

First Crushed Red franchises to open in Denver



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Feb 3, 2015

The fast-casual Crushed Red Urban Bake & Chop Shop is set to expand into Denver this year.

St. Louis-based Crushed Red said the deal marks the first franchise agreement since the company announced open franchising opportunities late last year.



Chris LaRocca at Crushed Red in Clayton

Franchise group JAM Management, led by [Jim Merlo](#), plans to open six Crushed Red restaurants in the Denver area over five years. This May, JAM will open its first restaurant, a 2,900-square-foot location in the Denver Tech Center. In June, JAM will open its second Denver-area Crushed Red at the Orchard Town Center, in a 2,700-square-foot space. Each store will hire around 25 to 30 employees.

Crushed Red focuses on salads, soups and pizzas made on whole-grain crust developed by former Panera Bread Co. baking operations director [Mike Marino](#). Restaurateur [Chris LaRocca](#) founded the Crushed Red chain in 2012 with a location in Clayton and added a second in Kirkwood in 2013. Total investments for a Crushed Red restaurant run from \$600,000 to \$650,000, according to a company spokeswoman. Average revenue is \$1.5 million a year.

For franchisees, the company requires a net worth of \$1 million and \$200,000 in liquid assets, and it asks for a commitment to develop at least three locations, according to Crushed Red's website. The company plans to open franchises in urban and suburban areas with a population of at least 75,000, with average household income of \$75,000, within three miles of the restaurant. The company said it prefers co-tenancy in developments with similar fast-casual brands such as Panera or Chipotle.