



Pesto Café/Ginza Project



IL Patio/Rosinter

# Russia: The March of QSR

After a few years of slow-down, the Russian market is now demonstrating promising growth. Within the last 12 months, the top 25 foodservice operators have shown growth per unit of 20%, a result comparable to the most successful years in the mid-2000s. The major growth comes from QSR. The number of operations belonging to the top 15 brands went up by 8% in Moscow and by 28% in St. Petersburg; moreover, the latter beats the capital when it comes to the number of central locations still available for rent.

According to official figures, foodservice turnover in Russia amounted to RUB903 bn (=€22.03 bn) in 2011, showing a 15.6% growth in nominal prices as against 2010. Real prices, however, give us only 6.2% growth.

QSR has turned into the main newsmaker and powerhouse of the industry, overtaking the casual-dining sector that used to be very strong before the recession of 2008-2009. The international brands, among them Subway, Burger King, Cinnabon, Baskin-Robbins and Starbucks continue to expand throughout the country.

The two bargains of the year come from the two main competitors in the QSR sector. After 22 years of successful corporate growth in Russia (323 units), McDonald's has signed its first franchising agreement. The fortunate beneficiary is Rosinter Restaurants, the country's leading casual-dining operator (more than 400 restaurants in Russia, CIS and Eastern Europe). They are now licensed to develop the brand at the major transport hubs. In recent years, Rosinter have established themselves as travel-location specialists, operating a number of concepts (including tailor-made ones like Mama Russia) at Russian airports. They are also preparing extensive developments at the railway stations. If this first experience of franchising proves positive, McDonald's might consider taking on partners for other kinds of location, too, e.g. petrol stations or the Siberian regions. Still, corporate development remains the top priority for further McDonald's expansion.



■ ■ ■ Top 5 Growth\* Stars ■ ■ ■

R	(R)**	Group	absolute
1	(2)	Subway	179
2	(7)	Planet of Hospitality	100
3	(1)	Marcon	86
4	(4)	Shokoladnica	73
5	(16)	Nevedomsky	51

  

R	(R)**	Group	relative
1	(20)	Cinnabon	94.4%
2	(16)	Nevedomsky	81.0%
3	(2)	Subway	78.2%
4	(7)	Planet of Hospitality	55.2%
5	(22)	Malachite	39.1%

\*Number of unit dynamics July 2012 vs. July 2011 within Top-25, \*\*R in Top-25  
Source: Food Service. Russia/www.cafe-future.ru







proves that the Russian quick-service sector now looks attractive for serious investors.

International QSR brands continue their expansion throughout the country. Starbucks (56 units) are celebrating five years in Russia by entering St. Petersburg this autumn. The brand has a strong financial background thanks to its licensee, the Alshaya Group, the leading Middle East retailer. Subway, Baskin-Robbins and Cinnabon (the US chain that focuses on cinnamon rolls) have another growth model. The brands attract a large number of small franchisees – winning further franchising offers because of the small initial investment required. The model has proved so effective that growth-champion, Cinnabon, has doubled its presence in Russia within the last year.

It was, however, Planet of Hospitality, Sbarro's master franchisee in Russia and Eastern Europe, that got the biggest bargain in the casual-dining sector. At the beginning of 2012, the group bought two casual-dining chains, Elki-Palki and Malenkaya Yaponia, from Alfa Capital Partners who, in turn, had purchased them from the Novikov Group in 2009. This acquisition has enabled the group to grow by 100 units a year. The impressive growth of Dmitry Nevedomsky's business in St. Petersburg can also be attributed to an acquisition. The entrepreneur has bought Rubli street-food chain (48 units) and transformed them into outlets for the Emelya Blini concept, which sells pancakes with a variety of fillings, thus repeating the successful street-food model formerly implemented by Teremok.

The acquisition of Elki-Palki, which is said to have been bought for a very attractive price, raises the issue of a prob-

able makeover for the concept in the near future. The casual-dining chain, serving traditional Russian food, was launched in 1996 and was very popular ten years ago, but now looks a bit dated. In fact, it's a problem facing many of the large casual chains, who were the winners in the 2000s, but have, in recent years, been feeling the draught of declining sales. It is becoming more and more difficult for them to compete with the emerging younger chains and independent casual-dining concepts – not to mention the more up-market casual concepts – which offer fresh, contemporary design and interesting menus.

The strategy is exemplified by Ginza Project, the fastest growing operator in the fullservice sector. During the past year, the group sold its share in the casual Yaposha chain (founded in 2003), but then opened more than 15 individual casual and fine-dining concepts in Moscow and St. Petersburg, launched two new casual chains Oki Doki and Pesto Café and bought franchises for Jamie's Italian and the famous French bakery brand, Paul. Whilst the new concepts are winning their customers' affections, the older-style casual chains now require investment in upgrading and renovation so as not to lose their positions in tomorrow's market. This is something the market leaders understand very well. The new CEO at Rosinter, Kevin Todd, has recently announced the group's new strategy, involving a makeover for the core brands IL Patio and Planet Sushi. Both concepts will get a new menu and infrastructure upgrade in the short term, as well as medium-term repositioning.

The last, but far from least, interesting trend is a growing expansion of Russian

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- Further growth of the QSR sector coming from both international brands and local players
- St. Petersburg market is the fastest growing, Moscow feels the lack of good vacant locations
- Franchising and sub-franchising remain the main growth source for most brands
- Big casual-dining chains, leaders in the 2000s, feel the need for revitalization and upgrading
- Burgers and noodles are top-sellers and a key source of inspiration for concept development
- Farm produce emerges as an upcoming trend often featuring in restaurant promotions
- Operators exploring new business niches, e.g. foodservice at railway stations, in parks, at petrol stations, vending machines, etc.
- Russian restaurant entrepreneurs exploring the world

restaurant groups into Western countries. For example, RPSCom (23 casual restaurants in Russia) now operates three Goodman steak houses in London and one in Zurich. Recently, the group's co-owner, Mikhail Zelman, launched his new 'Burger and Lobster' concept in London. And in November 2011, Moscow fine-dining guru, Arkady Novikov, opened an up-market fine-dining Novikov in London. Another fine-dining expert, Andrey Dello, has opened the Café Pouchkine confectionery in Paris and Brasserie Pushkin in New York. The Big Apple will be the next destination for Taras Bulba, too, a Moscow casual chain serving Ukrainian cuisine. Ginza Project has added the fourth MariVanna, this time in London, to the three restaurants in Moscow, St. Petersburg and New York. Food-service concepts, it seems, are turning into an important Russian export!

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