

The 90s are back!

■ A RECESSION is a good time to buy a property franchise, according to property expert Sarah Walker of Platinum Property Partners (PPP), as the next 12 to 24 months are going to be a 'golden time' to buy property for those who have the means and know-how. "It will be a once-in-a-generation chance to buy at such a high level of discount," said Sarah.

One strategy for Platinum Property Partners' franchise partners is to focus on acquiring UK properties substantially below their true market value. Sarah said: "While prices are still falling there are some great opportunities to negotiate discounts, but you must make sure it's win-win for both you and the vendor; and it isn't a market for amateurs."

The demand for property is only set to rise as The Office of National Statistics recently reported that within the next 20 years, two out of every five homes will be single-occupancy, which is 18 per cent of the population.

"When the market is buoyant, loan to value ratios are much higher than they are at present. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs – usually with six rooms rented out to working



adults) in particular are the kind of investments our franchise partners have been making over the last 18 months, and several have now taken on property managers, which means the significant income from their portfolios is virtually passive.

"While HMOs give very high levels of cash flow and monthly income, this is a great climate

for buying smaller properties, which may not give the same level of cash flow, but can be bought with a good amount of inbuilt equity.

"Those who invest wisely over this period will find themselves with substantial equity in their portfolio and excellent financial security for the future."

New launch

■ SALAD BAR, Tossed, has opened two franchise sites in London and plans to open a further six in 2009. Tossed specialises in freshly tossed-to-order salads, as well as smoothies, wraps and other healthy and nutritionally balanced, freshly prepared foods.

Tossed counts calories and nutritional content, packs in superfoods and protein, does not add any salt to its foods, uses low GI carbs, ditches mayo for fat free yogurt to bind ingredients, serves hand-made soups, and makes smoothies that provide 100 per cent of your daily fruit in one hit.

Father and son

■ RECOGNITION EXPRESS franchisee Paul Slack has produced school leavers hoodies for his son's school.

Enterprising head boy, Ollie Slack, picked up a leaflet offering hoodies for school leavers, and asked his businessman dad if he could come up with a better deal.

As a result, 48 students leaving this summer have just taken delivery of a bespoke hoodie, badged with the name of all their mates, and printed by Recognition Express.

Paul said: "Some wanted nicknames instead – like Fred,

Borgy and Yeti. So every hoodie was different. The teenagers got a unique piece of clothing and a good souvenir of their school days."

Ollie breathed a sigh of relief when it all worked out. "I'm going to be helping my dad out at Recognition Express during my summer break," he said.



STAT-O-METER

The business start-up sector remained robust in 2008, according to Barclays

2.9m

Number of new business start-ups

9%

Increase in number of female-run start-ups

13%

Increase in number of start-ups in areas of health, care, education and social work

8%

Decrease in number of construction start-ups

13%

Decrease in number of property start-ups