

Entrepreneur®

JANUARY 2006

(ALMOST FAMOUS)

TOSSED>>

SALAD DAZE

UPPING THE ANTE OF THE TRADITIONAL SALAD BAR, THESE ENTREPRENEURS LET YOU CREATE YOUR HEALTHY LUNCH ONLINE.

VITAL STATS>> Adam Cohen, 35, Marc Meisel, 36, and Daren Herzberg, 36, (l. to r.) of Tossed

COMPANY>> New York City-based fast-casual, healthy-fare restaurant specializing in salads

2006 PROJECTED SALES>> \$3.6 million for three locations

FRESH CONCEPT>> In 1997, friends Meisel, Cohen and Herzberg were in their 20s, living off cheap Chinese food in New York City and focused on their individual careers: cooking, marketing and finance, respectively. Their paths were distinctly different, until Herzberg's wife came up with a business idea that united them all: a fast-casual restaurant specializing in fresh, sophisticated and healthy salads. Focusing their efforts, the trio opened their first location a year later to hungry customers willing to wait in 45-minute lines.

YOU'VE BEEN TOSSED>> At Tossed, every day is a flurry of activity, as 70 items, including plantain chips and cayenne-spiced shrimp, are thrown together to create salad masterpieces. Although greens are the focus, sandwiches, soups and even whole-wheat crepe wraps are equally healthy and popular options.

CYBER SALAD>> In 2000, the friends created the first-ever online salad bar, which allows customers to create salads with a few clicks of a mouse. The salads are then promptly delivered to their homes or offices. Now, about 30 percent to 50 percent of orders are made online.

"We're innovative with our food concept," says Meisel. "We want to be just as innovative with our ordering concept."

SEEING GREEN>> Tossed has grown to three locations and will expand to 25 to 30 this year alone, as franchising takes off. "We really wanted to make sure we had a good, solid foundation and many years of experience under our belts," says Meisel. "We can handle anything coming our way now." —SARA WILSON

