



Finkel, Covey and Schuster of RKF with Rubens and Block of Winick collaborate for 2,000 s/f Roti Mediterranean Grill; Maiden Lane Properties is property owner

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Chicago-based Roti Mediterranean Grill has secured a deal to open at 100 Maiden Ln. in January 2013. The new restaurant will be located at the northwest corner of Cedar and Pine Sts. in the Financial District.

With their 16th location in the U.S., the Roti team will share their love of healthy, affordable Mediterranean food with a very discerning public.

"New Yorkers are some of the most sophisticated eaters on the planet, and they love Mediterranean food. They demand fresh, delicious food, and there is a premium on quick, efficient service. These are the hallmarks of Roti and we can't wait to open," said Bill Post, co-founder and CEO.

A team of brokers from RKF, consisting of managing director Marc Finkel, senior director Greg Covey and executive vice president Ariel Schuster, represented Roti on the 2,000 s/f, ground floor leasing transaction. Darrell Rubens and Lee Block of Winick Realty Group represented building ownership Maiden Lane Properties LLC. RKF serves as the exclusive leasing agent for Roti in the borough and is assisting with the expansion.

Roti chairman Mats Lederhausen, is determined to solve the American food conflict between good taste and good health. Having held senior leadership roles at industry titans like McDonald's, Chipotle, Pret A Manger and Boston Market, he knew the timing was perfect for an innovative, healthy restaurant concept. In 2007, he partnered with a group of friends to help further develop Roti Mediterranean Grill, a restaurant where you felt as good leaving as you felt eating. "It's basically fast food with no guilt," said Lederhausen.

"Most of the great innovations we enjoy solve paradoxes of basic human desire. We feel we always have to choose between something good and something bad...like you can't really have both. That is why the technology category is doing so well - it's easy and satisfying. Roti is trying to do the same with food. Eating healthier food doesn't mean eating food you don't like," he said.

In 2011, Roti continued its strong annual sales growth and doubled in size from six to 12 locations. While still in its startup stage, Roti is trending to hit profit margins similar to leading national restaurants. Post and Lederhausen have carefully strategized their growth plan and have no intention of turning their creation into a land grab. "We are in no hurry to franchise or sell. We love being in charge of our own destiny," Lederhausen said. For now, Roti keeps its focus on excelling in three areas: quality of ingredients, value and customer service. Smart move, considering an average Roti store in 2011 served approximately 500 people per day with an average check near \$10, which translates to approximately \$1.6 million a year.

"We worked closely with Roti over many months to find the optimal location for their debut restaurant in Manhattan," said Finkel. "With its high-density office and residential population, the

Financial District is the ideal place for Roti's Manhattan debut, and we are thrilled to have assisted them on their expansion here."

Roti intends to open ten more locations in Manhattan over the course of the next two to three years. As more customers crave healthy cuisine, Roti is on the forefront of a larger Mediterranean movement. Chicago-based Technomic Inc., one of the most recognized and experienced food industry consulting and research firms, stated in September 2011: "Mediterranean restaurants on a chain level are not widely represented. Coupled with consumers' willingness to order Mediterranean food, this indicates an opportunity for emerging concepts." Sales at Mediterranean chains grew to \$362 million in 2010 and continue to be on the incline.

Roti's customizable menu allows guests to create their own meal from a variety of bold and unique flavor profiles not found at many other fast casual chains. According to Roti co-founder (and owner of the Chesapeake Spice Company) Larry Lessans, "The Mediterranean region is the perfect climate for spices to flourish, which enables us to introduce our customers to some of the most delicious and vibrant flavors in the world." People with dietary sensitivities can also enjoy Roti's robust tastes through the extensive gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian menu options. Soon, Roti will launch an organic chickpea falafel and hummus, along with other healthful and nutritious menu additions.

Not only does Roti serve good-for-you food, its owners are good to the community. Post claims that their success puts them in the position to help revitalize local communities. In 2011 they donated more than \$10K to various non-profit organizations in the Chicago and Washington, D.C. areas through their "Free Lunch Days" program. Each time a new location launches, customers can receive a free lunch in exchange for making a donation to a local beneficiary, which is selected via in-person and social media votes, adding yet another dimension to the "Food That Loves You Back" concept. "We feel very fortunate to be in our position, especially in this economy," Post says. "We are not just counting our dollars, but also our blessings."

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