

# Pirates of the Convenience Channel

L.A.'s Trimana seeks profits from pirating new customers from fast-food chains

By Don Longo

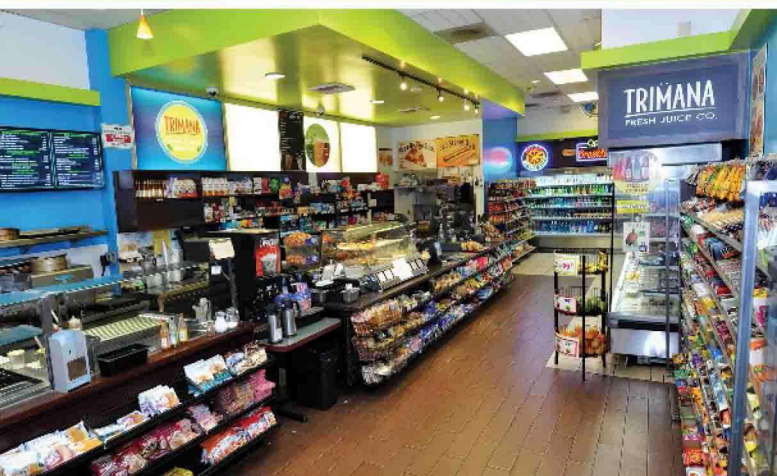
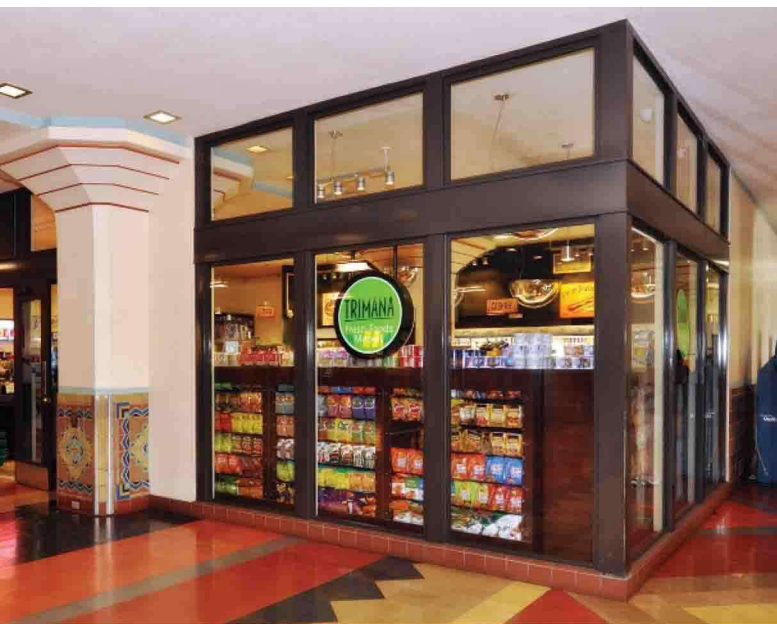
**A** new operation located in modern, high-rise office buildings in Los Angeles is the latest retailer to blur the line between restaurants and convenience stores.

Called Trimana, the concept is the brainchild of Bijan Yadegar, founder of High Rise Goodies Restaurant Group Inc., owner, operator and franchisor of approximately 50 restaurants that serve a mixed cuisine of American, Mexican, Italian and Asian food. Yadegar currently operates three Trimana convenience stores in the Los Angeles market.

All of Trimana's growth has been, and will continue to be, funded with internally generated resources. Yadegar is planning to slowly expand the chain by adding three to five new locations annually. However, to accelerate the growth of Trimana's hot food program, he hopes to partner with a major c-store chain and expand the system both nationwide and internationally.

Because his restaurants specialize in high-rise office buildings with limited space, Yadegar developed a hot food commissary and distribution system to provide his three Trimana convenience store locations with proprietary foodservice for the breakfast, lunch and dinner dayparts.

"Since many tenants needed some convenience items, we initially added a limited number of such items to the restaurants," explained partner Robert Brasch, whose firm Pacific Partners specializes in strategic partnerships between U.S. and Japanese firms. "Based on this experience, we decided to create a full-sized standalone c-store that also served hot soup and



Trimana is designed to blur the line between restaurants and convenience stores.



Trimana's hot food program uses the bestselling items from its restaurants.

sandwiches prepared onsite. This evolved to our present format of c-store plus a hot food program using the bestselling food items from our restaurants.”

Utilizing just a 10-foot by 10-foot area, each food-service operation inside Trimana stores serves a wide variety of fresh menu items, including breakfast sandwiches, burritos, quesadillas, melts, subs, pizza, and hot snacks. The stores overall measure 1,000 to 1,800 square feet.

In addition to the proprietary foodservice, the stores sell cigarettes, bottled soft drinks, beer, wine, grocery items, general merchandise, milk, ice cream, candy and snacks.

## TRIMANA CREATOR BIJAN YADEGAR IS PLANNING TO SLOWLY EXPAND THE CHAIN BY ADDING THREE TO FIVE NEW LOCATIONS ANNUALLY.

The hot food items are prepared when ordered by customers. During slow periods, the staff prepares some hot food onsite, along with grab-and-go items and freshly-squeezed bottled orange and vegetable juices. The hot food program operates without the need for a costly exhaust hood system.

The approximate cost for equipment and installation for the entire program is about \$30,000, according to Brasch, who has extensive experience working with convenience store chains.

The company recently presented the hot food program concept to a large c-store chain. “The Trimana fresh food program is designed to bring a new fresh dimension to existing sales, to add to the present items being sold, and to increase profits [by] pirating new customers from other fast-food chains,” said Brasch. “Fresh food customers will buy typical c-store items to complement their meal purchases at a c-store location.”

The Trimana program is priced to compete with fast-food chains like McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Dominos and Subway. “When your new customers are able to buy fresh food items at your c-store, they will increase the frequency of their shopping visits and increase the dollar amount of their purchases, while buying other c-store items,” added Brasch. **CSN**