

BUSINESS

Former El Diablo owner is back with a high-profile partner and a new restaurant concept

Morreale is partnering with Larimer Associates, City Street Investors to open new restaurant in northwest Denver



Denver Post file photo

In a 2012 file photo, The restaurants El Diablo and Sketch are located in the building at First Avenue and Broadway in Denver.

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Helen H. Richardson, Denver Post file

Jesse Morreale stands behind the bar of Sketch, a former wine bar located on South Broadway March 13, 2009.

Former El Diablo owner Jesse Morreale is getting back into the Denver restaurant game.

Larimer Associates and City Street Investors, the team behind Larimer Square and the retail leasing at Denver Union Station, have formed a partnership with Morreale to open a new restaurant/bar in northwest Denver, the parties announced Tuesday.

“We wanted an edgy concept designed from the ground up to specifically serve the demographic and location, and Jesse is the perfect partner to make this vision a reality,” Larimer Associates partner Joe Vostrejs said in a statement. “His proven track record of creating successful businesses in transitional neighborhoods and on traffic corridors was exactly what we were looking for at this location, and we’re excited to see him in action.”

The exact location of the new restaurant was not revealed Tuesday, other than the fact that it will be “on a traffic corridor on the border of the Highlands and Sunnyside neighborhoods.”

A top contender, though, is the now-vacant TAG Burger Bar space at 3759 Lipan St., which Larimer Associates has owned since 2012. [The Highland location of chef-restaurateur Troy Guard’s burger concept closed in July.](#)

Morreale, who has been quiet over the past few years, previously owned [El Diablo](#) and [Sketch](#) restaurants on Broadway and [Rockbar](#) on East Colfax. Both properties ran into problems with city regulators, however, and were [ultimately lost through bankruptcy](#).

“I’m back in the business in Denver, and the timing is more related to who than when,” Morreale said in an interview Tuesday. “I’ve known Joe Vostrejs and Pat McHenry and Jeff Hermanson (of Larimer Associates) for a long time and we’ve always been simpatico with each other. ... we’ve talked for probably 10 years or longer about doing something together.”

The new concept will be similar in spirit to his past endeavors and could open sometime in September, Morreale said.

“My strength is in providing places where people feel comfortable and have fun and no one feels like they’re underdressed,” Morreale said. “I’ve done white tablecloth, but this won’t be.”

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