

Coffee outlet corners the express espresso market



DRIVE brew ... Zarraffa's CEO Kenton Campbell serves coffee to Daryn Daniel.

Picture: Paul Riley

Greg Stolz

WHAT'S claimed to be Queensland's first drive-through coffee shop is set to open on the Gold Coast early in the new year.

The \$1.5 million outlet is the brainchild of young Glitter Strip entrepreneur Kenton Campbell, who heads the steadily expanding Zarraffa's coffee chain.

Located just off the M1 at Worongary, in the Gold Coast hinterland, the drive-through will be the company's 31st outlet.

Mr Campbell ran coffee carts in opposition to coffee giant Starbucks in his native Seattle in the early 1990s. He was brought out to Australia as a consultant by the now-listed Gold Coast-based Retail Food Group, owner of the bb's cafe, Donut King, Brumby's Bakeries and Michel's Patisserie franchises.

Zarraffa's, (which is Arabic for giraffe, the animal represented in the company logo) began in 1996 as a wholesale coffee-bean supplier and roaster in a Southport backstreet.

A year later, the company opened its first coffee shop in Southport's Australia Fair shopping centre and has since expanded into Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. It has one interstate outlet, in Sydney's Manly.

Zarraffa's stores are a mix of company-owned and franchised

outlets. Franchisees include former Brisbane Bullets basketball star Shane Heal, who opened a shop at Salisbury in Brisbane's south two months ago.

The Worongary drive-through will be operated by existing franchisees Debbie and Brendan Blakemore, who also own a Zarraffa's at Miami.

It is one of three drive-throughs Mr Campbell plans to open in the next 12 months as he seeks to more than double Zarraffa's presence within five years.

"Our aim is to open eight to 12 new stores a year," he says.

"We'd like to get to 70 or 80 stores in the next five years but at the moment, we're focusing on southeast Queensland. We believe you should own a market before looking interstate or overseas."

Zarraffa's also does not want to grow at the expense of existing franchisees and the company's aim is to boost average annual turnover from \$800,000 to \$1 million, Mr Campbell says.

Business Review Weekly last year named Zarraffa's as one of Australia's fastest-growing franchises. The company recently won the Gold Coast Business Excellence Award.

But Mr Campbell, 38, says he does not want to lose sight of the ingredient behind Zarraffa's success. "We have to keep delivering quality coffee," he says.