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In an interview with Hodema for HN, Marius Burger, GM of S'wich Dubai, tells us more about the concept's success and upcoming plans.

1. Could you tell us more about S'wich?

S'wich is a UAE homegrown concept spearheaded by Fadel Belmahdi, Bader Kalooti, world-renowned Chef Izu Ani, and myself. We opened in May 2015 and haven't looked back since. The brand has grown in popularity over the years and gained a large and loyal customer base. We have invested a lot of time into shaping the brand as a solid 'franchisable' concept, and we have recently franchised our UAE operations.

2. What is the inspiration behind the brand's name?

Initially, S'wich was designed to be a customizable shawarma concept prior to venturing into wraps, salads and bowls. We wanted to convey the idea of a playful brand that could be pronounced easily and also reflect our product, the shawarma sandwich, hence the abbreviation 'S'wich'.

3. What are the main attributes that differentiate S'wich from similar concepts?

We are providing truly gourmet-quality food from 18 in-house freshly made sauces. Duck confit, braised beef and marinated chicken are just a few of our specialties. We control the entire process. Everything is prepared inside our kitchens, including our freshly made breads. We use premium products, such as French duck legs, New Zealand beef brisket and local fresh chicken. All our meats are free of antibiotics and have no added hormones. Our breads are made from stone milled organic Italian flour. We use organic chickpeas, quinoa, French lentils and local organic vegetables when possible. We truly provide an upscale, superior and healthy product at a very affordable price. In our 'Build Your Own Sandwich' section, customers can pick from five proteins, white or whole wheat saj bread, a wide variety of toppings and sauces to create their own gourmet S'wich. We also offer an extensive 'Build your Own Salad' section consisting of bases such as cauliflower rice, organic wild rice mix and quinoa as well as original toppings like oven-baked Cajun sweet potato, crispy chickpeas and beet hummus. Last but not least, we have our own selection of side dishes from our gourmet fries to hearty salads.

4. In your opinion, how is the F&B industry evolving in Dubai? What impact will COVID-19 have?

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The market has changed dramatically over the last two years; for instance, third-party delivery services are increasingly popular, with cloud kitchens becoming an interesting investment option for startups and established businesses alike. They require minimal initial investment and benefit from fairly low overheads. With many dine-in outlets closing and overall footfall falling since

April, which will probably continue for another four months, it is likely that deliveries will become even more popular. We believe the COVID-19 impact will be dire and could change the dine-in scene for a long time to come.

5. How important is the role of social media for the F&B industry?

With cloud kitchens gaining popularity, it has become crucial to be visible on social media. It is one of the strongest tools to get your restaurant out there and be noticed. Social media is more important than ever and will definitely grow further.

6. What are your plans for S'wich?

We are working actively to increase our franchise portfolio. We would like to see S'wich in every city around the world.



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