

# THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

DEC. 3, 2010



## BUSINESS

### Add croutons

Three national chains think O.C. is perfect for salad shops

# BUSINESS

## TODAY'S THEME RESTAURANTS

# It's crunch time

Three national chains will open salad shops in a crowded O.C. market.

Several fast-casual salad chains are about to toss themselves into the fray of fast-food chains in Orange County, an invasion that comes as restaurants increase diet options on menus.



**STEFANI PETERSON**  
REGISTER  
WRITER

**Tossed**, **Saladworks** and **Freshii** are chains promising healthy quick meals for Orange County. Combined, the made-to-order salad chains plan to

open at least 40 units in Orange County.

Here's the lowdown on all three concepts:

- **Tossed** was founded in 1998 in New York City. It offers made-to-order salads, whole-wheat crepe wraps, sandwiches, melts and soups.

At the end of the summer, Tossed signed a deal for at least 30 franchises to open in Orange County over the next 10 years.

The company will decide on its first location in the next 60 days, said Mike LaRue, director of development of the Irvine-based **Fransmart**, which has partnered with Tossed.

He hinted at Irvine as a potential candidate for the first store, but did not confirm.

Because the chain is a lunch-driven concept, LaRue says the company is looking for locations around businesses. Since the food travels well, catering will be a core part of Tossed's business, he said.

"Orange County is at the forefront of healthier choices," said LaRue, who lives in Orange County. "There is a need, and there is nothing quick for a good salad. People crave good food and customer service, and we hope to offer



**Tossed** was founded in 1998 and offers made-to-order salads, whole-wheat crepe wraps, sandwiches, melts and soups.



**"Orange County is at the forefront of healthier choices."**

**MIKE LARUE**  
DIRECTOR OF  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
FRANSMART

**Freshii** has planned at least 30 locations over the next six years. Guests can choose and customize their own meals, including salads and wraps.



**Saladworks**, which began in Pennsylvania in 1986, announced in March that it would open eight franchise units.

something special.”

- **Saladworks** is based in Pennsylvania and began in 1986. It announced in March that it would open eight franchise units.

One Saladworks franchisee recently signed a lease for his first location in Costa Mesa.

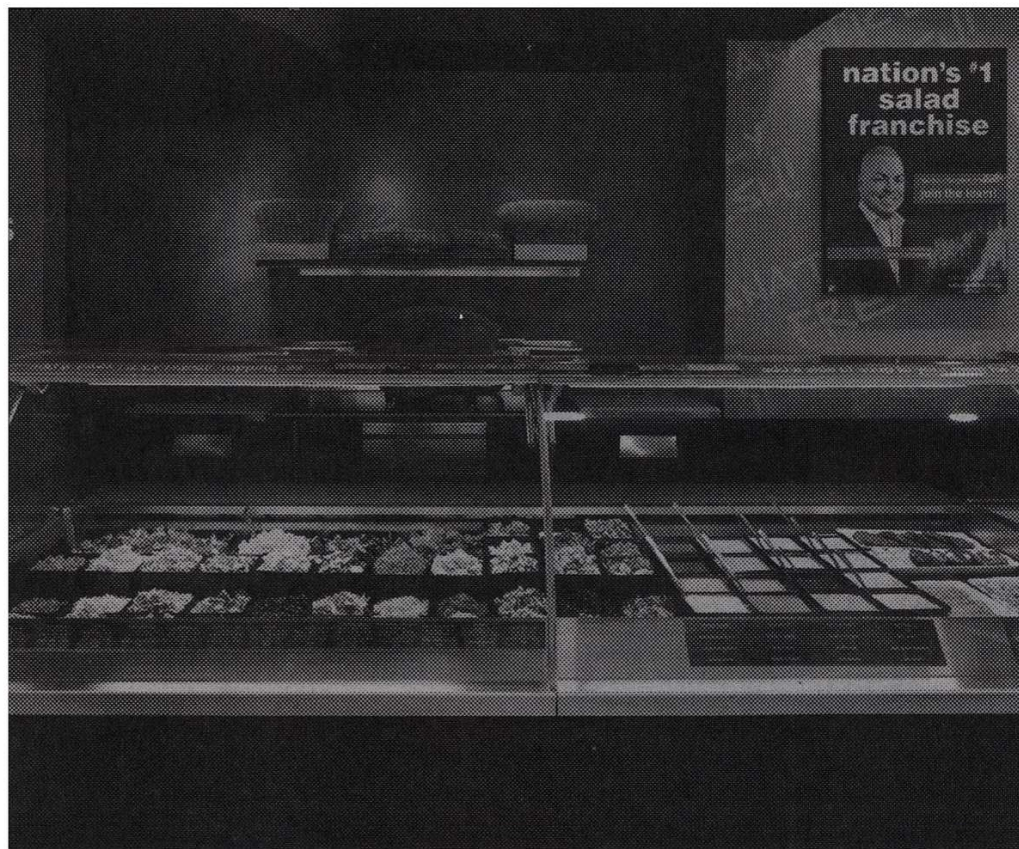
It is slated to open in the Newport Mesa Plaza at 488 E. 17th St., Suite A-100, in the first quarter of 2011.

Saladworks offers an assembly-line salad system in which diners can watch as their salads are created in front of them.

- **Freshii** is a third salad chain slated to open in Orange County. With at least 30 locations planned over the next six years, the company is also hoping to fill the void for healthier fast-food choices.

“Freshii is made for Orange County,” said Souhel Stephan Tarakji, master franchisee of Orange County and CEO of ST Corp., based in Newport Beach. “With people concerned with having a healthy lifestyle and a healthy outlook on life, they are interested in something fast and of quality.”

Tarakji thinks a lot of the ap-



COURTESY OF BARRY HALKIN

**A Saladworks franchisee has signed a lease for a location in Costa Mesa. It is scheduled to open next year in the Newport Mesa Plaza.**

peal of Freshii comes from guests' ability to choose and customize their own meal, which can consist of anything from salads to wraps to rice bowls.

Freshii has two locations in Los Angeles, which have been received well, Tarakji said. As for Orange County, though Tarakji has been looking at sites all over the county, no lease has been signed.

He hopes to sign a lease in the

next 60 to 90 days.

Freshii is slated to open two Orange County locations next year.

“This is the future of Orange County. People don't just want burgers and pizza,” Tarakji said.

**Tell us:** Do you think these salad chains will do well in Orange County? Is healthy fast food a “void” you've been looking to fill? Comment at

[ocregister.com/fastfood](http://ocregister.com/fastfood).