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NEW YORKERS EMBRACE HELLO PASTA

New Pasta Model Spices up Fast Casual Market

NEW YORK, August 24, 2010 – **Hello Pasta**, a new model in fast-casual dining that serves perfectly cooked pasta with delectable sauces, launched its first of four restaurant locations at 649 Lexington Avenue between 54th and 55th in New York City on July 7, 2010. Long lines and satisfied customers prove that healthy, delicious, freshly made pasta is a welcome addition to New York's comprehensive list of culinary choices.

Hello Pasta offers a choice of imported Italian pasta (with organic, whole wheat and regular options) or Californian-made gluten-free pasta, all served with high quality, low sodium sauces made with all-natural, locally sourced, seasonal ingredients free from additives and preservatives, for between \$6.95-9.50. A serving of pasta comes in small and large sizes and is made-to-order within minutes. Hello Pasta's 11 delicious sauces, each created in the Hello Pasta test kitchen, include Italo-American classics such as Pomodoro, Pesto, Carbonara and Bolognese and Hello Pasta 'signatures' such as Sausage and Peas, and Tuscan Chicken Vodka.

There is something for everyone with sauces featuring meat, fish and poultry and additional vegetarian and vegan options. The fun begins when each customer picks the particular shape of pasta for the desired sauce, including conchiglie (shell shaped), fusilli, penne and rigatoni. Once the pasta and sauce has been selected, it's time to choose between 100% Parmesan cheese or a gluten free/vegan alternative. Within minutes, the order is ready and packaged in the sleek, signature white and green Hello Pasta to-go box: perfect for dining anywhere.

In addition to pasta, Hello Pasta offers seasonal soups, ready-to-go salads and cold pasta options (Ratatouille and Tomato Mozzarella.) Hello Pasta also serves Ciao Bella ice cream, private labeled sweet treats and Nespresso coffee and cappuccinos.

The focus of Hello Pasta is to be both healthy and delicious. Founders and long-time friends, Laurent Lesort, Gregory Baratte, and Nicolas Barthelemy, wanted to fill a void in the North American fast-casual market by providing a high quality pasta alternative at a great value.

Laurent, Nicolas and Gregory collectively bring several decades of hospitality and marketing experience to their respective roles as Chief Food Officer, Chief Operations Officer and Chief Marketing Officer of Hello Pasta. Laurent and Nicolas developed a professional relationship while working together in New York City at such celebrated restaurants and lounges as *Le Bilboquet*,

Le Charlot and *Opia*. Laurent and his brother Frederick went on to open three hugely successful lounge/restaurants: *Frederick's Lounge*, located on West 58th Street, *Frederick's Madison*, an upscale bistro on Madison Avenue and finally *Frederick's Downtown*, a West Village bistro with authentic French flair. Nicolas was a member of the opening team of Parisian hot spot, Buddha Bar, then was charged by parent company, George V Entertainment (*Buddha Bar*, *Buddha Bar Hotels Resorts & Spas*, *Barrio Latino*, *Barfly*, *Bound*, *Barlotti*, *Little Buddha Café*, *Karma Café*), with all F & B operations in North and South America and Eastern Europe. Gregory, as the Senior Director of Marketing for Louis Vuitton, was Laurent and Nicolas' number one customer and supporter. As the son of French restaurateurs, Gregory grew up in the business with a keen instinct for emerging dining trends.

"Pasta is one of the most beloved foods in America," says Laurent Lesort, "We believe that if it is made-to-order within minutes and served with delicious, dimensional sauces for around \$6.95-9.50, it will attract a great variety of customers. Our goal is to serve a remarkable product in a modern and clean environment at a low price."

Hello Pasta will open one restaurant a month for four consecutive months, with its first restaurant open on July 7 at 649 Lexington Avenue between 54th and 55th Street. The second restaurant will open on September 7 at 708 Third Avenue between 44th and 45th Street, followed by 125 Maiden Lane at Wall Street in the Financial District and 1400 Broadway between 38th and 39th Street. Each Hello Pasta restaurant will have 800 to 1,000 square feet of dining space and will seat 15-25 customers. Designed by architect Antonio Di Oronzo, founder of Bluarch Architecture and Urban Planning, the interior space of Hello Pasta is modern and innovative, and was inspired by the shape of traditional, hand-made pasta drying on a rack.

"We wanted to create a brand that perfectly balances tradition and innovation, transcends all language barriers and is as genuine as our absolute love for our pastas!" states co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer Gregory Baratte. Adds Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer Nicolas Barthelemy, "We created Hello Pasta to be an inviting, fun space with a strong, unique design that provides both an efficient flow of service and a memorable experience."

Hello Pasta is open seven days a week from 11:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. for lunch, dinner and afternoon indulgences. For delivery, please call 212.55PASTA or order on hellopasta.com. More information on Hello Pasta can be found at hellopasta.com or [facebook/hellopasta](https://www.facebook.com/hellopasta) and [twitter/hellopasta](https://twitter.com/hellopasta).

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