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For the Albany region's largest restaurant groups, growth is on the menu

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Opening one successful restaurant is a difficult feat to achieve.

Opening several? That's a mark of a successful business.

This year, for the first time, we have a List of the largest restaurant groups in the region, which you can see below.

Restaurants are an important and vital part of the community. They are often cited as being a big part of an area's quality of life, and some of the bigger restaurant groups in the area also employ hundreds of full- and part-time workers.

Restaurants aren't Regeneron, but they keep lots of people employed in the region.

No. 1 on the inaugural version of this List is BMT Management, owned by Brian Viglucci, Michael Viglucci and Tony Lounello.



DONNA ABBOTT-VLAHOS / ALBANY BUSINESS REVIEW

Brian Viglucci is the managing partner of BMT Hospitality, No. 1 on this year's Restaurant Groups List.

BMT owns and manages eight restaurants in the region — a number that just recently changed, as the group closed The Point on Madison Avenue in Albany at the end of 2022. Though that restaurant is closing, the space isn't going anywhere. Cafe Madison, located next door, is expanding into the former Point space.

A number of the companies that made The List are in the midst of expansions, both in and out of the area.

Motor Oil Coffee opened three locations just in the past year, and is already close to opening a fourth site, at Slip 12, the former Huck Finn's Warehouse in Albany.

Meanwhile, Bare Blends opened its seventh local location, with more on the way. But the chain's expansion is moving even faster in other states: It now has locations open or in the pipeline for the Denver area, the Tampa Bay area and Boston.

For this year's List, we made the cutoff to qualify at three locations. That means some well-known local restaurateurs didn't make The List this time out — like Purnomo Hospitality and Ziemann Hospitality.

But we'll update this List as the year goes along — and both of those groups may make their way onto the List before the year is out. Dominick Purnomo will be opening his third restaurant soon, a waterfront spot in Coxsackie. And later this year, he's planning to add a fourth location, at a hotel restaurant and bar next to that restaurant.

Originally, the hotel's operator, Prestige Hospitality, asked Purnomo to handle the food and drink at the hotel's restaurant and bar. When the next-door restaurant operator fell through, Purnomo decided to take on the challenge of doing both.

"It's for the better because I think they have all of the food and beverage for the entire campus under one umbrella, so to speak, versus having multiple operators," he said.

For Devin and Kaytrin Ziemann, who own Cuckoo's Nest in Albany and The Nest in Schenectady, their latest venture is a

Mediterranean-themed restaurant in Schenectady called Mila Restaurant & Bar. The planned opening is late spring or summer this year.

They're also still looking for a new location in Albany to reopen their first restaurant, Crave.

Interested in having your restaurant group included in updates and future Lists? Contact me: tkehoe@bizjournals.com

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