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LE.SAL + CO. Introduces Franchise Program as Demand Grows for Clean, Design- Driven Café Concepts

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As consumers increasingly seek elevated everyday experiences, LE.SAL + CO. is stepping into its next chapter with the official launch of its franchise program, bringing a modern interpretation of New York style bagels and specialty coffee to new markets across the United States and beyond.

The global café and coffee shop industry now exceeds **\$200 billion annually**, with the U.S. market alone generating over **\$90 billion**, driven by demand for premium offerings, clean ingredients, and experiential dining. Within this landscape, bakery café concepts continue to outperform traditional quick service models, as guests prioritize quality, authenticity, and atmosphere over speed alone. Early inbound interest from multiple U.S. and international markets has reinforced demand for a modern, design-forward café system built around clean-label food and disciplined operations.

LE.SAL + CO. was built precisely at this intersection.

Inspired by New York City's bagel culture and refined through a clean, European influenced design sensibility, LE.SAL + CO. delivers an intentionally simple yet elevated café experience. Every bagel is slow fermented, boiled, and baked fresh daily using only 5 clean ingredients, with no additives, preservatives, or added sugar. Specialty coffee is prepared with the same level of care, creating a cohesive experience rooted in craftsmanship, consistency, and hospitality.

The brand's origins trace back to New York City, where founders Meli Salihagic and David Levine identified an opportunity to modernize the traditional bagel café. That vision came to life with the opening of the flagship location in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in **2023**. The Sarajevo flagship served as the real-world foundation for shaping the brand's operations, training standards, and overall guest experience.

Originally launched as NYC BAGEL, the café quickly became a destination for both locals and travelers. The founders bring a combined background spanning New York hospitality, education, brand development and design, shaping a system that balances craft with operational discipline.

Following this success, the brand evolved into LE.SAL + CO., reflecting a broader global vision and a model built for scalability.

As part of this evolution, LE.SAL + CO. introduced a **two-tier franchise model** designed to meet different market needs. The brand offers both a NY Style Bagel Café format, anchored in fresh, daily bagel production, and a Specialty Café format, focused on premium coffee, curated menus, and design-forward environments. This flexible structure allows franchise partners to enter the brand at different investment levels while maintaining consistent standards, systems, and brand identity across all locations.

The NY Style Bagel Café format carries an initial franchise fee of **\$30,000**, with an estimated total initial investment ranging from approximately **\$180,500 to \$456,000**, reflecting its full bakery production and buildout scope. The Specialty Café format offers a more streamlined entry point, with an initial franchise fee of **\$15,000** and an estimated total initial investment ranging from approximately **\$77,000 to \$160,000**, depending on location size and buildout requirements.

Franchise partners operating a LE.SAL + CO. NY Style Bagel Café receive a comprehensive **75 hour** training program, including **35 hours** of virtual classroom instruction and **40 hours** of hands-on training at the franchisee location. Training covers baking and dough handling, brand standards, hospitality, food safety, daily operations, marketing, and technology systems, ensuring consistency and confidence from day one.

Franchise partners operating a LE.SAL + CO. Specialty Café receive a streamlined 50-hour training program, including 25 hours of virtual classroom instruction and 25 hours of hands-on training at the franchisee's location. Training covers specialty coffee preparation, brand standards, hospitality, food safety, daily operations, marketing, and technology systems, all designed to support a consistent and elevated guest experience from day one.

“Today’s guests want more than convenience. They want intention,” said Meli Salihagic, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of LE.SAL + CO. “We built this brand around quality, design, and community, and our franchise model is designed to protect those values as we grow.”

David Levine, Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer, added, “Bagels are one of the most recognizable foods in the world, yet very few concepts approach them with true craftsmanship and systemization. We spent years refining our methods so franchise partners can deliver the same experience consistently, without compromise.”

As consumer demand continues to shift toward clean label food, premium café environments, and brands with purpose, LE.SAL + CO. is positioned to meet the moment, offering partners a modern café concept grounded in tradition and built for the future.

For additional information, visit www.lesalandco.com or contact the franchise team directly.

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