

Costa eyes more than 100 UAE outlets by 2014

by Lucy Taylor on Tuesday, 05 January 2010

Costa Coffee in the UAE is planning to open 10 new outlets in 2010, including a focus on Abu Dhabi.

Eric Hughes, the company's UAE general manager, said Costa Coffee was committed to the country and was capable of operating in excess of 100 stores in the UAE over the next three to five years.

In an interview with Hotelier Middle East, Hughes said: "Costa is in the UAE for the long term. We certainly plan to open new stores within the UAE including a focus on Abu Dhabi."

He added: "We have plans to open 10 stores throughout 2010 which we believe demonstrates our commitment to the region.

"Beyond 2010, we believe we can comfortably operate in excess of 100 Costa stores in the UAE, which is our goal over the next 3-5 years."

He added that today's savvy coffee drinkers are rightly demanding and expect their coffee to be customised to their exact requirements.

"Consumers are also becoming more inquisitive about nutritional information and are looking for a balance of both healthy and indulgent products," he said.

Since 1999, the brand has opened 70 stores in the UAE and Hughes said in the past five years Costa had seen growth on average of 27 percent.

"While this obviously slowed in 2009, it hasn't stopped our expansion plans. We opened 15 new stores in 2009 and plan to open 10 more over the course of 2010," he said.

Costa has just celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its first international store, which was opened in Dubai.

"The Middle East has a very strong coffee culture, with a large portion of the population already habitual coffee drinkers.

"Added to that, a large UK expatriate community was already established, in the UAE and Dubai in particular, many of whom would have already experienced Costa coffee in the UK. So it made sense to look at expanding into the region."



EXPANSION PLAN: Costa is planning to operate a total of more than 100 outlets in the UAE within five years.

Hughes said the competitor environment had changed enormously in the last 10 years. From a handful of branded coffee shops there are now 260 in the UAE, of which 200 are in Dubai alone.