

Crushed Red fast-causal restaurants coming soon to Denver market



[Caitlin Hendee](#)

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Crushed Red Urban Bake & Chop Shop, a fast-casual salad and pizza restaurant chain based in St. Louis, plans to open its first location in the Denver Tech Center in May.

The restaurant comes as part of a six-restaurant franchise agreement that calls for openings in the Denver market over the next five years. Crushed Red's second location will open at the [Orchard Town Center](#) in Westminster in June.

JAM Management franchise group will own and operate the new locations. [Jim Merlo](#), owner of JAM, said he wanted to open the Crushed Red locations after becoming a fan while visiting his sister in St. Louis.



Chris LaRocca at Crushed Red

"Every time I go to visit now, I make it a point to stop at Crushed Red," Merlo said. "From the eclectic décor and urban feel to the innovative, artisan-crafted menu items and speed of service, Crushed Red is a natural fit for Denver and I'm excited for the opportunity to introduce this innovative concept to the local community."

The menu includes customizable salads, hand-made pizzas with organic sauce, as well as soups and appetizers.

The concept was founded in 2012 by restaurateur [Chris LaRocca](#), a 30-year veteran in the business best known for his St. Louis area EdgeWild Restaurant & Winery.

"This franchise agreement marks a significant milestone for Crushed Red as we expand the brand outside of our St. Louis roots," LaRocca said. "We are carving out our own distinctive niche in the fast-casual space that we have dubbed 'Artisan Fast,' serving up true artisan flavors – fast – in a welcoming and comfortable environment."