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The Melting Pot Announces Year-End Achievements to Fuel National and International Franchise Development



Leading Polished Casual Fondue Restaurant Focuses on Operational Excellence and an Enhanced Dining Experience as it Celebrates 40 Years in Business The Melting Pot® Restaurants, Inc., the world's premier fondue restaurant and a leading polished casual dining franchise, announced today key achievements in its strategic growth plan, including operational and menu enhancements to build on its strong fondue foundation and position the brand for future international and domestic franchise development as the restaurant celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2015.

In 2014, new leadership positions were created to support the brand's evolution, including the hiring of Maryellen Torres as chief brand officer of its management company Front Burner Brands while Chef Jason Miller joined The Melting Pot to lead culinary development. As part of this initiative, The Melting Pot began developing new ways to fondue with convenient and flexible dining options to attract new customers while still accommodating those guests looking to enjoy the traditional fondue experience. Additionally, the company began testing a new menu line of fully cooked entrées made in-house to accelerate speed of service and increase repeat business. Furthermore, the company launched a localization effort across all of its restaurants giving franchisees the opportunity to customize their menus with regionally-influenced fare for the first time since its inception in 1975.

While The Melting Pot has adapted its menu in response to changing consumer dining habits, it has remained focused on what it delivers best – a unique dining experience, a variety of fresh menu selections and a guest-centric standard of service.

“It’s a very exciting time to be part of The Melting Pot – we’re celebrating 40 years in business and positioning the company for future growth,” said Mike Lester, president of The Melting Pot Restaurants, Inc. “The decision to further strengthen the brand’s operations and enhance the dining experience for our guests is a result of extensive consumer research that was conducted over the last couple of years. We’re thrilled with the progress we’ve made thus far and look forward to working closely with new and existing franchisees to build an even stronger brand in 2015 and for years to come.”

The Melting Pot plans to expand its footprint in select markets throughout the U.S. and overseas. Domestically, the company is seeking new franchisees in select markets, including Anchorage, Alaska; Dallas, Texas; Hartford, Conn.; and Los Angeles, Calif., as well as Memphis and Chattanooga, Tenn. On the international front, The Melting Pot is focusing its expansion efforts in target cities across Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan and South Korea. During the first half of 2015, the company plans to open its first restaurants in Jakarta, Indonesia; Dubai, United Arab Emirates and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



Underscoring its 2014 achievements, The Melting Pot was ranked sixth out of 38 concepts in the casual dining segment of *Nation’s Restaurant News* 2014 Consumer Picks Survey. In the varied menu/specialty sub-segment of the casual dining industry, The Melting Pot ranked first in the categories of cleanliness, service and likelihood to recommend. Overall in the casual dining segment, the brand ranked second in cleanliness, second in service and fourth in likelihood to recommend.

The Melting Pot operates more than 130 restaurants in the U.S., Canada and Mexico and has more than 20 locations in development internationally. The concept is known for offering an assortment of flavorful fondue cooking styles and a variety of unique entrées served with signature dipping sauces. The menu features a variety of à la carte selections, highlighting customizable options that invite guests to enjoy one, two, three or more courses as they select any combination of individually-priced cheese fondues, salads, entrées and chocolate fondues.

To learn more about franchise opportunities and available territories, The Melting Pot is hosting a live webinar on Thursday, Feb. 12 at 11 a.m. (EDT). To register, please visit <https://fb.meetings.com/guest/?id=1654-269072> or contact Shak Turner, director of franchise development for The Melting Pot, at 800-783-0867 ext. 105 or sturner@meltingpot.com.

The Melting Pot is seeking entrepreneurs with business backgrounds and/or preferably restaurant experience who are passionate about the brand and want to be their own bosses. Franchisee candidates should have a credit score of 650 or higher, a minimum net worth of \$750,000 and liquid assets of at least \$325,000 per unit. Depending on the real estate site selected, franchisees can expect the total investment for one restaurant to be approximately \$977,000 to \$1,436,000. Single-unit and multi-unit franchise opportunities are available with an initial franchise fee of \$45,000 per unit.

To learn more about ownership opportunities with The Melting Pot, contact Shak Turner, director of franchise development for The Melting Pot, at 800-783-0867 ext. 105 or sturner@meltingpot.com or visit www.meltingpotfranchise.com.

To learn about fondue history and facts, check out The Melting Pot's fondue infographic.