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Sandwich chain camps out near DTC

GEORGE DEMOPOULOS SEPTEMBER 22, 2015



About a quarter of Backcountry Delicatessen's business comes from catering. *Photos courtesy of Backcountry Delicatessen.*

Dave Mischell is pushing into uncharted territory: the suburbs.

An accountant by training, Mischell owns two outdoor-themed Backcountry Delicatessens in downtown Denver and plans to open a third by the end of 2015 near the Denver Tech Center near the junction of interstates 25 and 225. It's the latest stop in a planned 15-store trek.

The Bellevue store will be the chain's fifth location – Mischell opened one in LoDo in 2010 and his second at 17th and Glenarm last year, and the brand has shops in Fort Collins and Steamboat Springs.

"We were looking around DTC for a while before we found that spot," Mischell said. "It's a good area for us because there's a big office component, which we needed because most of our sales happen during lunch, and we do a lot of catering."


Backcountry Delicatessen serves outdoor-themed sandwiches, salads and soups like the "Basecamp" and "High Plains." The concept was founded in 1999 by Steamboat Springs backcountry skiers Peter Boniface and David Pepin under the name "Backcountry Provisions."

Mischell signed a lease on a 2,200-square-foot space earlier this month. He said it takes around \$500,000 to open a new Backcountry Delicatessen franchise.

When the restaurant opens, it'll seat 80 patrons: 40 inside and another 40 on an outdoor patio, he said. Mischell plans to hire between 10 and 12 staff initially, starting with a general manager in the next few months.

Andrea Nicholl of Greenwood Village-based Eidos Architects designed the project. Mischell is currently gathering construction bids. Newmark's Justin Kliever and Alyssa Mischell, Dave's wife, brokered the lease.

Finding commercial space was Mischell's biggest hurdle when opening the shop. With Denver's abundance



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Dave Mischell

"Demand from other retailers has made finding that space really tight and construction costs high," he said. "It's also tough to find labor with experience in restaurants – there's so many jobs out there and not enough people to fill them."

Backcountry Delicatessen's target demographic is high-income adventurers, who have the disposable income to eat out and dig the restaurant's branding. Mischell said about 25 percent of his locations' revenue comes from catering, and 75 percent comes from dine-in sales.

Mischell, 34, had no experience as a restaurateur prior to opening his first Backcountry Delicatessen in 2010. The former CPA's first experience with the fast-casual chain came during vacations in Steamboat, and he became involved after craving its food in Denver.

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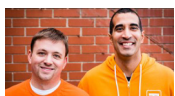
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