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How I Made It / Ian Carr

Island Hi owner filling stomachs and lunchtime niche

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At 15 years old, Ian Carr began flipping burgers at a Burger King restaurant in Canada. Little did he know what it would build his own fast-food shop here in Bermuda — Island Hi eatery on Parliament Street.



That's a wrap: Island Hi owner and wrapmaker extraordinaire, Ian Carr. Photo by Leah Furbert

With wraps and subs as the main focus of the restaurant, Carr aims to please all his customers with quick, quality food and service. Here we find out how he made it.

What was your first big break in business?

I've been in the restaurant business for 25 years, mostly in Canada. I worked at Burger King, Pizza Hut. I've always worked in restaurants, I went to school for restaurants.

Who was your mentor or source of inspiration?

When I first started I was lucky to work with an older man at Burger King, and he taught me everything he knew about the business. He got me interested at an early age, because I started part-time when I was still in school, at 15. He brought me in and showed me a lot of the business side of the restaurant, as a franchise, how to run a franchise, how to work the company. He showed me a lot besides just working at the store, so it got me interested in it as a thing to do.

What's the best business decision you've ever made?

Going into business myself. I opened Island Hi five years ago and it's been growing year after year. It's been growing nicely.

Where do you find business ideas and inspiration?

Most of my inspiration comes from things I've done in the past or other concepts that I saw while working in Canada. It's a combination of both.

What made you decide to focus mainly on wraps and sub sandwiches for your menu?

I tried to keep the menu simple so that we can ensure quick service. We had a limited menu for that quick service, because if you expand the menu too much, it's hard to keep the speedy service up. It's something that was done to try and make it quick-paced.

What's the most important thing you've learned about making money?

You really need a good business plan and you need to research your ideas. Experience helps as well. If you have experience and you have a good business plan and you research it well, you're more likely to make less mistakes. You'll always make mistakes and (unexpected) things will always happen, but it will be less if you put more work into it at the beginning.

Any future plans for Island Hi Eatery?

I'd like to grow again. Down the road I would like to partner with somebody to give them an opportunity to

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have their own business. My first growth would be to partner with another person and have them develop the concept. If the right person came along, that's what I'd like to do. If another location became available and I had another person who was interested in learning to run their own business, I would open another store.

So far, what has customer response been like?

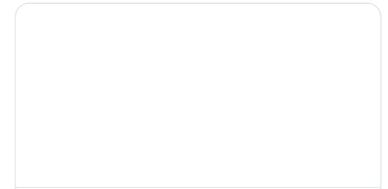
A lot of people like the quick service, that's a draw for customers here. I try to create a nice environment where they can sit down. I try to keep the environment nice for the customers and employees and try to provide good service, good value and quality. It's very basic quality service in a good environment. If you have a good foundation you can build on that.

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