

## 58. Spicy Pickle Franchising Inc.

Denver / No. of units: 34

After months of net losses amid the economic downturn, things are now looking up at Spicy Pickle Franchising Inc. The leadership of Mark Laramie, who took over as chief executive last April, has buoyed the Italian-themed sandwich chain, which is now in turnaround mode. According to Laramie, the franchisor of Spicy Pickle and 11-unit Canadian entity Bread Garden Urban Caf, has secured funding through 2012, reduced costs by consolidating its supply chain operations, increased store-level profitability and launched a new advertising campaign for Spicy Pickle and is reimagining its Bread Garden Urban Caf locations in Canada. The company also has embarked on new menu development at both chains and shored up new franchisee recruitment efforts and is preparing for accelerated expansion.

## 59. Penn Station East Coast Subs

Cincinnati, Ohio / No. of units: 220+

2010 was a big year for Penn Station, which celebrated 25 years in business and added about 10 new locations. The company's newest location opened in August in metro Chicago and features a newly designed front counter and grill that faces the customers. The company also earned several awards, including City Beat's "Best in Cincinnati" award in three food categories: Best Cheesesteak, Best French Fries and Best Sub Sandwiches. In

November, Jeff Osterfeld, who launched Penn Station in 1985, reported that same-store sales had increased month-over-month since January and that the company's projected revenue for 2010 was \$119 million, up from \$114 million in 2009.

## 60. OinkADoodleMoo

Dayton, Ohio / No. of units: 3

Imagine driving in your car, making animal noises to entertain your young son, and all of a sudden the words "OinkADoodleMoo" come out of your mouth. That's exactly what happened in 2006 to Mark Peebles, founder and president of the barbecue brand and former professional barbecue pit master. Peebles calls the concept "fabulicious," because it is "so fabulous and delicious." With one franchised unit already open for business, plans in 2011 call for the rollout of one franchised store per month and an ultimate goal of 1,000 restaurants in operation over the next few years. "We always say we're going to be the most sought-after barbecue brand in fast casual," Peebles said. "That's what we're going for."

## 61. Cheeseburger Bobby's

Kennesaw, Ga. / No. of units: 5

Cheeseburger Bobby's, the better-burger concept founded in 2007 by brothers Richard and Bob Stoll, is determined to offer its customers food items made with top-quality ingredients. The Kennesaw, Ga.-based chain, which was founded by the people behind the Stevi B pizza buffet concept, specializes in gourmet hamburgers, hot dogs, fries and frozen custard. It has five stores in operation and plans to open two new restaurants in Acworth and Dawsonville, Ga.

## 62. Obik Mozzarella Bar

New York City / No. of units: 3 in U.S. (15 international)

With two locations launched in Los Angeles in 2010, Obik Mozzarella Bar is building on its international reputation and the success of its debut U.S. eatery, unveiled in New York City in 2008. Along with Mozzarella di Bufala Campana DOP (Protected Designation of Origin), a distinctive cheese

made under strict European regulations in a limited area of Campania, Italy, the menu features cured meats, fresh fish and marinated vegetables, prepared with minimal cooking. Silvio Ursini, an executive at Bulgari, opened the first Obikà in Rome in 2004. The company's U.S. locations are being developed by Innovative Hospitality Concepts of New York City (eastern region) and B Ventures USA LLC of Santa Monica, Calif.



## 63. Boston Market

Golden, Colo. / No. of units: 490+

Boston Market was on a roll last year. With new CEO George Michel on board and a nationwide upgrade almost complete, Boston Market looked to herald in 2011 with a bang. In addition to its brand overhaul, the company invested in additional hospitality training for staff. Big changes also took place at locations in Hartford, Conn.; Washington, D.C.; Dallas; Phoenix; and Chicago, which replaced disposable plates and utensils with real plates and stainless flatware for dine-in orders; unveiled an expanded menu with new entrées and side dishes; and upgraded serving stations to include a Chef's Hot Case and carving stations. The company reports that the nationwide upgrades have contributed to positive guest feedback and a double-digit increase in guest counts and sales.

