

Crumbl Cookies bringing fresh baked goodness to Seaview Square, its first bakery in NJ

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OCEAN TOWNSHIP - Chomping cookies, lots of cookies, is a pretty sweet way to get the tasty low down on your new business.

Just ask Darrell and Karen Doucette, a Manalapan couple who plan to open New Jersey's first Crumbl Cookies bakery in October, taking a spot next to Applebees at Seaview Square shopping center.

"Our research was not the worst research in the world: We traveled around near our house and ate a bunch of cookies," Darrell Doucette said. "We really feel like there's not anything that we can find around that is comparable."



Besides Ocean Township, they are looking to open two more bakeries, eyeing locations in Manalapan and Cherry Hill, he said.

Founded in 2017 with a first bakery in Logan, Utah, Crumbl now has more than 200 bakeries in 32 states. Its stores feature an open kitchen where customers can see the eggs cracked, the dough mixed and the cookies put in the oven. "You get to see the entire process from start to finish," Karen Doucette said.

Crumbl is known for its rotating menu of cookies. Its two staples, a warm chocolate chip cookie and a chilled sugar cookie, are always for sale. But every week, Crumbl rolls out four specialty flavors with names such as Lemon Glaze, Molten Lava, Churro and Cinnamon Fry Bread.

Watch the video at the top of this story to see and hear a franchisee in Wichita Falls, Texas talk about Crumbl Cookies.

Darrell Doucette, who works for a solar company, became acquainted with Crumbl Cookies during an out-of-state business trip. Soon, he looked for Crumbl wherever he traveled and tried a new cookie flavor.

He told his wife about Crumbl Cookies and it became part of Karen Doucette's plan to get back into the workforce and open and run her own business.



A stay-at-home mom with three kids, Karen Doucette said they researched different franchises and planned for her return to the work. Crumbl was the morsel that got her attention.

"I needed something that I really, really love, something that I could be passionate about, something that I could get behind and when Darrell introduced Crumbl Cookies to me, I fell in love right away," Doucette said. "It was such a memorable experience eating that cookie."



Doucette will run and manage the store. "I knew that I would be a loyal customer if one opened up near me so why not get my own?"

Crumbl Cookies, fresh baked and with rotating unique flavors each week, has created a buzz, said Wade Hanson, principal, advisory practice at Technomic, a Chicago-based research firm. With services including curbside pick-up and mobile app ordering, it sustained itself and continue to grow despite the pandemic.

"They made it easy for people." Hanson said. "It's considered a treat and a treat during a very difficult treat and a comforting treat at that."

Darrell Doucette said there was a "unique opportunity" to bring the bakery to New Jersey. "They're growing so fast that there's not a lot of opportunities in most markets across the country," he said. "But Jersey was ... relatively untouched."

Danielle Brunelli, president of RJ Brunelli & Co., a commercial real estate firm in Old Bridge, said the brand has a "great following."

"I think it is going to be really exciting for the area," Brunelli said. Crumbl Cookies is leasing a 1,700-square-foot space, formerly occupied by Sprint, in the strip shopping center along Route 66 at Seaview Square.

Darrell Doucette said they liked the location at Seaview Square and the proximity to big stores like Costco and Target.



"We shop there. We take our kids off to the beach," he said. "We love that area and we felt like it was a really good fit."

David P. Willis, an award-winning business writer, has covered business and consumer news at the Asbury Park Press for more than 20 years. He writes APP.com's What's Going There column and can be reached at dwillis@gannettnj.com. Join his [What's Going There page on Facebook](#) for updates.