

Founding Farmers to open first location outside the D.C. area

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Founding Farmers, the D.C.-based restaurant group that is partly owned by several Midwestern farmers unions, has set its sites on a new metro area: Philadelphia.

The group will open a Founding Farmers restaurant in the new King of Prussia Town Center, a 260,000-square-foot development from [The JBG Cos.](#) being built about 30 minutes outside of Philadelphia and within walking distance of the massive King of Prussia mall.

The 14,000-square-foot restaurant — which is still toying with its final name — will be divided on two levels, with the brand’s in-house bakery on the ground floor and the main dining room and bar on the second floor. It will serve the brand’s traditional three meals a day when it opens in spring of 2017.

The 14,000-square-foot restaurant — , which includes a lineup of six other full-service restaurants, including [a Fogo De Chao](#) and Paladar Latin Kitchen, several fast-casual spots, including [Naf Naf Grill](#) and [Honey Grow](#), and a slew of retailers including REI and Nordstrom Rack.

Though the group has gotten offers over the years to open in Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas, among others, [Dan Simons](#), founder of [Farmers Restaurant Group](#), said Philadelphia made sense due to its proximity to many of Founding Farmers’ suppliers.

“We already buy a ton of stuff from Pennsylvania,” he said. He’s also reached out to the Amish community and the Pennsylvania Farmers Union to work together. Simons was also intrigued by Pennsylvania’s past, as he and other members of the team have been digging into the area’s Pennsylvania Dutch, Amish and German histories to help give the spot a hometown feel.

The Philadelphia deal will make for a busy year for the restaurant group: [Farmers & Distillers, which includes an in-house distillery](#), is expected to open in D.C. later this year, and Founding Farmers in Reston should open in early winter 2017. Philadelphia that spring will mean three additions to the existing four-restaurant chain within a year.

It wasn’t originally the plan; about a year and a half before the Distillers deal for 600 Massachusetts Ave. NW went through, the restaurant was about to sign on to do a restaurant at 655 K St. NW. But it didn’t come together. That condensed the timeline, Simons said.

He expects to do at least one more in the Philly area, and he also thinks the Founding Farmers concept is tailor-made for Massachusetts — although as a Boston native, he may be biased. He

isn't ruling out additional D.C.-area locations either, though he doesn't expect to do anything else here until maybe 2019 or 2020, he said.