

POOLHOUSE Special Situations Fund I Acquires Masi Masa, Accelerating Growth of Fast-Rising Premium Spice Brand

Transaction Provides Founder Liquidity While Preserving Future Upside Through Innovative Seller-Financing and Equity Structure

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, June 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [POOLHOUSE](#) today announced



Too often, founders spend decades building value only to face limited options at exit. We're creating flexible pathways that reward both legacy and future potential."

Chris Merkle

the acquisition of Masi Masa, a rapidly growing specialty spice and seasoning company known for globally inspired flavors including Japanese Gold Curry, Tikka Masala, and other top-performing products on Amazon.

The acquisition was completed through a combination of cash consideration, seller financing, and performance equity – providing immediate liquidity to founders Cindy and Eric Frigard while allowing them to participate in the future success of the business.

Masi Masa will become part of POOLHOUSE Special Situations Fund I, a private investment vehicle focused on acquiring, improving, and scaling founder-led businesses with strong brands, loyal customer bases, and clear opportunities for operational enhancement.

Founded with a mission to make globally inspired flavors more accessible, Masi Masa has built a loyal following among home cooks and food enthusiasts. The company's Japanese Gold Curry seasoning has emerged as a leading product within its category, while its Tikka Masala blend continues to attract strong consumer demand.

"This transaction allowed us to achieve something many founders struggle to find: immediate liquidity while still maintaining participation in the future upside of the business," said Cindy Frigard, Co-founder of Masi Masa.

"We're proud of what we built with Masi Masa. It was truly a labor of love, born out of our desire to help others experience global flavors. But we realized that the effort required to scale it wasn't in our wheelhouse. This is why POOLHOUSE is exactly the right partner to realize our vision - they have the talent, the team, and the passion to take it to the next level."

Unlike traditional private equity transactions that often prioritize financial engineering and complex layers of debt, POOLHOUSE focuses on operational transformation, technology enablement, and long-term value creation.

"We believe Masi Masa already has the foundation of a category-defining brand," said Chris Merkle, General Partner of POOLHOUSE.

"The opportunity ahead is substantial. We intend to consolidate key supplier relationships while keeping production inside the United States, selectively bring critical supply chain functions in-house, improve manufacturing economics through vertical integration, and expand distribution globally. We see significant opportunities to introduce new products, enter new channels, and create meaningful value for customers and investors alike."

POOLHOUSE expects to launch more than ten new products under the Masi Masa brand during the next twelve months, including the company's first collaboration product: an Espresso-Based Steak Rub developed in partnership with specialty coffee producers.

The acquisition reflects a broader strategy by POOLHOUSE Special Situations Fund I to partner with founders seeking [succession planning](#) solutions, [growth capital](#) alternatives, operational expertise, or partial liquidity events without sacrificing future participation in the value they helped create.

"We believe the next generation of private equity will be built by operators, not financial engineers. Our objective is simple: acquire great businesses, preserve what already works, improve what doesn't, and create outcomes where founders, employees, customers, and investors all win." Merkle added.

"Many entrepreneurs are forced to choose between taking money off the table or participating in future growth. Our approach is designed to create alignment by offering flexible structures that can include cash at closing, seller financing, retained equity participation, or performance-based upside."

POOLHOUSE is actively seeking additional acquisition opportunities across consumer products, e-commerce, software, specialty manufacturing, business services, and founder-led lower middle market businesses throughout North America and Europe.

Portfolio Update

POOLHOUSE also reported continued operational progress across investments within Special Situations Fund I. One portfolio company, Love Is Art, has undergone significant operational improvements during the leadership period of Chris Merkle, including the elimination of legacy debt obligations, revenue growth of approximately 49%, increased profitability, and the

expansion of a global fulfillment infrastructure.

POOLHOUSE implemented new customer acquisition systems, expanded international distribution capabilities, and improved marketing efficiency. Based on internal management estimates, POOLHOUSE managed investments and engagements have generated an aggregate unrealized multiple on invested capital (MOIC) of approximately 8.3x to date. These estimates have not been independently audited and should not be relied upon as indicators of future performance.

Love Is Art is currently evaluating strategic alternatives, including potential growth capital, recapitalization, merger, or sale opportunities. No assurance can be given that any transaction will occur.

*Forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties; actual results may differ materially.

Chris Merkle

Poolhouse

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