

MEDIA RELEASE

International restaurant chain opens its first Australian doors

Brisbane, Australia - 17 December 2009: The successful international dining chain **Vapiano** will open its first Australian restaurant in Brisbane's CBD tomorrow.

Vapiano restaurants serve old-fashioned Italian recipes using local meat, produce and cheese. The concept began in 2002 in Hamburg, Germany and now has more than 65 locations worldwide. Another 100 stores are currently in development in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Australia's first Vapiano is a 750m², 225-seat restaurant in the Brisbane CBD's new development hot-spot, Albert Lane. It cost \$2.4 million to fit-out and includes two bars; a living olive tree; a herb garden which allows fresh herbs to be served on each table; a pasta manifattura bought in direct from Italy; and a speedy cooking system for more than 50 combinations of pizzas, pastas and salads. It was designed by leading Italian architect Matteo Thun, who is responsible for all the Vapiano designs across the globe as well as the award-winning Hugo Boss factory in Coldrerio, Switzerland.

Vapiano's local Director Will Cooke owns a 12 year development agreement for Vapiano's Australian stores, with each restaurant having a 20-year franchise agreement.

Brisbane-based Cooke returned to Australia recently after spending the past seven years as Chief Operating Officer with McDonald's Sweden, where he oversaw 225 restaurants with a turnover of \$600 million.

Cooke has brought fellow ex-McDonalds Franchise Manager Tim Johnson on board as General Manager, a role which will grow into National Operations Manager as more stores open across Australia.

There are already plans to open a second Vapiano in Brisbane and one on the Gold Coast in 2010, with Sydney scheduled to get its first Vapiano the following year.

Cooke comments, "When I was overseas I fell in love with Vapiano's philosophy of fresh food made daily on the premises - to get its food 'from farm to fork' as quickly as possible - and just knew that other Aussies would too. Australians have long-enjoyed authentic pizza and pasta as a pleasurable part of our cuisine; we naturally gravitate towards a fresh casual approach to quality Italian dining. I'm confident Vapiano will strike a real chord here," he says.

Vapiano's approach to customer service will be a first-of-its kind in Australia, with diners being given a chip card on arrival which they can charge all food and drink to as they order, and then pay at the end.

"The chip card system is very popular overseas, because customers can order what they want when they want and at the end of the meal don't need to worry about splitting the bill with friends or colleagues. It's a flexible system which puts the customer in control," Will says.

Each Vapiano store will require approximately 75 casual staff behind the food service counters to prepare fresh meals as they are ordered.



Vapiano's first Brisbane location is in the newly developed Albert Lane, off the Queen Street Mall, and will open from 11am to 11pm from Friday 18 December. Visit www.vapiano.com.au for further information.

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