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RESTAURANTS

In a hurry? How about falafel and kebabs to go?

■ **Pasha's, a new Mediterranean restaurant chain, opened its first two Miami-Dade locations last month.**

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There are Italian, Chinese and Mexican quick-service restaurant chains, so why not Mediterranean?

That's the goal behind Pasha's, which in the last month opened its first two Miami-Dade locations with

plans for another before the end of the year.

And co-founder Antonio Ellek doesn't plan to stop there.

LONG-TERM GOAL

Ellek has dreamed for years of finding a way to bring healthy and flavorful Mediterranean food to the United States in the form of a quick-service restaurant. He first conceived the idea while earning an MBA at Harvard Business School. But professors

suggested the former banker should first get experience in the restaurant industry.

After four years with Yum Brands, whose portfolio includes Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and KFC, Ellek set out to fulfill his dream starting a restaurant chain in Miami.

Pasha's menu offers a collection of Eastern Mediterranean dishes that run the gamut from spinach pie and hummus to kebab platters and wraps with falafel or grilled veggies. The majority of the items are

under \$5, and everything is less than \$10.

NUTRITIOUS, TOO

"The food from that part of the world has a lot of healthy components that fit well with today's trends," said Ellek, who is part Turkish and grew up in the Mediterranean. "We're trying to do something that has not been done before."

Helping Ellek and his partner Nicolas Cortes try to make Pasha's into an industry leader

are two former Burger King executives: Jacqueline McCook and Tulin Tuzel.

The first sit-down restaurant is located at 900 Lincoln Rd. in South Beach, and there is an express location at 3801 North Miami Ave. in the Design District. A Brickell Avenue restaurant is scheduled to open before the end of the year.

To ramp up future growth, Ellek expects to raise money through a second round of private financing.