



El Pollo Loco Remodels First Three Restaurants with New L.A. Mex Design

*Fire-grilled chicken chain plans to remodel more than 300 stores over the next few years;
New store prototypes will also fuel growth outside its core market*

COSTA MESA, Calif., March 09, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) – Merely three months after unveiling its new restaurant of the future designed to enhance off-premise convenience, [El Pollo Loco, Inc.](#) (“El Pollo Loco” or “Company”) (Nasdaq: LOCO), the nation’s leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant chain, has remodeled its first three restaurants – two in Los Angeles and one in Las Vegas.

The re-imagined restaurants are inspired by the changing habits of consumers to enjoy a more digital-forward and contactless experience that was inevitably sped up by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new concept also features a modern interpretation of the brand’s heritage and strengths, including iconography distinct to Los Angeles and the El Pollo Loco L.A. Mex brand.

“To compete in a COVID and post-COVID world, we knew we needed to create a unique concept that is anchored in technology, accessibility, and modern design elements infusing our brand history to make it easier and more rewarding to be a customer,” said El Pollo Loco CEO Bernard Acoca, noting that more than 300 additional remodels are planned over the next few years. “We’re incredibly excited to have remodeled our first few restaurants so soon after announcing the prototypes and now look forward to ushering in a new era of El Pollo Loco expansion with our L.A. Mex asset design.”

The new L.A. Mex restaurants come to life with a unique design and innovative features for the most seamless customer experience possible:



All-New Exterior Branding: The new image features a complete re-design of the building exterior, featuring the “Fire Tower” that evokes the feel of the flames that create the brand’s Famous Fire-Grilled Chicken. More comfortable and branded patios give restaurant customers the opportunity to dine outside in the fresh air. Brighter colors, enhanced lighting, and a softer treatment to the logo round-out the exterior package.



Embracing Off-Premise Dining: Along with EPL's traditional drive-thru, the new design supports many modes of off-premise dining. The brand has added GPS-enabled curbside pick-up and has amplified delivery and in-restaurant order pick-up with a new dedicated Pollo To Go digital order pick-up fixture. All off-premise dining modes are driven through a flawless connection with the El Pollo Loco app.



Comfortable and Branded Interior: Restaurant customers experience an open and comfortable interior design rooted in the history of the brand yet embracing a modern look and feel. New features, like full digital menu boards and grab-and-go drinks add to a more upscale customer experience.



Fun Touches: The design also contains unique and fun touches based on the brand's long history and positioning serving fresh "L.A. Mex" cuisine. Pendant lights in the dining room are made from the forks that the EPL Grillmaster uses to cook the chicken over open fire. Entry door handles are shaped to resemble the cleaver that cuts the freshly cooked chicken. Logo art features inlaid murals, and even the wallpaper shows maps of Los Angeles.

“The future is now. We’re excited to have officially rolled out our evolved restaurant concept, which brings us to the culmination of our three-year transformation agenda and sets us up for geographical expansion in the years ahead,” said Acoca. “This is the catalyst to eventually get the brand back to 5% annual new unit growth across the U.S. by 2023.”

Chief Development Officer Brian Carmichall said the true unlock for El Pollo Loco is attracting new franchisees to expand into untapped markets. The expansion will initially target select DMAs in the Western United States, including Denver, Colorado; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and parts of Texas.

El Pollo Loco is seeking highly sophisticated and motivated multi-unit operators who share the company’s commitment to high standards of operation. Qualified franchise partners will receive support from a tenured team of restaurant professionals providing long-term stability and vision for the future.

The initial investment to own and operate a single unit is estimated between \$770,000 and \$2,097,000, which includes a franchise fee of \$40,000.

About El Pollo Loco

El Pollo Loco (Nasdaq:LOCO) is the nation’s leading fire-grilled chicken restaurant with a mission to bring people together around food, family, and culture in the communities it serves. El Pollo Loco is renowned for its handcrafted L.A. Mex food, an innovative blend of traditional Mexican cuisine and better-for-you eating, that Los Angeles is known for. Since 1980, El Pollo Loco has successfully opened and maintained more than 480 company-owned and franchised restaurants in Arizona, California, Nevada, Texas, Utah, and Louisiana while remaining true to its Mexican-American heritage. El Pollo Loco continues to grow and evolve, nourishing connections to tradition, culture, and one another through fire-grilled goodness that makes us feel like familia. For more information, visit us at www.elpolloloco.com.

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