

Edgar Filing: CLINTON GROUP INC - Form SC 13D

CLINTON GROUP INC
Form SC 13D
September 07, 2007

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

SCHEDULE 13D
(Rule 13d-101)

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN STATEMENTS FILED PURSUANT
TO RULE 13d-1(a) AND AMENDMENTS THERETO FILED PURSUANT TO
RULE 13d-2(a)

Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934
(Amendment No.)*

Carrols Restaurant Group, Inc.

(Name of Issuer)

Common Stock, \$0.01 par value

(Title of Class of Securities)

14574X104

(CUSIP Number)

Marc Weingarten, Esq.
Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP
919 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10022
(212) 756-2000

(Name, Address and Telephone Number of Person
Authorized to Receive Notices and Communications)

August 30, 2007

(Date of Event which Requires
Filing of This Statement)

If the filing person has previously filed a statement on Schedule 13G to report the acquisition that is the subject of this Schedule 13D, and is filing this schedule because of Rule 13d-1(e), 13d-1(f) or 13d-1(g), check the following box. []

NOTE: Schedules filed in paper format shall include a signed original and five copies of the schedule, including all exhibits. See Rule 13d-7 for other parties to whom copies are to be sent.

(Continued on following pages)

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11 AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH PERSON

1,124,561

12 CHECK IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT IN ROW (11) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES*

[]

13 PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED BY AMOUNT IN ROW (11)

5.2%

14 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON*

IA; CO

* SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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1 NAME OF REPORTING PERSON
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NOS. OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)

CLINTON MULTISTRATEGY MASTER FUND, LTD.

2 CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP*

(a) []

(b) []

3 SEC USE ONLY

4 SOURCE OF FUNDS*

WC

5 CHECK BOX IF DISCLOSURE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO ITEMS 2(d) or 2(e)

[]

6 CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION

CAYMAN ISLANDS

7 SOLE VOTING POWER

-0-

NUMBER OF
SHARES
BENEFICIALLY
OWNED BY
EACH

8 SHARED VOTING POWER

939,989

9 SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER

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REPORTING
PERSON WITH

-0-

10 SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER

939,989

11 AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH PERSON

939,989

12 CHECK IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT IN ROW (11) EXCLUDES
CERTAIN SHARES*

[]

13 PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED BY AMOUNT IN ROW (11)

4.4%

14 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON*

CO

* SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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1 NAME OF REPORTING PERSON
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NOS. OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)

CLINTON SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES MASTER FUND, LTD.

2 CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP*

(a) []

(b) []

3 SEC USE ONLY

4 SOURCE OF FUNDS*

WC

5 CHECK BOX IF DISCLOSURE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IS REQUIRED PURSUANT
TO ITEMS 2(d) or 2(e) []

6 CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION

CAYMAN ISLANDS

7 SOLE VOTING POWER

-0-

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6 CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION

CAYMAN ISLANDS

7 SOLE VOTING POWER
-0-

NUMBER OF SHARES BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH REPORTING PERSON WITH 8 SHARED VOTING POWER
65,413

9 SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER
-0-

10 SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER
65,413

11 AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH PERSON

65,413

12 CHECK IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT IN ROW (11) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES*

[]

13 PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED BY AMOUNT IN ROW (11)

0.3%

14 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON*

PN

* SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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1 NAME OF REPORTING PERSON
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NOS. OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)

GEORGE HALL

2 CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP*

(a) []

(b) []

3 SEC USE ONLY

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4 SOURCE OF FUNDS*

AF

5 CHECK IF DISCLOSURE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IS REQUIRED PURSUANT
TO ITEMS 2(d) or 2(e) []

6 CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION

UNITED STATES

7 SOLE VOTING POWER

15,200

NUMBER OF
SHARES
BENEFICIALLY
OWNED BY
EACH
REPORTING
PERSON WITH

8 SHARED VOTING POWER

1,124,561

9 SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER

15,200

10 SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER

1,124,561

11 AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED BY EACH PERSON

1,139,761

12 CHECK IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT IN ROW (11) EXCLUDES
CERTAIN SHARES*

[]

13 PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED BY AMOUNT IN ROW (11)

5.3%

14 TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON*

IN

* SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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ITEM 1. SECURITY AND ISSUER.

