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Larry King to Open Brooklyn Bagel Shop in Beverly Hills

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Delray Beach, Fla. – Delray Beach, Florida-based Brooklyn Water Bagel Company is immediately jumping from its cradle in the Atlantic to now the Pacific. The new franchising firm announced today an inaugural store on the West Coast. CNN broadcaster Larry King, who has become a franchisee for Southern California and a pitchman for the brand, is scheduled to open a shop in Beverly Hills in November.

"I am excited about bringing a taste of my native hometown to Beverly Hills... a city that has become my home," said King. "We will be making Brooklynized water – the key ingredient in the bagels I was brought up with in Brooklyn – right here, in Southern California!"



Drawings of the new Los Angeles bagel shop, photo/bwbc

Original Brooklyn Water Bagel owns a 14-stage patented water technology that creates Brooklynized water, which is marketed as producing a distinctive Brooklyn water bagel.

Craig Slavin, president of Franchise Architect, a consultant that helps create and develop franchise chains, thinks there is wisdom in Brooklyn Water Bagel focusing on a specific regional taste. "When someone eats their product and says, 'I'm home,' that is a great anchor to the customer's passion of what they grew up with," he says. "The fact is water does make a difference." But Slavin interjects, "However, so does altitude and we learned that in repeating pizza concepts that were originally from Chicago. We recreated the water but altitude makes an impact on the dough, as well."

Founded last year with a single prototype in Delray Beach, Florida, Brooklyn Bagel lists on its website that it has sold five locations that are pending opening – four in South Florida and the newest in Southern California.

Slavin thinks a passion for a specific taste of bagel is not enough to create a successful franchise chain. The franchise chain architect declares, "If the franchisor can validate the sales and the business model, not just customer passion for the product, they will have a winner. Passion alone is not enough to create a sustainable [franchise] model unless you have a marketplace proliferated with people from New York, who grew up with the product."



Brooklyn CEO Fassberg, TV host Larry King and COO Harris, photo/bwbc

Steven M. Fassberg, CEO and president of The Original Brooklyn Water Bagel Company, believes that Southern California's marketplace does indeed proliferate with consumers who appreciate Brooklyn food. "Southern California has one of the highest concentrations of Brooklyn natives and is a supreme location for this concept," declares the CEO. "We anticipate considerable traffic from those familiar with the Brooklyn water bagel, as well as those taking a bite for the first time."

King will launch the 3,700 square-foot bagel shop, open seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. until 9 p.m., in November. The inside will seat 70, while the outside has seating for 24 more. The large, Beverly

Hills bagel shop will have a reminder of whose Brooklyn Bagel shop this is. A booth for eight people with an iconic microphone will be built and reserved just for King to use with his friends and guests.

The Brooklyn bagel concept shows how flexible the brand can be. One of its very first franchises, King's Beverly Hills bagel shop will expand outside of traditional Brooklyn cuisine to offer California-style ingredients such as asparagus and avocado, creations of celebrated Chef Allan Susser, who recently joined the company's Advisory Board. Additional menu items include: pizza melts, Scooper melts and freshly cut 'Potatonater' fries.

The chain has no lack of franchise know-how advising it. Larry Feldman, an area developer of 1,100 Subway stores from Washington D.C. and beyond, is known in the industry as an aggressive seller of franchises. Now living in Boca Raton, just south of Delray Beach, Feldman sits on Brooklyn's advisory board.

And now it has a well known celebrity pitching the concept and lifting its visibility above other new startups.

All of this may be good and well, but Slavin interjects that the road ahead is steep. "Unless there is a sustainable base of familiar customers, it is tough to win over new consumers," he says.

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