



Wednesday, May 20th, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GIANT IN RESTAURANT AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY CELEBRATES 60TH

One of South Africa's most prominent restaurateurs and CEO of Mugg & Bean Franchising, Ben Filmalter, recently celebrated his 60th birthday and simultaneously celebrated forty successful years in the hospitality industry. The celebrations were held at Mugg & Bean's head offices in Johannesburg and in attendance were employees, friends and family.

Mike Maree, Managing Director of Quantum International Franchising; the holding company of Mugg & Bean; congratulated and thanked Ben for being an inspirational leader and friend to many, saying that: "Ben is like a father to the industry and to everyone crossing his path." A list was compiled of all the people who have been touched by Ben through all these years. It started with the thousands of waiters, tens of thousands of kitchen staff whose families around the continent relied on Ben to help put bread on the table and the hundreds of franchisees and customers who have enjoyed Ben's hospitality.

Ben started in the business as an 18-year-old cook's apprentice; he has been involved in one capacity or another ever since, working his way up and out of the kitchen into management of various South African restaurants, hotels and country clubs. In 1979, Ben and his older brother John purchased an old moribund Johannesburg restaurant, Linger Longer. They reinvented the restaurant into what has become the most consistently celebrated destination restaurant in Johannesburg. Next year it celebrates its 50th anniversary, still the Grande Dame of Haute cuisine, Filmalter recently sold this operation to focus on the franchise business.

/more...

Continues...2/2

Filmalter, greatly influenced by his experiences travelling the United States, has introduced South Africa to Cajun food, South Western Tex-Mex, Diners, and California style wine bars. He has, in the last 28 years, conceptualized and developed some fifty restaurants in South Africa. He has become justifiably famous for his drive to encourage the local restaurant industry to expand its creative and competitive capacity, pushing suppliers to import or produce products that would make the industry competitive globally.

Never intimidated by failure, Filmalter has managed to correct some doubtful starters, redevelop dying concepts and rebuild complete failures. This resilience has served him well in a fickle industry. Since moving into the franchise industry, Filmalter has attacked it with the same intensity, he previously expended on his stand-alone restaurants. Mugg & Bean has been described by one South Africa's leading institutional retail developers as "the most sought after food service brand in their shopping malls."

Filmalter remains optimistic with exciting goals for his brand. "We are in the process of exploring opportunities to expand elsewhere in the world; we developed a world class brand and believe that now is the time to share it with the world."

In the years to come Filmalter will continue to positively influence people's lives, further develop his brand and leave his footprint as a world class African entrepreneur.

ends.

Enquiries:

Martie Smuts

Corporate Communication

Mugg & Bean Franchising

Tel: 011 380 7860

Cell: 072 409 6500

Email: chatterbean@themugg.com