This statement relates to the shares of Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share (the "Shares"), of Carrols Restaurant Group, Inc., a Delaware corporation (the "Issuer"). The principal executive office of the Issuer is

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located at 968 James Street, Syracuse, New York 13203.

ITEM 2. IDENTITY AND BACKGROUND.

(a) This statement is filed by Clinton Group, Inc., a Delaware corporation ("CGI"), Clinton Multistrategy Master Fund, Ltd., a Cayman Islands company ("CMSF"), Clinton Special Opportunities Master Fund, Ltd., a Cayman Islands company ("CSO"), Clinton Lexington Master Fund, L.P., a Cayman Islands exempted limited partnership ("CLEX") and George Hall (collectively, the "Reporting Persons").

(b) The principal business address of CGI and George Hall is 9 West 57th Street, 26th Floor, New York, New York 10019. The principal business address of CMSF, CSO and CLEX is c/o Fortis Fund Services (Cayman) Limited, P.O. Box 2003 GT, Grand Pavilion Commercial Centre, 802 West Bay Road, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

(c) The principal business of CGI is investing for funds and accounts under its management. The principal business of CMSF, CSO and CLEX is to invest in securities. George Hall is the Chief Investment Officer and President of CGI.

(d) None of the Reporting Persons nor any of the individuals set forth in Schedule A attached hereto has, during the last five years, been convicted in a criminal proceeding (excluding traffic violations or similar misdemeanors).

(e) None of the Reporting Persons nor any of the individuals set forth in Schedule A attached hereto has, during the last five years, been a party to a civil proceeding of a judicial or administrative body of competent jurisdiction and as a result of such proceeding was or is subject to a judgment, decree or final order enjoining future violations of, or prohibiting or mandating activities subject to, federal or state securities laws or finding any violation with respect to such laws.

(f) George Hall is a citizen of the United States of America.

The name, citizenship, present principal occupation or employment and business address of each director and executive officer of CGI, CMSF, CSO and CLEX is set forth in Schedule A attached hereto. To the best of the Reporting Persons' knowledge, except as set forth in this statement on Schedule 13D, none of such individuals owns any Shares.

ITEM 3. SOURCE AND AMOUNT OF FUNDS OR OTHER CONSIDERATION.

Funds for the purchase of the Shares reported herein were derived from available capital of CMSF, CSO and CLEX. A total of approximately \$16.2 million was paid to acquire such Shares.

ITEM 4. PURPOSE OF TRANSACTION.

The Reporting Persons originally acquired Shares for investment in the ordinary course of business because they believed that the Shares, when purchased, were undervalued and represented an attractive investment opportunity.

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On September 7, 2007 CGI sent a letter to the Issuer's Chairman and CEO, Mr. Alan Vituli, expressing confidence in the Issuer's management team and business strategy. The letter stated CGI's belief that the market has misunderstood the Issuer's story and growth prospects since its IPO pricing last year and further noted that the issuer trades at a substantial discount to its peer group and to restaurant M&A multiples. CGI stated that, in the future absence of multiple enhancement and stock appreciation, it would be happy to help the Issuer explore more broad based strategic alternatives including a return to a delisted private company or would consider an appointment to the Issuer's board of directors. A copy of this letter is attached hereto as Exhibit B and incorporated herein by reference.

Except as set forth herein or as would occur upon completion of any of the actions discussed herein, including in any Exhibits hereto, the Reporting Persons have no present plan or proposal that would relate to or result in any of the matters set forth in subparagraphs (a)-(j) of Item 4 of Schedule 13D. The Reporting Persons intend to review their investment in the Issuer on a continuing basis and may engage in discussions with management, the board of directors, other shareholders of the Issuer and other relevant parties concerning the business, operations, board composition, management, strategy and future plans of the Issuer. Depending on various factors including, without limitation, the Issuer's financial position and strategic direction, the outcome of the discussions and actions referenced above, actions taken by the board of directors, price levels of the Shares, other investment opportunities available to the Reporting Persons, conditions in the securities market and general economic and industry conditions, the Reporting Persons may in the future take such actions with respect to their investment in the Issuer as they deem appropriate including, without limitation, purchasing additional Shares or selling some or all of their Shares, engaging in short selling of or any hedging or similar transactions with respect to the Shares and/or otherwise changing their intention with respect to any and all matters referred to in Item 4 of Schedule 13D.

