

# South Florida BUSINESS JOURNAL

## NEW YORK EXPORT

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## *New York's Energy Kitchen comes to Florida, set to open in Pinecrest*



### R&R ROUNDUP

Susan R. Miller

Energy Kitchen is heading south. The New York-based, health-oriented restaurant chain signed a franchise deal with Miamian Justo Luis Pozo III to open six stores in the next four years.

His first is slated to open Aug. 12 at Suniland Plaza in Pinecrest.

Pozo, a self-proclaimed health and martial arts enthusiast, was looking to launch a similar restaurant concept when a friend showed him an article about Energy Kitchen.

"I said 'that's my idea on paper,'" Pozo said. "It was everything I envisioned. I met with the owners and, as they say, the rest is history."

Nothing on the menu is more than 500 calories. Everything is grilled, baked or steamed. The price point is about \$12.

There's an open kitchen and everything is prepared fresh.

Anthony Leone, who founded the chain in 2003, plans to open 25 Florida locations. Energy Kitchen recently signed a deal for three more stores in Broward, the first of which will open in November on Broward Boulevard and Federal Highway. Tony Lord, a former regional sales manager for Glaceau, the maker of Vitaminwater, will own and operate that location, as well as one in Boca Raton and another in Plantation.

Energy Kitchen's expansion plan calls for 1,000 locations in the next 10 years.

There are about 75 locations in various stages of development in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Texas, Illinois, Colorado, Connecticut and Washington, D.C.

The franchise fee is \$30,000, and Pozo said the total cost, including buildout, was about \$450,000.

While the New York restaurants traditionally have operated in urban downtown and commercial business districts, Pozo said he is looking in high-end residential communities.

"Opening in a residential area will give us a chance to prove the product," he said.

Pozo said he's looking to open next in Miami Beach, either on Alton Road or Collins Avenue.

Other areas he's targeting are Coral Gables, Midtown Miami, Aventura and South Miami. He also hasn't ruled out Brickell, Kendall and Doral.

"We are in talks with all types of locations," he said.

### NICK'S NEW HAVEN PIZZA: 'RESPECT THE PIE'

Glades Plaza in Boca Raton has been a hotbed of activity, with restaurants and retailers opening left and right.

New to the scene is Nick Laudano's New Haven, Conn.-style apizza (pronounced ah-beetz).

Laudano closed his more traditional pizzeria in Lake Worth to focus on his new 4,600-square-foot Nick's New Haven-Style Pizzeria & Bar with business partner Anthony Giovanniello, a native New Yorker.

"It's New York swank meets New Haven



SUSAN R. MILLER

### Nick Laudano and Anthony Giovanniello at Nick's New Haven-Style Pizzeria & Bar.

style," Giovanniello said.

Both have been in the construction business, and Laudano builds his own brick ovens that run strictly on coal, which he dubbed "The Dragons."

"Our philosophy is 'respect the pie,'" Giovanniello said.

The concept started out similar to Laudano's beer and pizza joint. But, a third of the way through the buildout, the men decided to scrap it and make it "a trendy hip place to have pizza," Giovanniello said. "We took a six- to eight-week setback."

Laudano is best known for his specialty white clam pie, made with freshly shucked Rhode Island littleneck clams.

### ON THE WEB

■ For breaking news on restaurants and retail, go to [www.southfloridabusinessjournal.com](http://www.southfloridabusinessjournal.com).

The restaurant seats 150 and has a full bar. There's also a to-go window. Framed black-and-white photos – some with the owners' family members – line the walls. The ceiling is covered with vintage ads from the 1920s and 1930s, giving customers something to read while they are waiting to be served.

The average bill is \$18 to \$20 a person. The restaurant, which has 40 employees, had its soft opening Aug. 1, and there are plans for a grand opening at the end of the month.

Laudano said he's planning three more South Florida locations, and is looking at Fort Lauderdale, North Miami and Delray Beach.

### TOSSED TO OPEN FIRST FLORIDA LOCALE

Town Center at Boca Raton will be Tossed's first Florida location.

The Fort Lauderdale-based salad restaurant concept said it will open a 587-square-foot model at The Cafés at Boca. Mall owner Simon Property Group is redesigning its food court.

Tossed has four locations, with several more – including the one in Boca Raton – opening in the fall and the first quarter of next year.