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By ALAN PEPPARD [apeppard@dallasnews.com](mailto:apeppard@dallasnews.com)

## McCartney in Mo.

As the chairman and CEO of Dallas-based Consolidated Restaurants, **John Harkey** recently got a report with two names that most of us would never expect to see in the same sentence: Paul McCartney and Branson, Mo. John gets daily reports from the far-flung locations of his El Chico, Cantina Laredo, Old Spaghetti Warehouse, Good Eats and other restaurant concepts.

"Paul McCartney came in for dinner at our Cantina Laredo in Branson," says John. "We've got the nicest restaurant in Branson."

Of course, who are you gonna brag to about that?

The word is that Sir Paul was in town to visit Louise Harrison, sister of the late George Harrison and founder of the Beatles tribute band Liverpool Legends who perform at Branson's Starlite Theater. There is talk of Louise starting a Beatles museum in the Missouri resort town

## Emirate Tex-Mex

John Harkey took over his aforementioned restaurant empire last year when his Consolidated Restaurant Operations partners, John Cracken and Dallas restaurant fixture Gene Street, sold most of their shares to him.

He's been growing the company internationally.

A decade ago, CRO acquired El Chico and Cantina Laredo, both founded by Dallas' Cuellar family, for around \$65 million.

Cantina Laredo now has a foothold in the Middle East.

"We just had member of the royal family come into our Cantina Laredo in Abu Dhabi with a party of 55," says John.

His Highness Sheikh Nahayan Bin Mubarak and his guests munched on guacamole, chicken fajitas and chocolate cake.