

Restaurant News

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Self-serve frozen yogurt comes into Canada

ENCINO, CA—A U.S.-based frozen yogurt chain where customers serve themselves and pay by the weight is poised to open in Canada, after signing its first franchise agreement.

Menchie's, based in Encino, CA, has 40 units in 11 states, and plans to open 10 locations in Canada this year, and more than 100 in the next four years.

Last month the company signed a master franchise development agreement with Concord-based Yogurtworld Corporation, owned by brothers Michael and David Schneer.

Menchie's plans to open two restaurants in the Toronto area this year.

The first franchise has been sold to Irv and Sheryl Bielas for a unit to open in Vaughan in September. The Schneers are planning to open a corporate store as well.

The brothers have not been involved in the foodservice business before but they have owned two brands of weight loss franchises.

They had to shut down their franchises for

LA Weight Loss centres in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces in 2008 when the U.S.-based parent company went out of business.

An important selling point for Menchie's, according to a release, is that "the self-serve model puts the customer in control to spend as much or as little as they want. This makes this concept so appealing to families with little ones, as well as those wanting a sweet treat option that fits within budget."

It also attracts a lot of



Menchie's customers can choose their own toppings (top photo) to go on yogurt they have taken themselves from dispensers (bottom).

celebrities.

The chain offers more than 100 yogurt flavours and 60 toppings, rotated throughout the year.

The toppings include fresh fruit, granola, nuts, an assortment of candy and hot sauces.

Customers load up with as many varieties and as much of them as they want, with no limits on the toppings they choose. Then they pay by the ounce.

The chain was started by Adam and Danna Caldwell after they were married in 2007.

The name of the chain comes from a nickname Adam gave his wife-to-be when they were dating, in the mistaken belief that the word means a "blessing."

The company's website explains that it actually means a good or generous man, although the word it is referring to is probably more accurately the Yiddish "mensch."