

# Mazzio's Italian Eatery Hires Fransmart to Ramp Up Expansion and Reach 1,000 units

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Along with a new CEO, Tulsa-based Mazzio's Corporation has signed a franchise partnership with Fransmart, the franchise development company behind the explosive growth of brands such as QDOBA, Five Guys Burgers & Fries and Zpizza. Fransmart will help develop Mazzio's Italian Eatery across the United States and in certain international markets Fransmart has been expanding in with its portfolio brands.

Mazzio's also brought on industry veteran, Gregory R. Lippert, to lead the chain as President/CEO in 2005. Greg has been in the foodservice industry for 25 years. He began his career with Procter and Gamble Company including being appointed Brand Manager of a 1.6 billion dollar brand with the Seven-Up Company. He has had executive leadership roles with Fazoli's, Inc. from 2003 to 2005 where he served as CMO and CCO and at Mazzio's Corporation where he directed the efforts behind Mazzio's Italian Eatery and Zio's Italian Kitchen brands from 1984 to 2003. Greg has also served on various industry boards and has been a featured speaker at MUFSSO and COEX conferences.

The fast casual Mazzio's concept features award winning pizzas, made-to-order pastas, sandwiches, and fresh specialty salads and appetizers. Founded in 1979, the Mazzio's concept has 170 units in eight states.

"Mazzio's has been around for 30 years, has over 170 locations, successful franchisees, and the timing has never been better to be a tenant looking for locations so we were happy to be able to add Mazzios to our portfolio," said Fransmart CEO Dan Rowe. "The concept is universally appealing and their franchise program is exceptionally well structured to support new unit growth. Mazzio's Corporation is a seasoned franchisor – they not only franchise restaurants, they are also excellent operators. Fransmart is excited to expand this great concept worldwide."

President and CEO of Mazzio's, Greg Lippert, stated that this new partnership will allow both brands to grow and provide new opportunities for employees and new franchise partners.

"We know that pizza and Italian food is extremely popular with consumers based on the value it offers young adults, families and empty nesters. There is so much demand for what Mazzio's and Oliveto represent and we want to extend the brand to new markets. Fransmart was drawn to Mazzio's Corporation based on our history as successful restaurant operators and the experience found in our Tulsa Support Office," said Lippert.

Mazzio's Italian Eatery was recognized in Technomic's 2008 annual list of the Top 45 Pizza Chains by Average Store Sales, and was also ranked 23rd on Pizza Marketing Quarterly Magazine's Top 200 Pizza Chains in the United States, ranked by units. Additionally, Mazzio's was recently ranked in Chain Leader Magazine's annual "Best Places to Work" report due to the concepts' low General Manager turnover rate (16%) and depth of employee benefits. Mazzio's Pizza has consistently won "Best Pizza" awards in their primary markets for many years and has a very loyal customer base and retains an industry leading Customer Loyalty Index for Overall Satisfaction from SMG.

## **About Mazzio's Corporation:**

Mazzio's Corporation is a privately held Tulsa restaurant company founded by Chairman Ken Selby that owns, operates and franchises Mazzio's Italian Eatery and Oliveto Italian Bistro restaurant brands in the United States.

