

Fast casual pizza concept signs 5-unit deal

Jan 11, 2013 // Fastcasual.com

Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza, a build-your-own, fast casual pizza concept created by the founders of Wetzel's Pretzels, Elise and Rick Wetzel, has signed an agreement with the Driz/Koral group to develop five franchise stores in Southern California. The first three will open in the Spring of 2013, according to a company press release. With the addition of those five units, the company now has 10 stores open or under development for Southern California.

The Driz/Koral Group is led by Peter Koral, founder of premium denim brand "Seven for All Mankind," and Daniel Driz, whose family interests include PrimeStor shopping centers and 750 Mexico-based retail stores, including Panda Express and Office Depot. The Driz/Koral Group is the second multiunit franchisee in Blaze Pizza's growing franchise network.

"We feel that Blaze Pizza has taken the leadership position in the emerging fast casual pizza category," said an executive for Driz. "We know that Blaze is getting a great deal of interest from franchise candidates and are aware of how quickly concepts like Five Guys sold out their development areas. We believe it's a smart strategy to get in early to capitalize on the momentum and to have the best selection of franchise territories."

Blaze Pizza currently operates two company stores in Pasadena and Irvine, Calif., and earlier announced a development agreement with franchise operator Sajha LLC to open three new stores in the Los Angeles area. To date, four locations for the Driz/Koral and Sajha groups have been secured and will soon be announced. Blaze Pizza is currently negotiating with landlords for an additional four sites for the franchisees.