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Toast eatery adds Birmingham location, expands menu, considers further expansion

by Pamela A. Zinkosky | for Oakland Business Review

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Mark Bialek

Thom Bloom at the new Toast Restaurant, currently under construction at 203 Pierce in Birmingham.

Investing in a new restaurant is risky these days, but Thom and Regan Bloom are diving in head-first. The owners of Toast, a popular Ferndale breakfast and lunch spot, will open a Birmingham location that serves dinner and alcohol this month. They expect the new location's first-year revenues to more than triple last year's Ferndale revenues.

The Blooms are building on a concept that started seven years ago when they wanted to bring a big-city dining concept to the Detroit area.

"In L.A., there are these great cozy little eateries," explained Thom, who's originally from Metro Detroit but lived in Los Angeles. "There was nothing but Coney's in Detroit."

Enter "Toast, a breakfast and lunch joint" - a casual eatery offering gourmet food. The Blooms, self-proclaimed "foodies," built a menu that blends Southwest and French cuisine - and one that draws diners from surrounding cities. The menu includes myriad omelets and pancakes, pastries like beignets - French donuts with powdered sugar and raspberries - and of course French toast.

The concept took off. The Blooms grew revenues 54 percent from 2001, their first year in business, to 2007. The Ferndale "destination" restaurant