

# RPG-Narula JV carts in Au Bon Pain cafe chain

Novel Confectioners will roll out 100 standalone stores in 18 months

**Sumanta Ray Chaudhuri.**

Kolkata

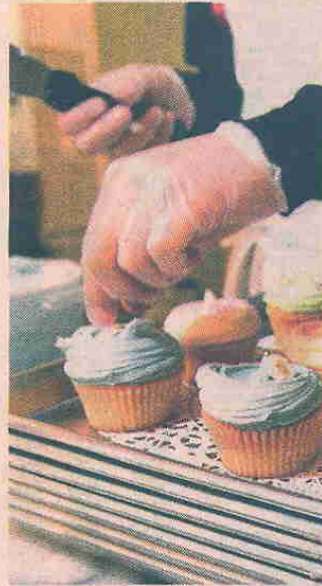
The RPG group's Spencer's Retail Ltd on Tuesday said it has tied up with the Boston-based Au Bon Pain, a dining and bakery café chain, to set up 100 standalone outlets in 18 months.

Sanjiv Goenka, vice-chairman, RPG Enterprises, said a joint venture company, Novel Confectioners Ltd, has been formed with Varin Narula, who would be the master franchisee of Au Bon Pain in India. Narula is the director and promoter of Au Bon Pain, Thailand.

Goenka said Au Bon Pain's first outlet will be opened in Bangalore in six months. "The majority of the 100 outlets to be opened during the first 18 months would be down south in cities such as Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai. The total investment in the venture will be around Rs 50 crore.

He said these standalone outlets will have an area of around 1,200 sq ft to 1,500 sq ft. "The outlets will offer choicest, healthy and nutritious bakery products and beverages," Goenka said.

He said the Au Bon Pain outlets in India would concentrate on low calorie foods with higher nutrition value. "Consumers these days are willing to pay a bit more, if offerings are differentiated. The opportunity, therefore, is ripe for brands such as Au Bon Pain, whose unique selling proposition is a fresh and healthy assortment and quick-serve convenience in a pleasurable and relaxed environment," he said.



## Whipping up ideas

**The company** will invest Rs 50 cr for opening these outlets

**Varin Narula** would be the master franchisee of Au Bon Pain in India

**Most of** these stores will be rolled out in southern Indian cities such as Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai

It is learnt that the outlets will serve a "build-it yourself" range and assortment of breakfast and lunches such as soups, stews, sandwiches, salads, bread and bakery items, confectioneries and hot and cold beverages. "Keeping in mind the cultural and traditional dietary preferences, the menu in India will also include a line of vegetarian dishes," Goenka said.

*r\_sumanta@dnaindia.net*