

## Chachi's local spreads are made from scratch

**David Parker**

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Derek Brock and Jason Cunningham have become leaders in the food court business after many years of ups and downs catering to people with an appetite for good food in a hurry.

They both moved to Vancouver and worked for the Starbuck's brand before moving into management in Kelowna and then returning to Calgary.

True entrepreneurs, they decided to launch their own outlets and settled on healthy drinks, which became Jugo Juice. The first corporate store in Eau Claire Market started back in 1998.

Hard work, long hours, risktaking and creativity saw the company grow to 21 corporate locations and then from 22 to 138 as franchise operations opened from Victoria to Halifax.

MTY Food Group acquired the assets of Jugo Juice in 2011. By that time, Brock and Cunningham had launched another brand, called Chachi's, that opened its first location in the TD Square complex in 2007.

Selling sandwiches is a very competitive business considering the number of chains that sell them through lots of advertising, multiple locations and at cheap prices. But ask a landlord what Chachi's means to them and they would likely mention the no limit on quality and ingredients with recipes and flavours that are "kitchen class."

Today there are eight successful franchised Chachi's stores in Calgary and two corporate locations are about to open.

The first of those - opening Thursday in Southcentre - sets a new direction for Chachi's with a change away from tile and laminate to the rawness of reclaimed wood. Jennifer Brock of Thom Design is responsible for the new look.

Her company also designed all of the eight present stores, all of the Jugo Juice outlets and many other food related businesses such as Booker's Crab Shack and Cucina Bistro.



CREDIT: Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald  
Chachi's Southcentre team, from left,  
Wray Cunningham, Jason Cunningham,  
Derek Brock, Ronnie Olstad.

Chachi's has always been known for its premium quality and freshness, but the new internationally inspired menu at Southcentre adds so much more to its range of healthy foods.

The glass-enclosed meat locker showing premium products gives a good indication of the new measures.

Then check out the Pork Chinichurri, Banh Mi with made-inhouse Asian marinade and the tender pulled pork topped with Mac 'n Cheese.

All of the spreads in the store are made from scratch and there is a real awareness of the benefits of buying local; double-smoked bacon and sausage from Rocky's Sausage Haus in Bridgeland and the already popular Rice Krispie Sandwich from Nola's. Arugula adds a crispy gluten-free item.

The Chachi's in the new wing of Chinook Centre has become the flagship Chachi's but by the end of June another store is set to open in Market Mall, which no doubt will also be a big winner.

To help handle all of the new growth, Brock and Cunningham have hired Ronnie Olstead as vice-president responsible for Chachi's, giving them the time for their next venture - a brand new concept called Dirtbelly.

They say it will reinvent the vegetable in some amazing sauces. Later this year, customers will be able to buy by the scoop from multiple flavours in an array of storefront baskets. Healthy, hip and playful.

David Parker appears Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Read his columns online at [CalgaryHerald.com/Business](http://CalgaryHerald.com/Business). He can be reached at 403-830-4622 or e-mail [info@DavidParker.ca](mailto:info@DavidParker.ca)

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