

## A Message from Sam Panos, President and CEO

My dad started distributing food out of our family station wagon almost 50 years ago and each year our business continues to evolve and grow because we have more than customers and vendors that we do business with, we have partnerships. The ever-changing environment of this past year has been more than challenging but belonging to the world's largest food distribution cooperative in the world has enabled us to compete at a higher level. Our membership with UniPro guarantees

us elite purchasing opportunities, products, and services. Being a local, independent distributor allows us to react quickly to your needs. When you put those together, we are stronger to help you be stronger, and we feel that makes a great partnership. We appreciate that you have chosen Panos Foods as your partner and we look forward to growing together through each phase of the months and years to come.

## HOPING FOR A ROARING 20'S PART II TYPE REVIVAL

If you looked up neighborhood bar and grill in the dictionary, you might see a picture of ROCKS Northcenter in the Northcenter neighborhood of Chicago. Tim Shepardson and George Manta have been ROCKS Bar Group partners since they opened their first location in 2005. Together they own and manage three locations, and like other restaurant owners, the pandemic is forcing them to evaluate their business model. What worked in the past is not going to work now as they re-open each location.

One of the driving forces behind updating the business model is the lack of staff. Shepardson says, "We are very fortunate that we were able to keep 2 of the 3 places open during this last 15 months. But the hiring challenges we face now force us to lessen our own capacity and hours until we can get back to 100% staffing in the FOH and BOH. If we had lost our entire BOH staff, I don't think we could've reopened. To capitalize on the fewer tables and shorter hours George and I made the decision to eliminate specials and we are testing a reservation system to help control the flow of customers and eliminate long lines." Shepardson also quickly noted "we are extremely grateful that our team has been able to weather the worst of this storm. Antonio, Kristan, Joyce, Erin and many, many others made it possible."

ROCKS Bar is well known in their neighborhoods for having trivia or karaoke nights that accompanied ½ price burgers and packed dining rooms. Changing the mindset and the 16-year tradition of deep discounts on food is allowing ROCKS to maintain menu prices for now and become more profitable. Shepardson says, "You don't want to devalue your food by always discounting. We are learning that we have plenty of customers that want if for full price and we can achieve the sales needed because we don't discount. Most of our customers totally understand that and are just happy that we are still here."

ROCKS Bar Group is also testing a reservation system, Tock, to help with the flow of customers so they can avoid long lines, turn tables faster, and know exactly how many customers they will serve over an evening. Shepardson says, "The reservation system is working, and we are able to control traffic, which leads to less stress on our staff and happy, well fed customers that feel safe with us."

Shepardson is grateful and optimistic, "George and I are hoping for a Roaring 20's Part II type revival. Our customers have been so supportive by buying gift cards and visiting our patios in the dead of winter because they want us to make it." The revival is coming and right now it is about making the changes needed so restaurants can be profitable and sustainable.

## Customer Spotlight: ROCKS Bar Group



**"We are very fortunate that we were able to keep 2 of the 3 places open during this last 15 months."**

**TIM SHEPARDSON  
ROCKS BAR GROUP**

# THE BEST MENUS ARE MADE TOGETHER.

Because your customers have expectations for what you serve, we hold your chicken to the highest standards. Whether you add your culinary touch or simply heat and serve, you'll have a team of experts with over 95 years of experience working to make chicken that performs exactly how you need it to. That includes menu staples like fillets, tenders, and wings, plus specialty items like chicken burgers and breakfast sausage.

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#071215  
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#071220  
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# SPOTLIGHT BRANDS & PRODUCTS



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Exclusively from UniPro distributors, the Ore-Ida brand offers a full range of “best in class” products from line flow (Grade A) to Premium Extra Long (PXL), coated or uncoated, spirals, tots, shreds, thin cut, steak cut, and crinkle cut fries.



The Natural Mineral Water “Zagori” is concentrated below the earth’s surface in natural aquifers, on the slopes of the relief of the mountainous mass of Pindos, in one of the most picturesque, protected, and unspoiled areas of Greece, the area of Zagorochoria. Zagori water is immediately bottled directly from the source and exclusively imported and distributed in Illinois by Panos Foods.

- #310403, 24/.5 L plastic bottles
- #310404, 12/.5 L glass bottles
- #310405, 12/1 L glass bottles
- #310406, sparkling, 24/.33 L glass bottles
- #310407, sparkling, 12/.75 L glass bottles



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### WHY THE CLOUD BURGER?

- First fresh-frozen burger with unique craft burger look
- 100% fresh, domestically sourced beef
- Fresh-frozen safety and consistency
- Higher yields than fresh
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### BURGER COOKING 101... NOT JUST FOR THE CLOUD

**Only touch a burger twice once it's on the grill.**

- Once when you flip it and once when you take it off.

**Do not press the burger, do not poke the burger.**

- Overhandling harms performance and dries the patty.

### Chef's Corner

Costs are up, but don't compromise quality by downgrading the burgers you serve.  
Build your bottom line by building the better burger your customers want.



California Sun Cloud Burger



Caprese Cloud Burger



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