



## Press Release

For Immediate Release

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### **Incoming Burger Edge Franchisor reflects on first 12 months of rebuilding plan.**

**Melbourne, Australia.** Burger Edge Franchisors Issam and Enza Soubjaki reflected on some of the watershed achievements over the last 12 months of owning and running a flourishing gourmet burger franchise.

'Firstly, 12 months sounds like a long time in business, but in terms of rebuilding our brand, it's flown past. Time almost seems irrelevant when we've been focussed on putting the company on a path of sustainable growth, whilst coming out of a GFC' said Enza Soubjaki, owner and franchisor.

In July 2009, and after a third attempt at buying the company from the founders, the couple finally succeeded in taking over as franchisors. After serving as Victorian Master Franchisees for almost 5 years, the couple started their rise to the top post from the humble beginning as the first franchisees of the first store. Later acquiring the first Master franchise and then becoming the first multi store franchisees in the fledgling network.

'Working *in* a business gives you a great insight into how to work *on* it. We spent a lot of time learning and improving the systems, marketing, operations, ... etc from the ground up, and were well aware of the franchisee issues when we became franchisors' Said Issam Soubjaki, whom reflected that 'no franchisor is worth their salt unless they had done their time on the front line'.

'I had always made notes on the business, and what I would do if I took over the network' he stated. Those notes proved invaluable when opportunity knocked almost 5 years later.

In July 2009, the couple had successfully secured financing and the support of key advisors to make their third bid for the company. Their persistence paid off. Within weeks of taking over the company, franchise leads were revived and key flagship sites suddenly became available.

'We literally hit the ground running from day one. Negotiations to buy the company were exhausting, but within days, we were back in the thick of things rebuilding confidence in the brand, and setting the company on a new course' added Enza as she spoke of meeting every franchisee individually, and explaining their immediate plans for the brand and network.

'It was important we regained the confidence of the franchisees. They were and remain our number 1 priority' She added.

It was felt they had been neglected and the brand was becoming meaningless and lacked impact. A plan to reinvigorating a passion for the brand was launched and it had to begin with the franchisees.

The franchisees were 100% behind their move, and all were excited about the refocus of the leadership. 'I guess all franchisees want to be proud of their franchisors work. One franchisee was so chuffed when someone at a dinner party spoke glowingly of the brand before he informed him he in fact was a Burger Edge franchisee'. She continued. 'He rang me on a Sunday morning and said *You must be doing something right, I was proud to feel part of something new and exciting*. After hearing that, I smiled for the rest of the day' she chuckled.

Once the franchisees were re-energized, the Soubjaki's set about re-designing the stores for maximum customer impact, profitability and aesthetic appeal to the premium landlords. A hit list of key sites and locations was drafted and new leasing agents recruited to secure A1 tenancies around the country.

Within 12 months, 6 new sites were secured and opened. Glen Waverley, Australia on Collins, Chadstone Shopping Centre, Williamstown, King Street Melbourne and ENEX 100 Perth CBD. All franchised.

'Franchising is the easiest business to grow yourself broke in. There are countless franchises that start off great and quickly run out of ideas, money and momentum. Growth must be planned, measured and financed. If your systems are not ready for it, you quickly realise you're working with a house of straw or possibly sticks. And when a storms hit, only bricks stay standing' analogised Issam Soubjaki.

Instrumental in the rebirth of the business was a total re-branding. The Soubjaki's engaged Visual Unity for the brief to give the brand a distinct character via the in-store design and marketing collateral.

"We wanted a part of us in the new livery. It needed to be different, cheeky and it had to pop' said Issam whom acts as the company's marketing lead. 'I am glad we invested the time and effort in the early days into coming up with a look and feel something that I believe is distinct and works across our robust retail model of food courts, dine-in restaurants, and High Street sites' he added.

Infrastructure changes were also made including changing law firms, accountants, builders, recruiters and some suppliers to reflect the new direction and focus.

'We wanted professionals we could work with. It wasn't a questions of who was the cheapest, most prestigious or had the longest history with us. It was a new day and it was the right time to bring in the new guard' said Enza Soubjaki.

Packaging was redesigned to reflect the new branding, new manuals were prepared and a new website was launched keeping with the new theme. The Burger Edge loyalty program was tweaked slightly and now boasts more than 7,000 registered members.

9 months into the rebuilding plan, and the franchisors were happy with the progress, but needed to maintain expansion outside Victoria.

'It's one thing to grow locally, and another thing to start again in a new state' said Enza Soubjaki in reference to how the brand was to approach long term sustainable growth without straining local resources.

In keeping with the Soubjaki's hands-on management style, they went about assessing an offer to Master Franchise Western Australia as a *meeting of the minds*. Master Franchising hadn't been a priority until a chance meeting with a prospective franchisee that quickly escalated talks to a much higher level.

'In franchising, appointing a Master Franchisee is as close to taking on a partner as it gets. In our case, a Master had to score a resounding tick in every box before they would be considered. In this case, we scored a hole in one with Western Australia" recalls Issam.

Opening 6 new franchised stores on top of the 10 existing ones, rewriting the manuals, rebranding and restructuring the business for sustainability, is merely step one of a plan to take the Melbourne born burger franchise to the world. Burger Edge is fast gaining a strong and loyal following, and can only go on to bigger and better things from here. What this space!.

## **About Burger Edge.**

Burger Edge is a one of Australia's leading gourmet burger franchises with stores in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. With a focus on premium ingredients, Burger Edge has redefined the burger into a extraordinary, gourmet and healthy meal. Burger Edge is 100% franchised with locations in food courts, shopping centres,. High Streets and regional centres. For more information visit [www.burgeredge.com](http://www.burgeredge.com).

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