

MEET THE BOSS

Chain chief took his food fad to the Mex

When California-born Clovis Young opened the first Mad Mex grill in 2007 in Sydney's Darlinghurst, it was an act that grew from a lifelong passion.

"I grew up eating Mexican food in California. When I was 10, we moved to Massachusetts and I realised Mexican food wasn't great everywhere," he says.

Despite always dreaming of working for himself, Young's first career was in investment banking.

"I contemplated opening a Mexican restaurant in Boston when I graduated from uni, but I realised I didn't have the confidence to do

it." Fast forward seven years, and Young had an MBA and Wall Street experience under his belt.

"People often say, 'Just go for it', but sometimes you only have one crack, so you want to make sure you are ready," he says.

Now, as head of 29 stores (another three are scheduled to open by Christmas), Young's chain turned over about \$22 million in 2012. Despite the fast ride, he doesn't believe in short cuts. "I'd be telling my kids, 'Do whatever you are interested in – and then work your tail off'."

SUE WHITE

Curriculum vitae

Name Clovis Young.

Current position

Founder and head of Mad Mex.

Responsibilities

Setting the "direction, passion and temperature" of where the business is going.

Education BA in Latin

American history, Bates College (US);

MBA finance, Carnegie Mellon University.

Additional training/courses SEC (US Securities and Exchange Commission) Series 7 (Securities Licence).

Professional associations The CEO Institute; Franchise Council of Australia.

Honourable mentions Awarded No. 12 in *BRW* Fast 100 (2011) and No. 25 on *BRW* Fast Starters list (2012); runner-up, Franchise Council Australia, "Emerging franchise system" (2011).

Strength I ran the restaurant when it was a single store, so I understand it in minutiae.

Weakness It's very hard to move from doing it to coaching and delegating.

Management style and tips Develop a shared vision and goal; people want to be proud of what they do and how they do it.

Work motto There's no substitute for hard work.

