

New Mexico Business Weekly - March 10, 2010
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NEW MEXICO BUSINESS WEEKLY

Wednesday, March 10, 2010, 11:19am MST | Modified: Wednesday, March 10, 2010, 11:52am

5 Star Burgers sets Duke City opening

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Taos' **5 Star Burgers** will make its Duke City debut Friday, March 19, with a 2,800-square-foot restaurant in the North Towne Plaza in the Northeast Heights.

Owner Bob Gontram has plans to open five restaurants over the next four years in northern New Mexico. The new Albuquerque restaurant will hire 30 to 40 employees (15 to 20 will be full time). The North Towne location, at Wyoming and Academy in Albuquerque, is his first location outside Taos, where he opened two years ago. Gontram has more than 30 years of restaurant experience, having operated more than 100 restaurants as a franchisee, franchisor and an independent owner.



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Gontram's upscale concept includes grilled sandwiches, such as Coho salmon, turkey and lamb burgers and a green chile chicken cheeseburger (made with all natural chicken breasts, says the company's Web site). Its beef sandwiches are made with all natural Angus hamburger from the **Harris Ranch Beef Co.** in California. Toppings run from Gorgonzola cheese to wild mushrooms, caramelized onions and "crispy applewood bacon." The menu also features the Shanghai Chicken salad, a Caesar salad and a BLT salad as well as sundaes and the Chocolate Chunk Brownie ala mode dessert.

Harris, which supplies **Sunflower Farmers Markets**, **Costco** and **Kaune's Neighborhood Market** (Santa Fe) in New Mexico, says its antibiotic-free cattle eat only pesticide-free feed and that it does not feed its animals proteins. 5 Star Burgers' **Web site** says its cuisine is trans fat free. It also uses biodegradable packaging made from corn and recycled paper.

Prices range from \$7 to \$8 for the hamburgers and the restaurant will serve beer and wine.

Maestas & Ward Commercial Real Estate's restaurant specialists Brett Hills and David Fite represent Gontram in his expansion and are looking at two more sites in Albuquerque.

The company's first restaurant is located at 1032 Paseo del Pueblo Sur in Taos. The North Towne location, at 5901 Academy Blvd. NE, is in a former **Nothing But Noodles** site in the popular **Weingarten Realty**-owned center that is anchored by **Whole Foods**.

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