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REGIONAL SPINS ON SEAFOOD **82**

**Restaurant**  
HOSPITALITY

SEPTEMBER 2014

**RH**

*THE  
COOLEST*

**MULTI-CONCEPT**

**COMPANIES**

**25**

*2014*

operations/ 39

debut/ 18

6 WAYS TO IMPROVE P.O.S. SECURITY

ROOT & BONE DIGS IN



Arturo Gomez,  
Brad Young and  
Billy Dec

## Rockit Ranch Productions

**Headquarters:** Chicago

**Annual Sales:** \$35 million

**Units:** 6

**Key Personnel:**

- Billy Dec, c.e.o./founder
- Arturo Gomez, president/partner
- Brad Young, chairman/founder
- Kevin Hickey, partner, director of f&b, executive chef/partner  
Bottlefork

### SINGLE CONCEPTS:

- **Rockit Bar & Grill** (a culinary twist on traditional bar and grill fare)
- **Rockit Burger Bar** (chef-driven cuisine in a party atmosphere)
- **Sunda New Asian** (showcasing Eastern and Southeastern Asian regional cuisine)
- **Bottlefork** (a modern American restaurant and bar)
- **Ay Chiwowa** (Mexican street fare with a selection of 90 tequilas)
- **Underground** (one of the “sexiest” nightclubs in the world, says *Cosmopolitan*)

### UPCOMING PROJECTS:

- **Duck Inn** (new American menu opening in Chicago’s Bridgeport neighborhood in the fall)
- **Rockit Bar & Grill** (a renovation of the 10-year-old brand due next spring)

**WHY IT'S COOL:** Rockit Ranch c.e.o. Billy Dec isn't your average stuffed-shirt company head. We're pretty sure he was a troublemaker in college and is likely one today, albeit a very smart one who knows how to throw a party that makes his accountants and legions of fans very happy. His restaurants cater to a young, hip crowd where the settings are as important as the food. Perhaps he's learned the importance of place from his nightclub—Underground—which is a sensory explosion of mad fun. The only exception to all this is Sunda, an Asian restaurant that operates on a culinary level much higher than Rockit's other restaurants. Sunda is for people who are serious about food and where food comes first. It may be the precursor to more “serious” restaurants down the road. Meanwhile, Rockit Ranch is a party, and Dec is the guy having the most fun.

## Bread & Butter Concepts

**Headquarters:** Kansas City

**Annual Sales:** \$18 Million

**Units:** 5 and 1 food truck

**Key Personnel:**

- Alan Gaylin c.e.o and founder
- Tara Van Loenen, v.p. of marketing
- George Atsangbe, director of culinary
- Chris Stuewe, director of operations
- Jeff Petersen, director of finance and technology

### SINGLE CONCEPTS:

- **Urban Table** (modern American urban bistro)
- **Gram & Dun** (American gastropub)
- **Taco Republic & Taco Republic Truck** (taqueria)

### MULTIPLE CONCEPTS:

- **BRGR Kitchen + Bar** (classic American burgers in downtown Kansas City and Prairie Village, KS)

### UPCOMING PROJECTS:

- A modern trattoria

**WHY IT'S COOL:** While franchising is certainly not for everyone, there are some benefits to the corporate structure, including all the support systems that come with it. Alan Gaylin worked his way up through the Houlihan's corporate team, eventually reaching c.o.o., before he cut bait in 2007 and began the second half of his career as an independent restaurateur. Today, Gaylin's Bread & Butter Concepts owns Kansas City's restaurant scene—opening five restaurants and a food truck in four years. His ability to understand how a big corporation markets their product has boosted success, he says. Gaylin hired a marketing team eight months before his first restaurant, BRGR, opened to create the brand and help people know what it would be. The original BRGR (there are two locations now) has done 6% to 10% better in sales each year since its opening. Gaylin moved on to open Urban Table, an American bistro with fresh, scratch-made food; Gram and Dun, which he calls Kansas City's original gastropub; and Taco Republic, serving street-style tacos in a laid-back get-up. Gaylin's restaurants, whether casual or upscale, are focused on value. He wants customers to walk out saying their experience was worth the money.

