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Chilton Hill 3068
Phone (03) 9489 9011
Fax (03) 9486 2468

SA
46 First Street
Brompton 3046
Phone (08) 8346 2399
Fax (08) 8346 7647

QLD
12 Lathe Street
Virginia 4014
Phone (07) 3865 2099
Fax (07) 3865 2118

ACT
Unit 2/64 Wollongong St
Tyshwick 2069
Phone (02) 6280 4154
Fax (02) 6280 7330

WA
10-12 Fargo Way
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Phone (08) 9451 4544
Fax (08) 9451 5773

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Source: ACNielsen - Scantrack MAT October 2000, (Pure Coffee, excluding coffee bags). *Volume, value & units.

Foodchain by David Jones gets a rating



Easy ideas for tonight from the Foodchain chefs.



Checking out in style.

the first of David Jones new concept Foodchain specialty grocery stores debuted in Brighton last month to reveal an outstanding international and fresh food range aimed at easing 'meal time dilemmas.'

Built on the site of a former Franklins store, the 80 bay outlet officially opened on November 16. It carries a range of regular groceries at competitive prices and has 200 items, of a total 10,000 SKU offer, on special every day.

The store aspires to bring together a passion for food and a passion for people. One of its aims is to make the customer "a 15 minute hero in the kitchen" through a range of meal solutions, according to Foodchain general manager, Shane Tremble.

Foodchain is Mr Tremble's first food retail venture. He draws on 16 years experience in liquor operations at Coles Myer, 11 of those spent at Liquorland followed by five years at Vintage Cellars.

Mr Tremble described Foodchain as an upmarket, gourmet store combined with a very significant eat-in offer.

A cafe has been positioned at the front of the store, located on the former Franklins site in the Dendy Centre on Church Street.

Produce has been located close to the cafe so that fruit and vegetables can be picked up at the start of, or at the end of, the shopping trip.

A grill has been positioned at the heart of the store where the chef prepares quality meals to eat in or wrapped to go. To one side of the grill, shoppers can buy bakery and deli products, extending

to seafood, poultry and red meat. The deli alone boasts 150 different cheeses and 120 meats.

On the other side of the grill, the customer can select from an impressive range of 600-700 table wines at the liquor department.

Training of staff has been a huge priority for Foodchain. "We needed to have a level of product knowledge within the service departments in particular that gives, as a minimum, that of a specialist independent," Mr Tremble said.

Foodchain signals a marked departure to the renowned David Jones food halls, and sports a "workmanlike" albeit contemporary look.

Part of the concrete floor of Franklins has been exposed and polished and merged with recycled hardwood. Standard Metro fixtures feature barn-racking as opposed to cantilever shelving. Galvanised metalwork and gloss black tiles have been used, giving products in the wide-aisled store a bold stand-out presence.

"Our intent was to move away from the plastic and artificial finishes often associated with large food retail outlets and concentrate more on the colours, textures and finishes that evoke an authentic market feel in an up to date way," said Landini Associates creative director, Mark Landini.

Landini Associates were responsible for the Foodchain design and have previously worked with Harvey Nichols, Tesco and Coles Supermarket.

Store services manager, Jim Kariotis, leads a specially selected team of close to 100, trained by Foodchain and local suppliers.

Foodchain stocks more than 240 exclusive private label products, incorporating items such as

of '10-out-of-10 for getting it right'

jelly beans, pasta sauce, salad dressings to pasta, wine and pre-prepared meals. To qualify for the Foodchain label, products are put through a rigorous selection process.

A variety of nourishing gourmet meals are cooked on premise by Foodchain chefs. Main meals start from \$7.95 for pasta to \$11.95 for char grilled sirloin steak with wild mushroom ragout and vegetables. Soups and fresh sauces range from \$4.95 – \$8.95, side orders of vegetables range from \$2.45 – \$4.95. Desserts are priced from \$2.45.

The busy time-poor shopper can select from a variety of meal solutions which can be ready in 15 minutes. At the 'Easy Ideas for Tonight' fixture, recipe idea leaflets and ingredients required are displayed together to speed up the shopping process.

Alternatively, they can pick up packaged restaurant quality prepared meals under the Foodchain label. These come in stylish white boxes with a transparent window.

In the store's first three weeks, a small bottle of Jacob Creek wine was given away with each Foodchain pre-prepared main meal purchased.

Foodchain marketing manager, David Wotherspoon, told *Retail World* the opening special was in line with the store's positioning about adding value.

Mr Tremble told delegates at the recent Australian Food Congress, held in conjunction with Fine Food, that the Foodchain brand was upscale without being pretentious or threatening.

"Most importantly, it must engender confidence that we are knowledgeable and driven by solutions."

Foodchain's product offer is very much determined by the community where it is located.

"It is important to realise who our customers are, and that their needs and wants are not dictated by our guys, or by the marketing departments of our largest suppliers," he said.

Foodchain does not have a centralised warehouse like the larger supermarkets, and as a result, its staff works more closely with suppliers and growers to provide the best available products and fresh food across the store.

"Our buyers have responsibility for managing our range, managing our promotional program and working with our suppliers to ensure that our brands throughout the store are merchandised and promoted in a way that all three groups get maximum benefit," Mr Tremble said.

There were a number of advantages in not having a massive logistical infrastructure, primarily because it shortened the distance and the time between the fresh food and the shelf and the fresh food and the consumer, he said.

Following a soft opening on November 10, Foodchain Brighton officially launched during November 16-19. Originally a soft opening had been planned for November 7, but an IT glitch at the registers led management to roll it back a couple of days.

The eight checkout store features IBM registers using JDA software. Foodchain opening hours are 8am – 10pm, seven days a week.

Managing director of Walkers Shortbreads, James Walker, visited Foodchain recently when he was out from Scotland.

"Foodchain by David Jones gives me confidence. Small stand-alone stores of this calibre could stand up against anything in the world. Ten-out-of-10 to



David Jones for getting it right. I've seen a lot of fresh ideas in the world and this could stand up against anything," he said.

Further rollouts of David Jones Foodchain are timed for Hawthorn in March, and Parramatta in April next year, and at the St Kilda Metropol development and Williamstown in late 2001. Stores are set to open in Kew and Port Melbourne early in 2002.

Mr Tremble said Foodchain would concentrate on getting Melbourne and Sydney right before taking the concept to other States.

"We think there is probably room for 30-40 stores in the next five years, nationally," Mr Tremble said.

Premium fittings in the grocery section.

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