

Healthy chain on the move

Salad Spinners adding site, ready to franchise

BY VIRGINIA GROARK

Salad Spinners Corp. founder Rich Levy is preparing to franchise his healthy fast-food restaurant business. Mr. Levy recently opened his fourth Salad Spinners in the Loop, at 300 S. Wacker Drive. He aims to start selling franchises by early next year.

"We are ready," the 32-year-old South African says.

His move comes at a time when salads are becoming more com-

mon offerings at fast-food places. Starbucks began offering salads in June, joining McDonald's, which has had them for several years. But Mr. Levy believes his gourmet offerings—which include salads such as Cherry Chow and Tropical Sun-splash as well as a make-your-own salad with 80 ingredients—set Salad Spinners apart.

Mr. Levy opened his first Salad Spinners store in February 2000. Since then, he has expanded to four locations. He started with six

employees and now has 40. Annual revenue is about \$3.2 million.

The question looming over Mr. Levy's franchising plan is how big the market for salads is, says Lloyd Gordon, president and founder of Skokie-based GEC Consultants Inc., which focuses on the restaurant business.

"People are still eating fried chicken, and people are still flocking to have greasy hamburgers," he says. "So the question is, how fast are people going to change?"

