

9 June 2016

**Graphite Capital acquires pub restaurant business New World Trading Company for £50m**

Graphite Capital, a leading mid-market private equity specialist, has acquired New World Trading Company (NWTC), a fast-growing pub and restaurant business headquartered in Knutsford, Cheshire, in a £50 million transaction.

NWTC opened its first pub in 2011 and now operates 14 pubs/restaurants nationally under five sub brands: The Botanist, The Oast House, Smugglers Cove, The Trading House and The Club House. All of NWTC's outlets offer an exceptional range of traditional cask and craft beers, innovative cocktails, an all-day menu of homemade food including the celebrated 'hanging kebab', with live music featuring every evening.

NWTC's talented management team and its distinctive consumer proposition have been recognised in numerous industry awards. In March this year, the company won the Publican awards for Best Pub Employer and Best Managed Pub Company.

NWTC is expanding rapidly, with seven units opened in the past 15 months and four more planned to open in the next year. The company currently employs more than 900 people.

Chief executive Chris Hill and his senior management team have reinvested a significant proportion of their sale proceeds as part of the transaction and will continue to run the company.

Graphite initiated the acquisition process with an off-market bid for NWTC. The principal vendors were Living Ventures Group, a multi-brand pubs and restaurant group which develops businesses from an early stage, Hill Capital and LDC, which held a minority stake in the business. NWTC's former chairman, Tim Bacon, of Living Ventures Group, very sadly died recently after a long fight with cancer. He was widely acknowledged as one of the most talented innovators in the pubs and casual dining sector and was instrumental in the early development of the business.

Chris Hill commented: "We are delighted to be working with Graphite. Their partnership approach was attractive to us and their experience in supporting roll-outs in the pub and restaurant sector will be invaluable in the coming years. They share our vision for the future of the business and our enthusiasm for pushing out the traditional boundaries of the pub industry."

Omar Kayat, partner at Graphite Capital, said: "NWTC has rapidly established itself as one of the most innovative and respected pub and restaurant operators in the market. The company's multi-branded approach to all day-dining combined with live entertainment in the evening has been hugely successful nationwide. We look forward to helping Chris and his team in their continued expansion across the UK."

LDC's Tim Farazmand said: "Chris and the team have done an outstanding job of building on Tim and Jeremy's earlier vision, launching and scaling several award-winning concepts across the UK which have truly innovated the market. The business' success is another part of Tim Bacon's legacy and testament to his own entrepreneurial spirit and creativity. We wish the team every success for the future."

Graphite has a long and successful track record of investing in the pub and restaurant sectors. It grew Wagamama from two units to more than 100 around the world, generating a return of over 10 times its original investment on the sale of the business in 2005. Graphite is currently an investor in Corbin & King, operator of signature London restaurants including The Wolseley, The Delaunay and Brasserie Zédel. Graphite has also invested in Hawksmoor, which operates premium steak restaurants in London and Manchester.

Omar Kayat, senior partners Simon ffitch and Mike Tilbury, partner Mudassir Khan, and investment managers Alex Mills and John Western managed the transaction for Graphite.

Ends