CHEF RICHARD BLAIS TO LEAD TASTY MADE BURGER CONCEPT FOR CHIPOTLE

Blais to Enhance Fast-Casual Burger Concept with New, High-Quality Menu Items

DENVER--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep. 26, 2017-- Chipotle Mexican Grill (NYSE: CMG) has entered into a partnership with chef, restaurateur and James Beard-nominated cookbook author, Richard Blais, for its Tasty Made burger restaurant. Blais, whose other ventures include the highly acclaimed Juniper & Ivy and popular new chicken concept, Crack Shack, will bring his fine dining knowledge and considerable experience in the fast-casual space to the upstart Tasty Made concept, which opened its first location in October 2016.

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Blais and the Chipotle brand have had a long relationship in the industry and community. The partnership will further highlight the like-mindedness of Blais and Chipotle's vision to make great-tasting food, prepared with whole, unprocessed ingredients, available to everyone.

"Richard is an extraordinary chef and an exceptionally capable restaurateur," saidSteve Ells, founder, chairman and CEO of Chipotle. "While talking about the possibility of joining forces to do something that would have a positive, meaningful impact on food culture in America, we quickly landed on the notion of his joining Tasty Made. I have long believed that there was an opportunity to make the fast food burger a great burger using better quality ingredients. Richard's expertise is perfect to help us do that. He can apply his compelling vision and entrepreneurial spirit to our work in progress and oversee operations, allowing me to remain focused on continuing to grow and strengthen the Chipotle brand."

Blais plans to revisit the restaurant with a fresh eye, working to perfect the existing menu and expanding options. Currently, Tasty Made features four items: burgers, fries, shakes and sodas. Grilled-to-order burgers are made from fresh, not frozen, beef, and fries are hand cut in the restaurant and twice fried to a perfect, golden crispiness. Tasty Made's basic vanilla shake includes only five ingredients: milk, cream, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Other hand-mixed flavors include chocolate, strawberry and buckeye, an Ohio favorite created for Tasty Made's first location.

"Steve and Chipotle have had such a significant impact on reinventing fast food," said Blais. "There is no more iconic fast food than burgers, and I have always thought that there is a way to do them on a really big scale without compromising the quality of the food or the overall restaurant experience. Joining forces with Chipotle and Tasty Made is a truly unique opportunity to do that."

Blais may be most recognizable as the winner of Bravo television's "Top Chef All-Stars," but for years prior, and since, he has successfully owned and operated Trail Blais, a culinary consulting business, along with writing multiple cookbooks, and hosting several popular television shows. Like Ells, he is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America who went on to cook at such renowned restaurants as The French Laundry, Daniel, Chez Panisse, and el Bulli.

Tasty Made will unveil changes or enhancements to the concept stemming from the relationship with Blais as they are made.

About Tasty Made

Tasty Made, created by Chipotle Mexican Grill, serves a focused menu featuring burgers, fries, shakes and sodas. Like Chipotle, Tasty Made uses simple, fresh ingredients, with burgers, fresh cut French fries, shakes, and buns with no artificial ingredients. The first Tasty Made opened in Lancaster, Ohio, in October 2016. For more information, visit TastyMade.com.

About Chipotle

Steve Ells, Founder, Chairman and CEO, started Chipotle with the idea that food served fast did not have to be a typical fast food experience. Today, Chipotle continues to offer a focused menu of burritos, tacos, burrito bowls, and salads made from fresh, high-quality raw ingredients, prepared using classic cooking methods and served in an interactive style allowing people to get exactly what they want. Chipotle seeks out extraordinary ingredients that are not only fresh, but that are raised responsibly, with respect for the animals, land, and people who produce them. Chipotle prepares its food using real, whole ingredients, and is the only national restaurant brand that prepares its food using no added colors, flavors or other industrial additives typically found in fast food. Chipotle opened with a single restaurant in Denver in 1993 and now operates more than 2,300 restaurants. For more information, visit Chipotle.com.

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