

## NEW LOOK MAXI'S LA LUCIA WINS NEW CUSTOMERS

**Durban, 3 March 2009:-** As the economic downturn continues to reduce disposable income, South African consumers are becoming increasingly discerning, guarding their spending and demanding better value for money. The result is a competitive business environment for every industry, in which complacency equals failure and the race to attract consumers is on.

The restaurant industry is particularly sensitive to the requirements of the new breed of consumer, and is responding with drives to update their service offering from the range of dishes offered on the menu to the uniforms worn by staff.

With innovation in mind, a new-look Maxi's La Lucia has just opened its doors, greeting customers with décor and design that invites both relaxation and energised conversation, while guests enjoy the delicious meals that have made the Maxi's brand a South African favourite.

The first store in the Durban region to be launched in the new Maxi's store image, Maxi's La Lucia boasts newly painted walls in mushroom with accents of pumpkin. Complementing these warm shades are furnishings finished in cherry wood and chrome, creating a look that is both upmarket and modern. Bucket chairs imported from Malaysia and bench-style seating in matching tones complete the design.

The atmosphere created by the open kitchen was important to retain when revamping the image of the Maxi's chain, and so the kitchen did not escape the make-over process. Now, customers can experience the sizzle of burgers and the activity of the chefs preparing their meals in a kitchen walled with brushed stainless steel, inset with blue glass tiles – a look that is hygienically sound while being aesthetically pleasing.

A guiding principle behind the modernisation of Maxi's store image was the desire to create a quick service restaurant chain that looked like no other in the country. As such, the counter design differs from that in an ordinary sit-down restaurant, becoming a stylish, stand-alone feature. The bulkheads too have been considered an individual part of the overall design, and are decorated with large, enticing food images that invite passing customers to enter. Even the artwork on the walls has been carefully selected to embrace and enhance the welcoming, inviting ambience that is evident as soon as one steps through the door. The artwork reflects the diverse cultures of the South African public, all of whom are Maxi's customers.

Maxi's La Lucia franchise owners Nick Zafiroopoulos and George Manganas agree that the revamp process has had an impressive impact on business. "We have observed a marked increase in the

number of first-time guests since we re-opened," they comment. "Each of them has been attracted by the modern, clean look of the new store."

Maxi's Head Office is in the midst of co-ordinating a renovation plan that extends to stores country-wide, due to be completed in 2011. Over 50% of the network already enjoys the new Maxi's look and feel, placing the plan well ahead of schedule.

"The new store design and branding reflects the maturity of our brand, service offering and food quality, which has been enjoyed by South African families for almost 16 years," says Christo Calitz, Managing Director of Maxi's. "As we extend our footprint across the country, we look forward to opening more outlets in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region."

Stores in the Maxi's chain are reporting a growth in foot fall of up to 70%. That fact, considered with feedback regarding the new store design, indicates that Maxi's is well on their way to winning that race for customers.

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