



CEO of Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza Brings the World Leader in Fast Artisanal Pizza Home

Company Leader Returns to his Hometown Area with a Culinary Nod to his Roots

March 6, 2018 – Los Angeles, Calif. – When Jim Mizes, CEO and president of Blaze Fast Fire'd Pizza, the recognized world leader in fast artisanal pizza, took the helm of the company five years ago, he thrived on the possibility of bringing Blaze Pizza's scratch-made pies back to his hometown in Missouri. Come this Friday, March 9, Mizes will see that vision come to life as Blaze Pizza will open in Kirkwood, just miles from where he grew up.

"Growing up in the amazing city, I know this is the type of food and gathering place the community will embrace," said Mizes. "We strive for each restaurant to be service-focused, extending a level of hospitality that many in and around St. Louis may feel no longer exists. I'm looking forward to bringing that unique experience back to my hometown."

Since 2012, Blaze Pizza has been serving artisanal pies that are both fast and affordable. Each restaurant features an interactive open kitchen format that allows guests to customize one of the menu's generously sized personal signature pizzas or create their own, all for around \$8. Every pizza features made-from-scratch dough crafted in house daily, all-natural meats and vegetables, and is finished in an open flame oven which cooks pizzas in three minutes flat. For guests with special dietary needs, Blaze offers gluten-free dough, vegan cheese, animal rennet free dairy, and tree-nut free pesto.

Inspired by local flavor and tradition, Blaze Pizza's Kirkwood restaurant will utilize St. Louis beloved Provel cheese as one of the many cheese options, alongside the company's fresh ovalini, mozzarella, feta, parmesan and others. The brand will also offer a signature "Red Bird" pizza, which features our classic red sauce, Provel cheese blend, sausage, pepperoni and ground beef, is exclusively available to our fans in St. Louis.

“When we think about opening a Blaze Pizza restaurant in a new city or region, we always want to be mindful of the area’s culinary traditions and tastes,” said Brad Kent, Blaze Pizza’s award-winning Executive Chef. “For us, utilizing Provel cheese was an absolute must when coming to St. Louis. Recognizing and respecting local flavors is just as important to us as utilizing the ingredient itself.”

In support of the company’s commitment to “Intelligent Choices for Our Pizzas, People & Planet”, the Kirkwood restaurant will use both recycled and sustainable materials and energy-efficient LED lighting, and will feature eco-friendly, compostable packaging.

The newest Blaze restaurant is looking forward to building strong roots within the community, offering a spot where guests can connect, create and enjoy. To that end, the restaurant promotes a turnkey fundraiser program that returns 20 percent of an event’s proceeds back to the organization, helping schools, sports clubs and other local groups “cause a scene for a good cause.” The Kirkwood restaurant will also create 50 jobs locally.

About Blaze Pizza

The first Blaze Pizza® restaurant opened on Aug. 6, 2012, in Irvine, Calif., and quickly gained attention for its chef-driven recipes, thoughtful interior design, and a service culture that celebrates individuality. Recently named ‘#1 Brand of the Year’ in the 2017 Fast Casual Top 100, the fast-growing chain currently operates 252 restaurants in 39 states and Canada, including the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Miami, Boston and Toronto. Founded by Elise and Rick Wetzel (co-founder of Wetzel’s Pretzels), the concept is backed by private equity firm Brentwood Associates and founding investors that include LeBron James, Maria Shriver, movie producer John Davis and Boston Red Sox co-owner Tom Werner. For more information, visit www.blazepizza.com or www.facebook.com/blazepizza or [click here](#) to view a company video.

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