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BARILLA ENTERS FRESH PASTA MARKET BETS ON D2C AND E-COMMERCE TO EXPAND IN THE UK

The acquisition of a majority stake in Pasta Evangelists marks Barilla's international development and the willingness to invest in new marketing & sales approach.

The creation of a London based Digital Hub strengthens Barilla presence in the United Kingdom.

Parma, January 14 2021 - **Barilla**, the Italian family-owned food company, enters the fresh pasta market and consolidates its role as a global pasta leader and its presence in the UK, thanks to the acquisition of a majority stake in Pasta Evangelists, a UK-based specialist in D2C fresh, high-quality pasta & sauces. The connection was created through BLU1877, Barilla's venture firm. It is intended that **Pasta Evangelists** will continue to operate as a stand-alone entity led by CEO & founder, Alessandro Savelli, and co-founders Chris Rennoldson and Finn Lagun, who will remain significant shareholders in the company, within the frame of fully agreed-upon agreements. The value of the deal is undisclosed.

This acquisition represents a new step of Barilla's international growth, especially in the UK, and its willingness to invest in new marketing and sales approaches, up to digital as a priority platform for interacting with consumers. Online food sales have seen massive growth in recent years, both in the recipe box category as well as in the online take-away sector. Pasta Evangelists operates at the convergence of these.

Since 2016, Pasta Evangelists has been delivering boxes of fresh, restaurant-quality pasta across the UK, inviting Brits to prepare five-star homemade pasta dishes in five minutes, using only the freshest ingredients, and Italian where possible. **Born as a digitally-native brand, Pasta Evangelists is now the authority in premium fresh pasta and sauces in the UK.** Its sales increased by more than 300% during 2020, having sold in excess of 1 million portions of pasta during the year, up from just 200 portions when it launched in 2016. Its business model is based around three main pillars: e-commerce, with www.pastaevangelists.com as its core, a fast-growing on-demand offer, a retail offering that sees Pasta Evangelists distributing its pastas and sauces across Ocado, Amazon, Marks & Spencer and at a physical concession in the Harrods Food Hall.

Barilla's industrial expertise and over 100 years of experience in producing good, quality food will support Pasta Evangelists' growth plans in the UK and, in the future, internationally. And Pasta Evangelists will give Barilla the opportunity to consolidate in the UK thanks to its premium, high quality products and a business model projected into the future of the purchase and consumption of pasta. *"The Covid-19 crisis - stressed **Gianluca Di Tondo, Barilla Group CMO** - has changed consumer behaviour, the way people work, and the way products are distributed. The consumer demand for freshly made, premium food is growing, as well as the boom in e-commerce and subscription-based consumer products. We are excited to expand our Family with a brand that underlines these major trends. The UK is at the forefront of both."*

Pasta Evangelists CEO & founder, Alessandro Savelli, says: *"We are hugely proud to be partnering with Barilla, an iconic, family-owned business. With Barilla's support, we look forward to taking Pasta Evangelists to the next level, including through internationalisation and scaling up our production*



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whilst staying true to our core values: freshness, craftsmanship and italianità, or Italianness. As an entrepreneur, and as an Italian, for me this is a dream come true."

The outgoing **Chairman and co-founder, James McArthur**, reflected "Alex's vision and entrepreneurial spirit have been fundamental in driving Pasta Evangelists' development, and in attracting the great group of shareholders, including core institutional investors Guinness EIS (managed by Guinness Asset Management), Pembroke VCT and First Course (Francesco Fumagalli) who have worked closely with the founders and management to help realise growth ambitions. We all offer Alex and the Pasta Evangelists team our warmest thanks and best wishes for this next exciting chapter."

To date, the foreign business volume represents more than 55% of Barilla's 3.62 billion euros overall turnover. However, there is a highly potential to be seized, and for this reason Barilla intends to equip itself with an innovative approach that implies the development of new capabilities, new investments and renewed governance on foreign markets. Relevant projects regarding this strategic decision include the intention to expand in the promising UK market, where the Group is registering interesting growth rates. Despite an average per capita consumption of only 3.5 kg of pasta per year, the United Kingdom is among the most promising international pasta markets. Not only 71 percent of Brits eat pasta at least once per week, but 1 person out of 4 increased its consumption of pasta during the lockdown, thus choosing it as good, healthy, easy to cook, sustainable and "favorite" food in 2020 (source: BVA-DOXA – Unione Italiana Food Survey "Pasta consumption during the lockdown", 2020).

Barilla's expansion in the UK will also be possible through the creation of a "Digital Hub" in London: a new dedicated competence centre that will work in an integrated way with the Parma headquarter - where the competence centres for Customer Development, Research & Development and Digital are located - and with the other Barilla offices, promoting the exchange of information and experiences for the benefit of the entire Group.

The Barilla Group

Barilla is a family company, not listed on the stock exchange, chaired by brothers Guido, Luca and Paolo Barilla. It was founded by their great-grandfather, Pietro Barilla, who opened a bakery in Parma in 1877. Now, Barilla is famous in Italy and throughout the world for the excellence of its food products. With its brands – Barilla, Mulino Bianco, Pan di Stelle, Gran Cereale, Harrys, Pavesi, Wasa, Filiz, Yemina and Vesta, Misko, Voiello and Cucina Barilla – it promotes a tasty, joyful and healthy diet, inspired by the Mediterranean Diet and the Italian lifestyle.

When Pietro opened his store more than 140 years ago, his overriding aim was to make good food. Today, that principle has become Barilla's way of doing business: "Good for You, Good for the Planet," a slogan that expresses the daily commitment of the over 8,000 people who work for the company, and of a supply chain that shares its values and passion for quality.

"Good for You" means constantly improving the product offering, encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles and facilitating people's access to food.

"Good for the Planet" means promoting sustainable supply chains and reducing CO2 emissions and water consumption.

To learn more: www.barillagroup.com; Twitter: [@barillagroup](https://twitter.com/barillagroup)

For information: Andrea Belli, Global Media Relations, Andrea.Belli@barilla.com, +39 0521 262217