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Shakey's puts on a new face

Expanded menu, game room unveiled at Covina location

By Rodney Tanaka Staff Writer

COVINA - A long-standing pizza chain is shaking up its look and menu and using Covina as its testing ground.

Shakey's Pizza & Grill will reopen at 1422 N. Azusa Ave. on Sept. 5 after a complete overhaul, including a new menu, game room and decor. The Covina Shakey's is the first to open with the new concept.

A lot of Shakey's stores are older and in need of polishing to make them more relevant to today's families, said Tim Pulido, president and CEO of Shakey's USA Inc.

But many customers also have fond childhood memories of Shakey's, he said.

"We held on to our past while at the same time we brought the brand into the 21st century," Pulido said.

Shakey's still has a game room, but it will not detract from the dining experience, he said. The company still wants to invite soccer teams for banquets and it welcomes fundraisers.

"Our target is families with kids," Pulido said. "That's still the bull's-eye."

The restaurant retained its original thin-crust pizza, fried chicken and MoJo potatoes, but will also offer new menu items such as hand-tossed salads, burgers, micro-brewed beer and gourmet pizzas.

Shakey's offers a fun, family-first, casual place to eat, Pulido said.

Shakey's was established in 1954 in Sacramento and at one point grew to 500 stores. There are now 60 stores, including 50 in Southern California, he said.

The Covina Shakey's is one of 15 corporate-owned stores.

Covina was chosen for the prototype because it has the demographics the company was targeting and is within a shopping center with good anchors, Pulido said.



Photos by James Carbone / Correspondent
NEW LOOK: Tim Pulido, president and CEO of Shakey's Pizza, left, meets with Randy Hill, VP of New Concept Development, at Shakey's Pizza & Grill in Covina on Friday. The remodeled facility features a new concept and menu, with specialty salads and hamburgers, plus the classic pizzas.

Shakey's plans to remodel five corporate stores and open four prototype stores in the next year. These stores will serve as examples to franchisees as to how to convert their restaurants into the new model, Pulido said.

Further expansion will take place in 2008, depending on how the prototypes fare, he said.

Serving as the prototype gives Covina residents another reason to shop locally, Covina Councilman John King said. "This is one more example of why Covina represents a vibrant business community,"

he said.

Shakey's is part of a bustling shopping center that includes AMC Theatres and Home Depot, which is moving to a new site on Azusa Avenue.

Home Depot and the city are working on bringing another anchor tenant to move into Home Depot's old site, King said.

"We're very confident that the types of businesses we heard express interest will absolutely keep that center vibrant and be a great anchor tenant there," King said. "It's a great retail center for our community."

The restaurant will hold a grand opening and ribbon cutting from 5 to 7 p.m. Sept. 7.

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