

Pollo Campero Looks for Franchisees, Real Estate in Memphis



Offerings from Pollo Campero

POLLO CAMPERO



By Susan Ellis – Projects Editor, Memphis Business Journal
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The Guatemalan-based Pollo Campero first entered the U.S. market in 2002. It's now got its eye on expanding, particularly in the Southeast region.

"So, the best market, as we defined it, is the Southeast region of the country, meaning Tennessee, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida," said [Sam Wong](#), director of franchising for Pollo Campero.

"We have a pretty good idea of where our core customer base is," he said.

The goal is to open 10 restaurants in Tennessee in the next five years, with an overall target of opening more than 250 restaurants across the country. At present, they have 77 locations open or in development in the U.S.

They are currently looking for franchisees and real estate in Memphis.

Part of what attracts Pollo Campero to a particular region is the potential for economic growth. The first Tennessee Pollo Campero is in Nashville. That franchisee, Wong said, is hoping to open a second location nearby and another in Memphis. The plan is to eventually have three to five locations in Memphis.

When they move into a new city, they look first for the best trade area. And while they do build from the ground up, they are also interested in converting old fast-food spaces.

"If you see a closed Taco Bell or closed KFC, we're happy to look at those conversions," Wong said.

It costs about \$1 million to open a franchise. Wong said franchisees must fall into different "buckets."

One bucket is financial, another is experience.

"We will teach you the business, but eventually you have to have certain fundamental skills like leadership, mentorship, some experience in understanding the trade area, some understanding of building a team — their passion, their commitment," Wong said.

The menu at Pollo Campero is divided into two: individual meals and family meals. One thing that they believe separates them from other chicken places is that they offer grilled chicken. Some items are a nod to its origins, such as the yuca fries and sweet plantains. They also offer flan, empanadas, and horchata and mango drinks.

Wong suggests new customers order a little bit of everything.

"I wouldn't order the full menu, but I would order a combination of different things," he said.

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