ITEM 5. INTEREST IN SECURITIES OF THE ISSUER.

(a) As of the close of business on September 6, 2007, the Reporting Persons excepting George Hall may be deemed the beneficial owners of an aggregate of 1,124,561 Shares, constituting approximately 5.2% of the Shares outstanding. George Hall may be deemed the beneficial owner of 1,139,761 Shares, including 15,200 Shares beneficially owned individually, constituting approximately 5.3% of the Shares outstanding.

The aggregate percentage of Shares beneficially owned by the Reporting Persons is based upon 21,550,827 Shares outstanding, which is the total number of Shares outstanding as of August 3, 2007 as reported in the Issuer's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q filed August 8, 2007 for the period ended July 1, 2007.

(b) By virtue of investment management agreements with each of CMSF, CSO and CLEX, CGI has the power to vote or direct the voting, and to dispose or direct the disposition, of all of the 939,989 Shares held by CMSF, the 119,159 Shares held by CSO and the 65,413 Shares held by CLEX. By virtue of his direct and indirect control of CGI, George Hall is deemed to have shared voting power and shared dispositive power with respect to all Shares as to which CGI has voting power or dispositive power. Individually, George Hall also has sole beneficial ownership of an additional 15,200 Shares. Accordingly, CGI and George Hall are deemed to have shared voting and shared dispositive power with respect to an aggregate of 1,124,561 Shares and George Hall is deemed to have sole voting power and dispositive power with respect to an additional 15,200 Shares.

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(c) Information concerning transactions in the Shares effected by the Reporting Persons during the past sixty days is set forth in Schedule B hereto and is incorporated herein by reference. Unless otherwise indicated, all of such transactions were effected in the open market.

(d) No person other than the Reporting Persons is known to have the right to receive or the power to direct the receipt of dividends from, or the proceeds from the sale of, the Shares.

(e) Not applicable.

ITEM 6. CONTRACTS, ARRANGEMENTS, UNDERSTANDINGS OR RELATIONSHIPS WITH RESPECT TO SECURITIES OF THE ISSUER.

The Reporting Persons may, from time to time, enter into and dispose of cash-settled equity swap or other similar derivative transactions with one or more counterparties that are based upon the value of Shares, which transactions may be significant in amount. The profit, loss and/or return on such contracts may be wholly or partially dependent on the market value of the Shares, the relative value of Shares in comparison to one or more other financial instruments, indexes or securities, a basket or group of securities in which Shares may be included, or a combination of any of the foregoing. In addition to the Shares that they beneficially own without reference to these contracts, the Reporting Persons currently have long economic exposure to 444,533 Shares through such contracts. These contracts do not give the Reporting Persons direct or indirect voting, investment or dispositive control over any securities of the Issuer and do not require the counterparties thereto to acquire, hold, vote or dispose of any securities of the Issuer. Accordingly, the Reporting Persons disclaim any beneficial ownership in any securities that may be referenced in such contracts or that may be held from time to time by any counterparties to such contracts.

Except as otherwise set forth herein, the Reporting Persons do not have any contract, arrangement, understanding or relationship with any person with respect to the securities of the Issuer.

ITEM 7. MATERIAL TO BE FILED AS EXHIBITS

Exhibit A - Joint Filing Agreement dated September 7, 2007

EXHIBIT B - Letter to the Issuer dated September 7, 2007

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SIGNATURES

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After reasonable inquiry and to the best of his or its knowledge and belief, each of the undersigned certifies that the information set forth in this statement is true, complete and correct.

Dated: September 7, 2007

CLINTON GROUP, INC.

By: /s/ Francis Ruchalski

Name: Francis Ruchalski
Title: Chief Financial Officer

CLINTON MULTISTRATEGY MASTER FUND, LTD.

