

THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER

USA
TODAY

NO. 1 IN THE USA

USA TODAY · FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2004 · 7D

Food

Cereal: It's what's for lunch, dinner

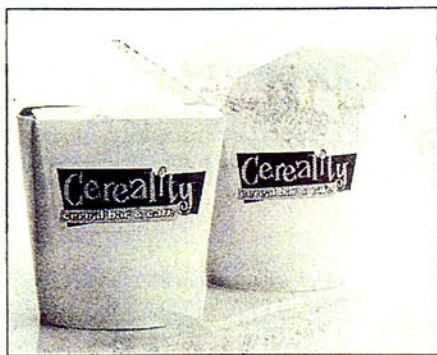
Concept is as Froot Loopy as it sounds

By Jerry Shriver
USA TODAY

The latest fast-food concept is so absurdly simple, self-indulgent and reflective of one's inner child that, well, how can it fail?

Imagine a food stand that resembles the kitchen of your youth and serves nothing but cereal and breakfast drinks from sunup to sundown. A place where you can create your own blend of Cap'n Crunch nestled on a bed of Lucky Charms and garnished with Cocoa Puffs, honey, bananas and soymilk.

If co-creator David Roth has his way, the whole country could experience munch mania at a chain of eateries called Cereality Cereal Bar & Café. He and partner Rick Bacher tested a prototype during the past eight months at the Arizona State University student union in Tempe. Now they're negotiating



Cereality

Cereal monogamy? Cereality diners will be tempted by 30 cereals and 34 toppings.

for space at train stations, arenas, hotels, office buildings and health-care facilities. The first stands will probably open this fall, at colleges and airports, Roth says.

"I wanted to create a totally cool experience where all of those (cereal) rituals and habits can be celebrated out of the home," says Roth, who has a Harvard master's degree in human development. He was inspired by cereal-loving characters on *Seinfeld*, "executives on Wall

Street sneaking Cocoa Puffs at 3 p.m. and moms with strollers who wouldn't think of leaving the house without a bag of Cheerios. Everyone loves cereal. More people buy it than toilet paper."

Each Cereality would offer about 30 hot or cold cereals; 34 toppings; seven types of flavored and unflavored milk; cereal-and-yogurt-based smoothies (Slurrealities); and fresh-baked breakfast bars.

Customers can construct their own mixes and store the formula in an on-site computer for their next visit. Or they can buy a prepackaged designer mix such as Devil Made Me Do It, consisting of Cocoa Puffs, Lucky Charms and chocolate-milk-flavored crystals, topped with malt balls. Or they can consult with "cereologists" wearing pajama tops.

A basic "meal" — two scoops of cereal, one topping and milk — will cost about \$4.

"We've figured out how to make oatmeal exciting," Roth says.