

Familiar Face Named Sizzler USA CEO

2008-06-04

Kerry Kramp helped grow Buffets, Inc. into an industry powerhouse, moves from Sizzler USA Advisory Board to top post

Thirty-year industry veteran Kerry Kramp joined Sizzler USA this week as president and chief executive officer as the casual dining chain continues marking its 50th anniversary. Kramp succeeds Ken Cole, who resigned in February after seven years as president and CEO.

Kramp's career has taken him from the kitchen to the executive suite at a wide array of restaurant and foodservice concepts, from start-ups to national brands.

"Having an industry superstar like Kerry Kramp lead our talented Sizzler USA team is extremely fortunate," said Kevin Perkins who served as acting president. "He is a highly skilled executive with a proven track record of success in a variety of restaurant-industry segments. He is a man of high integrity, and perhaps more importantly, he's a great food guy."

Kramp's appointment comes following the announcement that Sizzler's owners, Pacific Equity Partners, postponed the chain's sale. Kramp most recently franchised Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers restaurants in Minnesota. He also has served as CEO or president of a number of familiar brands, including Buffets, Inc., owner of Old Country Buffet and HomeTown Buffet, and Let's Dish!, Inc., a home meal preparation concept. While at Buffets, Inc. he grew the chain from two to over 400 locations. He co-founded Chicken by George, Inc. with former Miss America Phyllis George. The brand was purchased by the Geo. A. Hormel Company.

"I am excited to be a part of a concept that has survived and thrived for over 50 years, which is pretty unprecedented in these times," Kramp said. "Having served on the Sizzler USA Advisory Board, I have been very impressed with the employees who do such a great job serving the guests each day, the leadership team and the wonderful franchisees who play such an integral part in the brand's day-to-day execution and innovation."

Kramp has been a member of the Sizzler USA advisory board since 2006. "Kerry has been a key board member and has been instrumental in guiding our brand forward through great insights and understanding of the restaurant business," said Rob Koczkar, managing director of Pacific Equity Partners. "We are pleased he is joining the Sizzler USA management team."

As an advisory board member, Kramp has become well known to the chain's franchisees, including Murray Gast, who owns more than 10 Sizzler restaurants in the Northwest. "I have had the pleasure of sharing ideas with him and working with him on a comprehensive brand study," Gast said. "I look forward to having him as a leader and a trusted partner."

Kramp began his love affair with the food industry in 1977 as manager of a Steak and Ale in Columbus, Ohio. He holds a bachelor's degree in Restaurant Management from The Ohio State University (where he is recognized as a distinguished alumnus), and he attended the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. Along the way, he also worked for Chi-Chi's Inc., and he serves on advisory boards for Shari's Restaurants and McAlister's Deli.

Kerry and his wife Pam have relocated to Los Angeles.

Founded in suburban Los Angeles in January 1958, Sizzler is celebrating 50 years of serving great steaks, seafood and salad -- always at a great value. Sizzler owns or franchises more than 300 restaurants worldwide. Having updated its restaurants, menus and marketing, Sizzler is expanding in the U.S., Asia and Latin America.

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