchisees to scale with relatively low capital requirements and more rapid unit breakeven. With almost 600 units open in the USA, Canada, India and Southern China, the investment required for a single unit U.S. Rita's Italian Ice franchise ranges from about AUD \$100,000 to \$325,000.

In Australia, Rita's Italian Ice is seeking a national Master Franchisee or an Area Licensee with minimum commitment of 10 units. Qualified candidates would have approximately AUD \$450,000 to \$750,000 in available capital, with marketing talent and food service experience.

[Click on this video link to see loyal customers at a Rita's Italian Ice opening in New York City.](#)

[For additional videos on Rita's, visit the Rita's Italian Ice YouTube channel by clicking on this link.](#)

[Photo link: Loyal customers queue up at a Rita's Italian Ice.](#)

The Melting Pot and Rita's Italian Ice are represented outside the US and Canada by franchise management firm EGS LLC., based in California. To arrange a meeting in Sydney on 5-6 February or in Melbourne 7-8 February, please contact the EGS representative in Melbourne:

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