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## Baby gambles

A new departure for two young mothers has started something of a restaurant revolution

Quality organic baby food may not sound like a big earner, but BabyDeli, a company selling just that, saw turnover for the first year of 37 per cent over the original forecast, which, at the planning stage, had been considered reasonably ambitious. Although the partners are reticent about details, they project that the business is on course to turn over £1.3million a year in five years' time, supplying about 600 outlets. Not bad for a business that began with a modest investment of just £1,000 each.

When Cheshire mum and former 'mobile communications salesperson' Louise Duerr was preparing healthy baby food for her daughter Tally, she got frustrated that she would not eat it. She would like to have been able to buy in quality food for her daughter instead of having to make it herself, but did not want to resort to processed convenience food. Her friend Anne Morris, a former tax accountant and a mother herself, felt the same way, so they put their heads together and came up with the idea of supplying quality organic baby food purées to busy parents who didn't have the time or the inclination to make it themselves.

They quickly took the concept further and started supplying equally busy restaurateurs, who wanted to be baby and toddler-friendly without giving over precious kitchen time to puréeing solids or heating up food that

Words  
Andrew Don

customers had brought in for their babies. So BabyDeli was born in April last year.

Morris took her baby Rose on sampling sessions, visiting restaurants and seeing how food was being served. As a result they developed a complete BabyDeli package of food and menus tailored to individual restaurants, cutlery, crockery, 'Messy packs' and advice and information.

BabyDeli dishes include Dylan's Scrumptious Scrumpy Chicken, Cheeky Tally's Pretty Pink Fish Pie and Rosy Posy Pasta. The selections

are divided into categories of 4+ months, 7+ months and 10+ months.

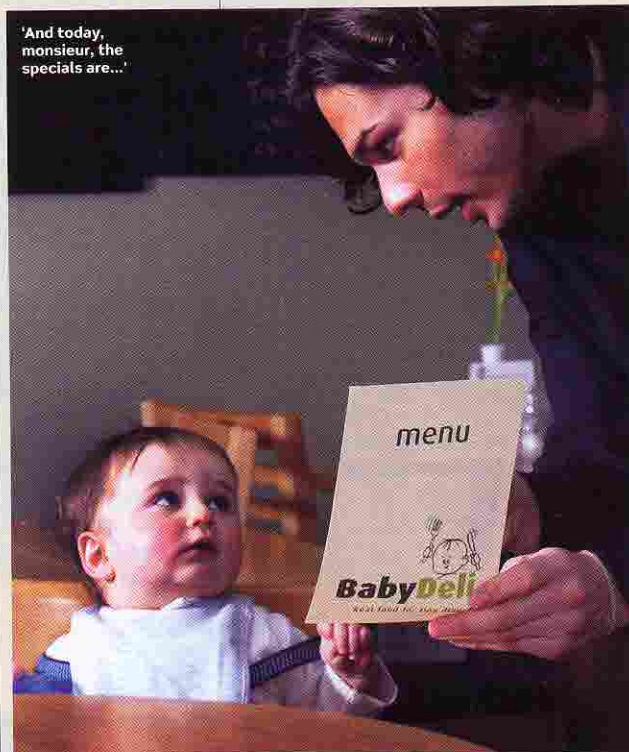
One of their first customers, the Daisy and Tom department store in Manchester, responded positively to the package, giving the pair the confidence to approach other caterers. Today, just 15 months after the mums set up BabyDeli, the business has grown to become the supplier of at least 60 UK restaurants, including Chester Zoo, Woburn Safari Park and several independents such as Café Delicious in Wilmslow, Cheshire, and OFM Best Restaurant for Kids winner Crumpet in south-west London.

Crumpet Owner Andrew Wilson-Smith says, "We really don't like the idea of our customers having to bring in baby food jars for their children. BabyDeli fills a gap in our menu and we make a margin on it, it's profitable for our business. It's frozen so there is a good shelf life on it. We probably sell about 50 products a week, which, in turnover, amounts to about £800-£1,000 a month."

Morris says, "To date, the first quarter of the current financial year shows sales ten times that of the same period last year and gross profit is nine times. In contrast with the rapid growth in sales in the first quarter, costs over the period have increased a modest fivefold."

She says that in five years they expect to see the company as a significant national operator. "We would hope to see the brand name and the company logo as readily identifiable and a reassuring presence for parents wishing to dine out with their family."

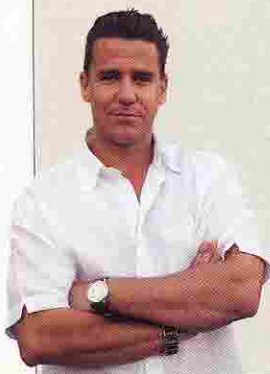
To this end, the owners are in negotiations with potential investors as they get ready to push ahead with the second stage of expansion into more restaurants, national groups and regional independents.



'And today, monsieur, the specials are...'

### Name dropping

#13  
Mike Filpi



**Who is he?** Owner of Mooli, a newly opened restaurant in south London, founder of Eclipse bars and former co-director of the Ignite group, which owns Eclipse, Boujis and Cocoon.

**What else did he do?** Italian-born Filpi was a pro golfer, but renounced his Italian citizenship to avoid military service, and his Italian sponsorship deals dried up so he started working in bars. After working at the Hippodrome in London, he moved to the states to develop his

skills, and was named best bartender in LA in 1992. He returned in 1995, opening Eclipse in 1997. He left Ignite in 2004 because it had become "too corporate". He went travelling, consulting in countries like Ukraine, then returned to open Mooli.

**How much is he worth?** Filpi is guarded about an exact figure, but admits that he is to join an entrepreneur's organisation where members must be worth at least \$1million. **Where did he first get his**

**money?** He has refused to take investment advice from "city boys" and has built up capital through "hard work and passion".

**His future plans?** He wants to focus on Mooli, introducing cocktails, expanding into home catering, perhaps a deli and a patisserie. But bars are his passion - he dreams of opening a nightclub. Before then you may see more Filpi-owned restaurant-bars opening around London, but don't expect them all to be called Mooli.

### A kick for the pub trade

How much it's worth to the pub industry if England stays in the World Cup

England matches in the Group Stage are worth an extra £90-100m to the pub sector

£90-100m

If they get through to the Quarters, England matches are worth £170m

£170m

Reach the Semis the pub industry can look forward to netting an extra £200m

£200m

And the Final would net pub owners an additional £250m

+£250m

£0m £50 £100 £150 £200 £250m

\*FIGURES SUPPLIED BY THE BRITISH AND IRELAND PUB ASSOCIATION