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LEE EHMKE, CEO and
director of the Minnesota
Zoo with Niño, a Southern
Three-banded Armadillo,
native to South America



CRAVEing a Stronger Team

The expanding CRAVE restaurant is now offering team-building.

BY KATIE PELTON

FRESH. VIBRANT. AMERICAN. Even at 9 a.m. on a Wednesday CRAVE's slogan is true. Between the unique window treatments, rich lighting and elegant wine tower, this atmosphere is not only inviting for restaurant goers but also corporate companies looking to strengthen their team.

CRAVE opened in Edina's Galleria nearly three years ago and expanded to the Mall of America in late May of 2009. A third CRAVE opened in St. Louis Park's West End in early October. When brothers Kam, the CEO, and Keyvan Talebi, the business developer, started CRAVE, their goal was location expansion but their recent addition of team-building is an unexpected result of their success.

« CRAVE offers a stylish, all-inclusive team-building atmosphere.

“We were in front of the customers with our standard product offerings, which were private events and we realized there was a whole segment that we saw,” Kam says. “We got a lot of traction from corporate America. A byproduct was seeing a need in the marketplace. So on top of doing off-site events, we broadened our services to another need, which is team-building.”

Kam says they are unique to team-building companies. “Instead of companies doing one training and then going out afterwards to do a dinner or drinks, now we're a one stop shop. We looked at our capabilities: an open kitchen restaurant with a vibrant open

cravemn.com

Click to learn about booking your own CRAVE team-building event

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CRAVE



« There's nothing like a post team-building meal.

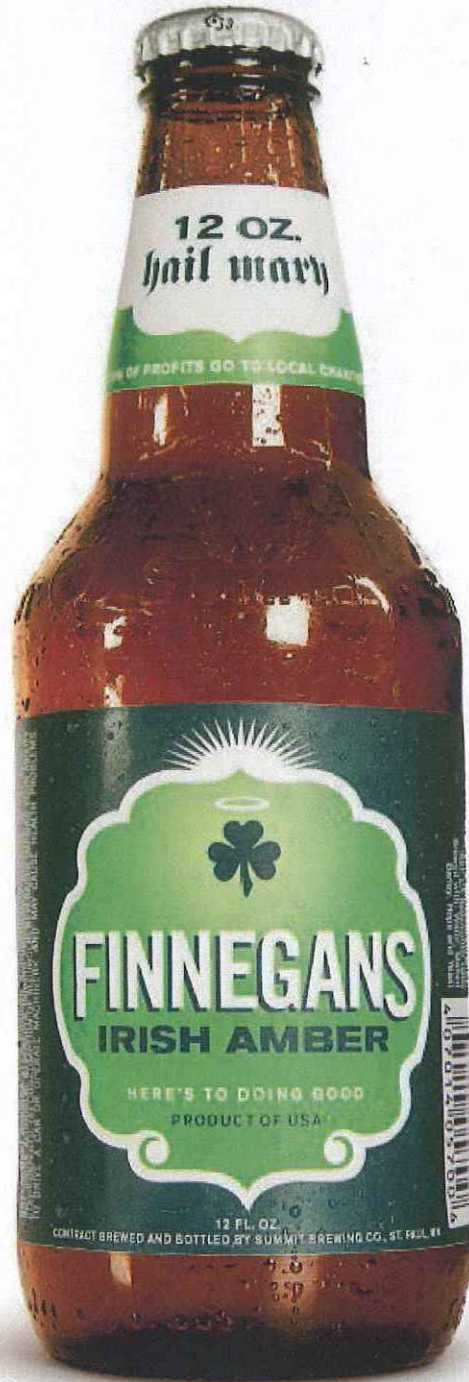
“Instead of companies doing one training and then going out afterwards to do a dinner or drinks, now we’re a one stop shop.”

—KAM TALEBI

atmosphere. We’re not clustered and we’re not formal in any way. The atmosphere played perfectly into some foundation of offering team-building.”

After testing different options and communicating with clients, the CRAVE staff narrowed it down to three activities that could enhance any team: mixology education, the sushi challenge and a dessert lesson.

“All products are geared towards fostering creativity in a fun environment,” says Marlo Kozlak Ellis, CRAVE’s group sales director. “We’re looking at what each group is trying to get out of it and we structure each option to cater to the group. With some of the activities, we have different ingredients that represent each thing; marshmallows for cohesiveness, a martini glasses for being trendy and a champagne glass for elegance and style. Choosing as a team to find what represents us and who are we and expressing that as a group is powerful.”



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