

## #8 BONMi

BONMi — a Vietnamese-inspired brand that serves banh mi sandwiches, noodles and rice bowls and green — sources clean ingredients and makes its items by hand from scratch. For meats, BONMi chefs use sous-vide cooking techniques, which require no ventilation and are intended to cook meat more evenly, ensuring that the inside is properly cooked without overcooking the outside, while retaining moisture. Food is sealed in airtight plastic bags then placed in a water bath or in a temperature-controlled steam environment for longer than normal cooking times—96 hours or more.



Although the chain got its start in Washington, D.C., it now is based in New

York City and has three units with . It has partnered with Fransmart to begin franchising all over the country and will open at least five units in 2016, said Brian Berger, co-CEO and a principal at JBH Advisory Group, the concept's developer and group of investors behind BONMi. The other co-CEO is Lynne Jacoby.



In March, BONMi opened a location inside an NYC Whole Foods Market; it also has partnered with the retailer to support the Whole Planet Foundation, which has a mission of poverty alleviation through microcredit in communities around the world that supply Whole Foods Market stores with products.

## #9 Blaze Fast-Fire'd Pizza

Blaze — founded in 2012 in Irvine, California — is one of the leaders in the fast casual pizza category, with more than 115 operating units and plans in place to open its 1,000th location before its 10th birthday. In 2015, it opened 55 units and reported a 7 percent increase in same-store sales and \$1.4 million in average unit volume.

This year's growth plans include adding 70 to 80 more units, including a site at Walt Disney World.

The chain launched a new mobile app this year, enabling guests to order and pay from their smartphones,

while earning their way to free pizzas and other Blaze benefits. It also leverages mobile-sales reporting, online ordering, an NCR/Aloha POS and digital-platform intelligence to review all guest comments.

"We're a young company, but already we have hundreds of thousands of fans on social media, and had over a hundred thousand online orders last year alone, so we certainly recognize the importance of technology in our business," said Jim Mizes, president and COO of Blaze Pizza. "Guests today want to be part of the conversation, and be able to order, pay and earn loyalty from their phones. Now, we have the tool in place to make this easy. We're thrilled with the initial response the app has received."



FAST-FIRE'D.

