

Go Big & Go Home

Spinx opens its largest convenience store to date in its home state of South Carolina By Danielle Romano



New and enhanced features abound both inside and outside Spinx's largest store.

EVERYONE IS FAMILIAR WITH THE ADAGE, "GO BIG OR GO HOME." But if you're The Spinx Co., operator of 79 convenience stores across South Carolina, the adage is "Go big *and* go home."

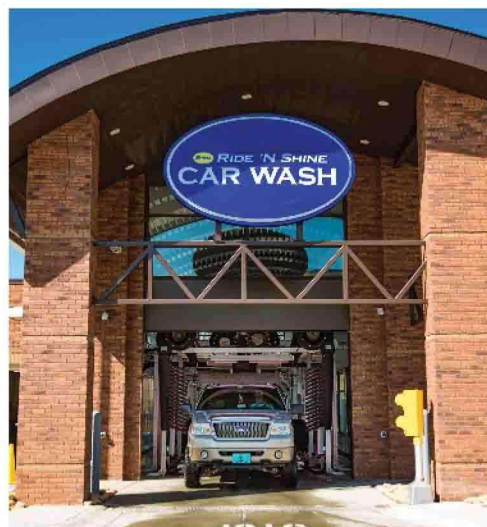
Situated on nearly four acres, Spinx recently debuted its largest store to date in Moncks Corner, S.C., a Berkeley County town that is included in the Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville metropolitan area. The 6,188-square-foot store, which opened Dec. 14, 2017, builds on the retailer's Fresh On The Go foodservice offer and introduces its first Ride 'N' Shine express tunnel car wash.

The Moncks Corner store — the company's 11th location in the Charleston area — is situated 20 miles from the downtown Charleston peninsula, with a fresh water lake on one side and the salty Atlantic Ocean on the other. Spinx decided Charleston was fitting for its most sizable location because South Carolina continues to grow demographically with a diverse population, coupled with its robust economy and workforce.

"Market research showed a dramatic change from 2006 to 2011, so it lit a fire for us to grow in Charleston," Spinx founder and Chairman Stewart Spinks told *Convenience Store News*. "Plus, I grew up in Charleston, so I'm prejudice to going back home where I started."

A Fresh Offer

Putting an emphasis on Spinx's Fresh On



The Go foodservice offer, the latest store concept introduces a new kitchen design, or what Spinks refers to as "a little manufacturing facility." The new layout accommodates more storage and provides mobility in prepping Spinx's fresh items.

Featured on the Fresh On The Go menu are the retailer's legendary Southern-fried chicken tenders, accompanied by sides like mashed potatoes and gravy, macaroni and cheese, potato wedges and fried okra. There's also chicken biscuits and made-to-order sandwiches, wraps, breakfast bowls, and fruit and yogurt smoothies.

Other aspects of Fresh On The Go include:

- Freshly packaged grab-and-go vegetable, fruit and yogurt cups;
- Cold fountain drinks, iced tea and lemonade;
- Bean-to-cup coffee, including cold brew and nitro cold brew;
- Hand-spun milkshakes and soft-serve ice cream; and
- Doughnuts, cookies and pastries that are baked fresh on-site daily.

"The concept resonates with customers because our offers remain consistent. Customers know what to expect from us, and we've been able to deliver the quality service and food they've come to know and

At a Glance The Spinx Co.

Location: 2801 Highway 52, Moncks Corner, S.C.

Size: 6,188 square feet

Unique Features:

Expansion of the retailer's Fresh On The Go foodservice offer and home to the company's first express tunnel car wash, Ride 'N' Shine



Spinx's Fresh On the Go foodservice menu includes multiple beverage options, from fountain drinks, to bean-to-cup coffee, to iced tea and lemonade.



love," Spinks expressed. "We're not a huge company, but we continue to perfect our offers."

A Shiny Offer

Outside, the Moncks Corner site is home to Spinx's first express tunnel car wash, Ride 'N' Shine, which opened Feb. 15 of this year. Each Ride 'N' Shine wash uses environmentally conscious water reclamation systems and eco-friendly chemicals, as well as advanced technology that gives customers the best wash for their budget, according to the retailer.

The system utilizes a 3-D scan of each vehicle to precisely target soap and high-pressure water based on the size and shape for the most accurate clean. The new tunnel wash is also equipped with specially engineered blowers to achieve a drier vehicle while conserving energy.

Ride 'N' Shine operates off a RFID tag, so car wash club members can pull up and drive right through. It was built with two lanes: one for cash/credit/debit users and one for members of the car wash club. Memberships sell for \$39.95 for unlimited washes per month. So far, more than 230 memberships have been sold, according to Spinks.

"We're so excited to open our first Ride 'N' Shine tunnel car wash. While all car washes may appear to be the same, our new tunnel wash sets us apart from the competition, and our trained staff and high-tech equipment will deliver a great experience and quick, thorough car washes to our



Ride 'N' Shine is the retailer's first express tunnel car wash.

customers," the chairman commented.

The Ride 'N' Shine car wash is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sunday. Members of the Spinx Xtras rewards program can earn fuel discounts when they buy a car wash. The Moncks Corner store is Spinx's first to offer E15 fuel as well. At the 18 pumps, drivers also find 87, 89 and 93 octane, E85 and diesel. Customers can pay at the pump with cash, credit or debit.

At the time of Ride 'N' Shine's opening, the company announced it would be the first of many tunnel car washes it plans to open. According to Spinks, the chain will continue to measure the car wash element and evaluate what impact it has on the retailer's overall offer. Forty-six of Spinx's 79 locations currently include a car wash.

"...It's definitely one of the elements that I believe is going to help us in the future diversify our offer, so we're not so dependent on petroleum profitability and its contribution as we have been historically," Spinks explained.

As for opening additional stores of this size, the Spinx founder notes that a c-store complex of this size is not the "end all be all, but it better [be] pretty close."

"The bigger the locations, the more footprint, and in Charleston and other areas, the real estate is in high demand and that means costs are rising. I'm satisfied that we've evolved but, at this time, it's the best we can do and we'll see if it proves to be the only way to go forward," Spinks said.

"Successful companies, whether they be a McDonald's or others in the c-store industry, that have a proven concept continue to build on [that concept]. This will be our fifth- or sixth-generation store, so this concept has got to take us a long way down the road," he added.

No matter the size, Spinx continues to find Charleston "a very good place to grow," so the company will focus on growth in this area for the next two years at least. Originally, the company planned to build 15 stores in Charleston, but has since doubled that number to 30 since it has found "so much success already," Spinks shared. **CSN**