

Case Study - Moore Australia advises Stokehouse on its sale to Trader House

Moore Australia Corporate Finance advised the Van Haandel family on the sale of Stokehouse St Kilda and Stokehouse Pasta & Bar to Trader House. The 36-year family business with exceptional brand, venue and team passes to a new owner.

SETTING THE SCENE

Stokehouse has been a cultural landmark in Melbourne since it opened in 1990. Sophisticated and elegant, it pairs modern Australian cuisine with stunning beachfront views. The business spans relaxed fine dining upstairs at Stokehouse St Kilda and casual dining on the ground floor at Stokehouse Pasta & Bar. Frank, Sharon and Hugh Van Haandel operated Stokehouse for 36 years, with a strong management team, building an international reputation.

Trader House is a collective of restaurants, bars and specialty food stores led by chef and author Andrew McConnell and photographer Jo McGann. Its Melbourne venues include Gimlet, Côte Basque, Apollo Inn, Cutler, Supernormal, Cumulus Inc., Marion, Builders Arms Hotel, Meatsmith and Morning Market, with Supernormal and Bar Miette in Brisbane.

THE OPPORTUNITY

After 36 years on St Kilda Beach, the Van Haandel family decided the time was right to step back and sell both businesses. Stokehouse is one of Melbourne's most recognised restaurants, with a venue capacity exceeding 800 people, making it one of the largest venues of its type. The family sought a buyer who was an experienced operator to protect the well-regarded brand, provide opportunities for their talented team and invest in the venue for the long term, without disrupting trade or unsettling staff and guests.

THE PROCESS

Moore Australia Corporate Finance (VIC/TAS) was appointed by the Van Haandel family to advise on the sale of the Stokehouse St Kilda and Stokehouse Pasta & Bar businesses, and to find a buyer who would invest in the brand, the venue and its people.

As exclusive strategic and financial advisor throughout the transaction, Moore Australia Corporate Finance's role included:

- Developing the sale strategy and preparing both businesses for market, including financial analysis, normalised earnings and valuation advice.
- Identifying and approaching buyers with the right cultural fit, then leading negotiations with Trader House and its advisors on behalf of the family.
- Coordinating a structured due diligence process, including managing and coordinating external advisors and Q&A process across financial, legal, operational and commercial matters.
- Advising on deal structure and transition arrangements, so the team, guests and forward bookings carried through to handover without disruption.
- Negotiating a comprehensive suite of transaction documentation through to completion.



THE RESULTS

The Moore Australia Corporate Finance Melbourne based team led the transaction and is proud to have supported the Van Haandel family on this important milestone, through to the successful sale of Stokehouse St Kilda and Stokehouse Pasta & Bar to Trader House.

After 36 years on St Kilda Beach, the family hands over a business at its best. We wish Frank, Sharon and Hugh Van Haandel every success in their next chapter, and the Stokehouse team every success under Trader House.

THE MOORE DIFFERENCE

Moore Australia combined strategic and financial advice with hands-on transaction management, from sale strategy through to completion. Our local market knowledge and structured coordination across buyer engagement, due diligence, deal structure and documentation kept the process moving and let the family stay focused on running two busy venues.

“Moore Australia Corporate Finance combined strong M&A expertise with a pragmatic, solutions-first approach. Their proactive leadership and structured execution kept the transaction running smoothly and let us stay focused on the business.”

Frank Van Haandel, Founder, Stokehouse

ABOUT JARRON PUSZET

**Managing Director, Corporate Finance Lead Advisory
Moore Australia (VIC/TAS)**

Jarron is Chair of the Moore Australia Corporate Finance Committee and has 18 years of experience in corporate advisory, specialising in mid-market M&A negotiations and dealmaking. His distinguished career positioned him as a trusted leader in delivering pragmatic and commercially focused M&A transactions.

Jarron advises clients on every stage of buying and selling businesses and raising capital. He has a track record of delivering outstanding results on both domestic and cross-border deals, completing the majority of recent transactions for Australian clients with international parties.



About Moore Australia

Moore Australia is a leading independent network of accountants, auditors, and advisors with 600+ professionals across 13 offices nationwide. As part of Moore Global, one of the largest global professional services networks, we connect with 37,000+ experts in 110+ countries.

Our advisors provide a full suite of services, from Tax Planning and Corporate Finance to Sustainability, Audit and Forensic Accounting. We support key sectors driving Australia's economy, including Mining, Energy & Renewables, Agribusiness, Health, Tourism, Technology, and Government.

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