

# Clearwater, FL Pizza Resale: A Remodeled Location and a Strong Lease Bring In a First-Time Owner

| Clearwater, FL | Pizza Restaurant Resale | Michael and Abby Spizzirri          |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Location       | Sale Type               | WSR FL Sarasota Tampa East and West |

## The Opportunity

Clearwater sits in one of the strongest restaurant markets in Florida. Tampa Bay carries a large year-round residential base, sustained population growth, and a visitor economy on top of it. Pizza performs well against that mix because it is a daily-use category with broad appeal, a simple operating model, and demand that holds through both seasons and cycles.

This listing had what buyers ask for and rarely find together. The location was strong, the space had already been remodeled, and the lease was in good shape. Those three items decide more restaurant transactions than the concept itself does. Michael and Abby Spizzirri, WSR FL Sarasota Tampa East and West, represented the listing and matched it with the right buyer.

## Why the Owner Sold

This was not a distressed sale, and that distinction matters. The seller was not new to the industry. She had previously operated a gastro pub in California, so she came into this location with real operating experience behind her.

What changed was her direction. She took another job and decided to get out of the restaurant business. That is a life decision rather than a business failure, and it is one of the most common reasons good restaurants come to market. Owners move, change careers, retire, or take an opportunity that does not leave room for a seven-day-a-week business.

For a buyer, a seller in that position is the ideal counterparty. There is no problem to inherit and no story to unwind. The business is being sold because the owner is moving on, and the asset is exactly what it appears to be.

## The Sale

Michael and Abby Spizzirri, WSR FL Sarasota Tampa East and West, brought the listing to a buyer from Canada who was looking to get into the pizza business. His uncle has been in pizza for many years and is going to teach him the operation.

A first-time buyer with an experienced mentor in the same category is a strong profile, but it is one a broker has to package and present properly. The buyer had to be qualified, the landlord had to be brought along on the lease assignment, and the deal had to be structured so a new operator was set up to succeed rather than simply handed keys.

The new owner plans to close briefly, roughly a couple of weeks, and reopen under a new name. That is a normal and healthy move. A short reset lets an incoming owner train, stock, and put his own identity on the business before the first guest walks in under his ownership.

## Why the Buyer Said Yes

- **The location**, the buyer led with it. Site quality is the one variable an operator cannot fix later, and this location was already proven
- **A remodel already completed**, the build was done. That is capital the buyer did not have to spend and months of construction he did not have to lose before generating a dollar of revenue
- **A strong lease**, occupancy is one of the largest fixed costs in a restaurant P&L. A favorable, assignable lease protects margin through the term and protects resale value later
- **Family expertise in the exact category**, an uncle with many years in pizza is training him. Learning from someone who has run the same type of business beats learning on the job alone
- **Pizza as an entry point**, a focused menu, manageable labor, controllable food cost, and steady dine-in, carryout, and delivery demand make it one of the more approachable formats for a first-time owner

## Key Takeaways

- Not every restaurant on the market is a problem. Many strong businesses sell because the owner is changing careers or moving on, and those are the cleanest deals a buyer can find
- The lease is frequently the most valuable asset in a restaurant sale. Rate, remaining term, options, and assignability shape both current margin and future exit value
- A completed remodel transfers real dollars to the buyer. Buying a built restaurant avoids construction cost, permitting delay, and the revenue lost while a space sits dark
- First-time buyers with a mentor in the same category start well ahead of those without one, and that support shows up in how a location performs in year one
- Rebranding after a sale is standard. A short closure to reset the name, the menu, and the team is a sign of an engaged owner, not a warning sign

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why does the lease matter so much in a restaurant sale?

Occupancy is a fixed cost a new owner cannot negotiate away after closing. Rent rate, remaining term, renewal options, and whether the landlord will approve an assignment all affect what the business is worth and whether the deal closes at all. A lease with favorable terms and real runway is often the single strongest value driver in a restaurant transaction.

### Is buying an existing restaurant better than opening a new one?

For most first-time owners, yes. An existing location comes with equipment, a build-out, a customer base, staff, permits, and a revenue history a lender can underwrite. A new build requires capital and months of construction with no income, and it still has to prove the site works.

### Do new owners usually change the name after buying a restaurant?

It happens often, particularly when the buyer intends to run the business personally rather than continue as-is. A brief closure to rebrand, retrain, and restock lets a new owner start on his own terms. Buyers should confirm signage rights and any branding provisions in the lease before closing.

### Why did the seller choose We Sell Restaurants?

Selling a restaurant means valuing it correctly, reaching qualified buyers rather than curious ones, and managing a landlord approval that can end a transaction. Michael and Abby Spizzirri, WSR FL Sarasota Tampa East and West, handled the listing from valuation through closing and delivered the seller the clean exit she was after.