

Scottsburg Ponderosa's Mike Everhart Recognized as U.S. Franchise Operator of the Year

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Homestyle Dining LLC, which operates and franchises the Ponderosa and Bonanza Steakhouse restaurant concepts, has announced the recipients of its annual franchise and brand support awards. The awards, which recognize excellence in operations on both the franchise and supplier level, were given at the company's 2013 Franchise Conference in Nashville in October.

"This year's winners represent what makes our brands so enduring and endearing with our loyal customers for the past five decades," said Tom Sacco, President & CEO, Homestyle Dining LLC. "Each of these brand leaders embrace and fully understand that quality and service are our calling cards, and that innovation added into that mix will propel our growth during the next 50 years. We applaud their success and are grateful for their support and leadership."

Scottsburg Franchisee Mike Everhart has been involved with Ponderosa Steakhouses for 20 years, growing from a cook to a General Manager and then purchasing his first location in Indiana in 1999. Today he owns three additional restaurants in Kentucky and Indiana. Everhart received the prestigious U.S. Franchise Operator of the Year award because of his exemplary operations, his enduring leadership and his involvement in the communities he serves. Everhart also serves as a Franchise Association Board Member and a member of the Operations Committee, and recently became an Area Developer in parts of Indiana.

This year, Bonanza Steakhouse celebrates 50 years as one of America's favorite, family-friendly restaurants. Sister-concept Ponderosa Steakhouse will celebrate its golden anniversary in 2015. Together the two iconic restaurant concepts include hundreds of units in the United States, as well as in Canada, Puerto Rico, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, and Taiwan. In early 2014, Ponderosa Steakhouse will expand into Egypt with the first opening in suburban Cairo.

Under the stewardship of Sacco, the two concepts are undergoing a brand refresh, a concept makeover and a culinary revitalization. Beginning in 2014, both Bonanza and Ponderosa will offer expanded menu offerings on the food bar, as well as across their entrée line-up. A completely new menu board meets the changing needs of guests, who crave longtime favorites and who also want to explore updated, relevant food offerings, appetizers and even some

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healthier options.

Restaurant interiors are being updated to include brighter and fresher graphics, vibrant informational signage, a refurbished redesigned food bar area with new eco-friendly plate ware, and new vibrant colored uniforms reflecting the two brands' focus on "Fresh, Quality, Flavors."

According to Sacco, Homestyle Dining will be ramping up franchising efforts in 2014 to expand the two iconic brands in the United States and internationally focusing first on filling in current markets and but also looking to both single-unit and multi-unit franchisees to open in new markets.