By: Clinton Group, Inc. its investment manager

By: /s/ Francis Ruchalski

Name: Francis Ruchalski
Title: Chief Financial Officer

CLINTON SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES MASTER FUND, LTD.

By: Clinton Group, Inc. its investment manager

By: /s/ Francis Ruchalski

Name: Francis Ruchalski
Title: Chief Financial Officer

CLINTON LEXINGTON MASTER FUND, L.P.

By: Clinton Group, Inc. its investment manager

By: /s/ Francis Ruchalski

Name: Francis Ruchalski
Title: Chief Financial Officer

/s/ George Hall

George Hall

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SCHEDULE A

DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF CERTAIN REPORTING PERSONS

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The following sets forth the name, position and principal occupation of each director and executive officer of CGI. Each such person is a citizen of the United States of America. The business address of each director and executive officer is 9 West 57th Street, 26th Floor, New York, New York 10019.

CLINTON GROUP, INC.

| Name | Position |
|----------------------|---|
| George E. Hall | Director and President |
| Francis A. Ruchalski | Director and Chief Financial Officer |
| Wendy Ruberti | General Counsel and Assistant Secretary |
| John L. Hall | Director |
| Hani K. Findakly | Director |

The following sets forth the name, citizenship, principal occupation and business address of each director of each of CMSF and CSO, and of the general partner of CLEX. There are no executive officers of CMSF, CSO and CLEX.

CLINTON MULTISTRATEGY MASTER FUND, LTD.

Jane Fleming is a citizen of the United Kingdom. Her principal occupation is Client Accountant of Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd. Her business address is Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd., Harbour Place, 5th Floor, 103 South Church Street, P.O. Box 30464 SMB, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

Dennis Hunter is a citizen of the United Kingdom. His principal occupation is Director of Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd. His business address is Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd., Harbour Place, 5th Floor, 103 South Church Street, P.O. Box 30464 SMB, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

Roger Hanson is a citizen of the United Kingdom. His principal occupation is director of dms Management Ltd. His business address is dms Management Ltd., P.O. Box 31910 SMB, Ansbacher House, 20 Genesis Close, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

Blair Gauld is a citizen of New Zealand. His principal occupation is Director of Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd. His business address is Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd., Harbour Place, 5th Floor, 103 South Church Street, P.O. Box 30464 SMB, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

CLINTON SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES MASTER FUND, LTD.

Dennis Hunter's citizenship, principal occupation and business address are set forth above.

Roger Hanson's citizenship, principal occupation and business address are set forth above.

Cassandra Powell is a citizen of the Cayman Islands. Her principal occupation is Senior Manager of Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd. Her business address is Queensgate Bank & Trust Company Ltd., Harbour Place, 5th Floor, 103 South Church Street, P.O. Box 30464 SMB, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

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CLINTON LEXINGTON MASTER FUND, L.P.

Clinton GP, Inc., a Delaware limited liability company ("Clinton GP"), is the general partner of Clinton Lexington Master Fund, L.P. Clinton GP is controlled by George E. Hall. George E. Hall's citizenship, principal occupation and business address are set forth above.

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SCHEDULE B

TRANSACTIONS IN THE SHARES BY THE REPORTING PERSONS DURING THE PAST 60 DAYS

Clinton Multistrategy Master Fund, Ltd.

| Trade Date | Shares Purchased (Sold) | Price Per Share (\$) |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 07/09/07 | (10,000) | 14.65 |
| 07/12/07 | (1,944) | 14.49 |
| 08/31/07 | 4,000 | 10.97 |

Clinton Lexington Master Fund, L.P.

| Trade Date | Shares Purchased (Sold) | Price Per Share (\$) |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 08/24/07 | 17,000 | 11.50 |
| 08/30/07 | 5,000 | 10.82 |
| 08/30/07 | 10,213 | 10.83 |
| 09/06/07 | 28,200 | 11.88 |
| 09/06/07 | 5,000 | 11.93 |

George Hall

| Trade Date | Shares Purchased (Sold) | Price Per Share (\$) |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 08/30/07 | 5,000 | 10.82 |
| 08/30/07 | 10,200 | 10.83 |