

Dulcé Café joins Wiesenhof Coffees in 70% buyout

Following a 12-month negotiation, Kobus and Belinda Wiese, founders of Wiesenhof Coffees, and incumbent Dulcé Café MD, Mike Pullen, agreed on a 70% sale of interest in Dulcé Café to Wiesenhof Coffees for an undisclosed amount.



L - R: Rob Barrett, Kobus Wiese and Martin Fuller

In order to retain valuable company DNA, Dulcé Café new business director and leasing and franchisee co-ordinator, Martin Fuller, retains his stock in the chain of 42 national stores.

Two of the original Dulcé Café partners, Mike Pullen and his son, Dulcé Café training manager, Tom Pullen, will leave the local franchise operation. The business duo is currently engaged in increasing and intensifying the international arm and global footprint of the Dulcé Café brand.

The addition of 45 Wiesenhof Coffee outlets to the buy-out equation brings the number of sites to just less than 90 across country. Both entities will keep their respective corporate identities and personalities, as developed and tailored towards a slightly varying South African demographic.

For Wiese, the procurement of a majority shareholding in Dulcé Café was the next logical step in expanding his existing commercial operations and business interests. Furthermore, he is keen to create additional value propositions for his ever increasing market across both franchise chains.

These benefits will include standardisation of operations and service training; competitive rates negotiated with all preferred suppliers; best of collective intellectual property shared across both brands and more.

Appetite for growth

To date, the majority of franchisees from both trademarks have welcomed the business deal, although some are still uncertain of the anticipated changes. The Dulcé Café head office in Port Elizabeth has been closed and moved to Heidelberg, to be run out of the official home of the Wiesenhof Coffees headquarters and primary business hub.

Wiese is adamant that despite his ambitious advancement and expansion strategy, the group will not lose its customer-centric focus, to provide professional service, excellent food and top grade, quality coffee consistently. The family spirit and commitment to continue improvement of the franchise chain, as a whole, is also paramount in all tactical undertakings.

Wiesenhof Coffees CEO, Rob Barrett, will be managing the progression and amalgamation of the two proven business models, together with their now considerable buying power, as a large franchising body. Up to 10 new stores are set to open within the current financial year.

"It is my dream to develop 200 successful stores, all of which would be operated by 50 franchisees, within the group. By encouraging the ownership of multiple sites, we can consolidate the investments of our franchisees, and ensure our family composition and personable customer rationale, at all times. It is also to our strategic advantage and positioning within the quick-service restaurant industry, that we now offer two choices in franchise proprietorship, to potential investors," says

Wiese.

In the interim, speculation regarding Wiesenhof Coffees in talks with a large retail group, to market blends under its local Wiesenhof label, are widespread.

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