Johan Engman thinks breakfast is underserved in San Diego. So he is building a small morning-food-focused empire that is moving beyond that corner of the country.

Engman is founder and owner of the Rise & Shine Restaurant Group, based in San Diego, which is parent to the Breakfast Republic concept, as well as a growing number of other restaurant brands.

Breakfast Republic, however, is the concept so far that Engman believes has legs. Here's a look:
Whimsy and humor drive the design theme at Breakfast Republic. Founder Johan Engman said he hopes guests notice new creative details in the design every time they visit.
A closer look at Breakfast Republic

Aug 26, 2016

Lisa Jennings

Engman opened the first Breakfast Republic in 2015. With two units open in San Diego, three more are planned over the next nine months. It's the most scalable of Rise & Shine Restaurant Group's concepts, he said.

Rise & Shine Restaurant Group's morning-focused concept combines an innovative menu, fun design and breakfast cocktails.

Read more: Breakfast Republic aims for scalable whimsy

Photos by Walter Wilson Photography
The Liberty Station location of Breakfast Republic has a full bar. The original unit in San Diego’s North Park neighborhood has a beer-and-wine permit, but soon will have a full bar. A full bar is planned for all units going forward.
Breakfast Republic offers traditional breakfast fare with a twist, like this deconstructed version of steak and eggs, all day from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
This whiskey cocktail uses whipped egg whites and orange peel to resemble a fried egg.
Founder Engman is a believer in branding. The restaurants sell branded tee shirts, hats, coffee mugs and more. One restaurant sells $3,000 to $4,000 in apparel a month, he said.
The restaurants have about 20 beers on draft, even though it's all about breakfast. Engman said beer flies out the door from 7 a.m. on. "That's just become part of the drinking culture in America," he said.
Breakfast Republic specializes in the decadent, but there are healthful items on the menu too.
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The whimsical décor extends to the patio, which is a strong feature of Breakfast Republic. It is Southern California, after all.
For guests who can’t decide, flights of pancakes are available.
Rise & Shine Restaurant Group has several other restaurants planned for the North Park neighborhood of San Diego, including a concept called Pizza Republic next door, and another breakfast-focused restaurant called North Park Breakfast Co.