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Chachi's co-owners Derek Brock and Jason Cunningham hold up a sandwich featuring barbecued pulled pork topped with mac and cheese at their TD Square restaurant.

# Business started with a juicy idea



**DAVID PARKER**  
AROUND TOWN

**Derek Brock and Jason Cunningham** say they got their business degree during the four years they worked for Starbucks in Vancouver.

The company then was in its early days with only 180 stores. Today, that number tops 20,000 stores worldwide.

Brock says it wasn't easy selling a \$5 latte in those days and when returning to Calgary to visit family, no one here had even heard of the company.

Not everyone drank coffee and some customers were asking for something different.

Brock says that's when he and Cunningham began to look for an alternative to the typical fast foods. They discovered new drinks that blended fresh fruits and were catching on with the shift into health and wellness beverages.

The two friends came home to Calgary, put their heads together, wrote a business plan that encouraged investors and opened their first Jugo Juice location in Eau Claire in 1998.

Thirteen years later they had grown the company to 138 franchise operations from coast-to-coast.

Their success came to the attention of **Stanley**

**Ma**, president and CEO of Quebec-based MTY Food Group, one of our foremost quick service companies, which operates 26 banners, including Mr. Sub, Taco Time, Panini and Extreme Pita.

After long negotiations, Ma bought Jugo Juice and Brock and Cunningham decided to focus all of their attention on Chachi's Sandwich Bar, a second company they had launched with one location in TD Square in 2007.

They have already opened eight franchised stores, all within Calgary. They intend to concentrate on growing the business in their own backyard where they feel there is tremendous potential for the type of food and service they are offering.

And local is the name of the game when it comes to food, using suppliers such as Benny's Bakery that delivers fresh every morning, Alberta Cheese Company and Valbella Gourmet Foods in Canmore for specialty meats.

Chachi's head office is on the second floor of the Fairey Terrace building along 3rd Street S.E. in Victoria Park. The interior design fits well within the historic building with furniture made of reclaimed palettes, old cinema seats, vintage mirrors and school chairs.

It is the work of Thom Design, the company that is responsible for the well ap-

plauded interiors in Cucina Market Bistro in Eighth Avenue Place. The same team has created a vintage theme for new Chachi's and all of its current locations when they are remodelled.

Vintage reclaimed will be the theme using discarded box palettes, funky furniture, sackcloth fabrics and creative packaging of butcher's paper.

The decor will be old, but the food offerings as fresh as the produce.

The popular 'Build your own sandwich' is a mainstay of course, but Brock is adding new and unique items such as Banh Mi made with beef brisket, Asian marinade, pickled carrots, jalapeno, garlic aioli and spicy mayo, made — like all of its offerings — from scratch.

Many franchise operations demand a percentage for advertising but Cunningham says they charge nothing; marketing dollars go into better food which attracts new customers by the word of mouth.