



## **Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza Set to Open 80th Restaurant**

*Concept's Popularity Fueled by Obsessive Attention to Food, Design and a Service Culture That Celebrates Individuality*

July 15, 2015 – Los Angeles, Calif. – Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza, the fast-casual artisanal pizza concept that has been inspiring excitement and cultivating fanatics since opening its first location in 2012, today announced that its 80th restaurant is set to open next month in Las Vegas. Known for its chef-driven recipes and casually hip restaurants, the nation's leading "build-your-own" pizza chain currently has a pipeline of over 400 restaurants committed to open in 42 states, Washington, D.C. and Canada by 2020. With the opening of its 80th location, Blaze Pizza will be operating in 20 states, including the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Miami and Washington, D.C. Going forward, the company is scheduled to open on average one new restaurant every four days – with its milestone 200th location projected to open by the end of next year.

Featuring a scratch-made dough recipe developed by critically-acclaimed Executive Chef Bradford Kent, the company maintains a "keep it simple" philosophy that shuns rapid-fire new product introductions and limited time offers, and instead focuses on carefully sourcing high-quality ingredients and cooking its fast-fire'd pizzas to order, to the delight of its food-centric fan base. Blaze's obsessive attention to detail extends well beyond the food, with a thoughtful, modern approach to restaurant design. Award-winning Los Angeles architect Ana Henton considers each interior, adding unique elements to localize each space and create the perfect vibe. Absent are promotional posters and signage, and all restaurants are constructed with both recycled and sustainable materials, use eco-friendly packaging and feature energy-efficient lighting.

"We're taking pizza back to its roots – making dough in-house, carefully sourcing ingredients, and cooking by fire," said Jim Mizes, president and COO of Blaze Pizza. "The authenticity of our food, plus a service culture that genuinely focuses on the happiness of our guests and crew – have clearly been key to our popularity and expansion."

With a dress code that encourages individual expression and a "say yes" service philosophy that empowers employees to delight those they serve, the company promotes an unconventional spirit that celebrates individuality and reflects the values of both team members and guests. Opportunities for professional growth are abundant, as restaurant openings create new management positions and

career paths for strong performers. Additionally, each month the company awards bonuses of one-half percent of sales to the best performing restaurant crews.

“What Blaze did was spot an opportunity to sell artisanal pizza that’s both fast and affordable, in an engaging dining experience that has some ‘soul’ to it,” said Carlyne Canady, chief development officer of Blaze Pizza. “It’s a disruptive idea that’s resonating with guests. We are changing the way people think about and eat pizza.”

### **Company Highlights:**

- Average unit volume (AUV) of \$1.55 million (roughly double the AUV of most large national pizza chains), as most Blaze Pizza restaurants enjoy both lunch and dinner business. <sup>(1)</sup>
- Guest engagement on social media is strong and growing with more than 100,000 followers on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.
- Plans have been announced for a new 5,000 square foot flagship restaurant at Disney Springs in Walt Disney World Resort at Lake Buena Vista, FL, scheduled to open in 2016.
- The company’s first international restaurants are scheduled to open later this year in Toronto and Calgary, Canada.
- Driven by its commitment to “intelligent choices for pizzas, people & the planet,” the company carefully sources ingredients that are free of artificial colors, artificial flavors, and preservatives, and is currently working with suppliers to find natural replacements for the few ingredients that do not currently meet this standard.
- With the introduction of plant-based straws this year, all Blaze packaging is now compostable, recyclable and/or made from post-consumer reclaimed materials.

### **About Blaze Pizza**

Blaze Pizza is a modern day “pizza joint”, serving up artisanal pizzas that are both fast and affordable. By taking pizza back to its roots, the innovative fast-casual concept has quickly become one of the hottest restaurant businesses in the country, with fans lining up each day for their custom-built pizzas, freshly made salads, blood orange lemonade and s’more pies. Each restaurant features an interactive open-kitchen format that allows guests to customize one of the menu’s signature pizzas or create their own, choosing from a wide selection of fresh, high-quality ingredients – all for about \$8. The generously-sized personal pizzas are then sent to a blazing hot open-flame oven – the centerpiece of the restaurant – where dedicated pizzasmiths ensure the thin-crust pies are fast-fire’d and ready to eat in just 180 seconds. Restaurants make fresh dough from scratch using a proprietary recipe developed by Executive Chef Bradford Kent (the “Pizza Whisperer”), which requires a 24-hour fermentation period to produce his signature light-as-air, crisp crust. For pizza fans with specific dietary needs, Blaze Pizza offers gluten-free dough and vegan cheese.

Now ranked as the overall #2 brand in the Fast Casual Top 100, Blaze Pizza is building momentum and developing a cult-like following as it expands across the country. Founded by Elise and Rick Wetzel (co-founder of Wetzel's Pretzels), the concept is backed by investors including LeBron James, Maria Shriver, Boston Red Sox co-owner Tom Werner and movie producer John Davis. For more information, please visit [blazepizza.com](http://blazepizza.com) and [facebook.com/blazepizza](https://facebook.com/blazepizza) or [click here to view a company video](#).

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(1) Trailing 12-month AUV for the 10 restaurants open an entire year as of January 2015. Of the 10 Restaurants in the Reporting group five (50%) met or exceeded this average. A new franchisee's results may differ from the represented performance.

Blaze Pizza®, Fast-Fire'd®, the horizontal logo design, and the proprietary names "Pizzasmith", "Intelligent Choices For Our Pizzas, People & Planet" and related trademarks are the property of Blaze Pizza LLC.