

Fast-casual movement changing how U.S. eats

By Tim Carman, Washington Post

Holler & Dash Biscuit House is a small, counter-service chain that has made some big promises to diners: Each location of the biscuit-heavy concept will seek out local ingredients for its food and drink, whether naturally raised birds for a fried chicken sandwich topped with goat cheese and sweet pepper jelly, or locally roasted, single-origin beans for drip coffee.

If Holler & Dash sounds like the latest chef-driven fast-casual concept, you're right. You're also wrong.

The budding chain is a subsidiary of Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, the publicly traded company with more than 600 restaurants in 44 states. Cracker Barrel – known for its roadside locations, its retail shops based on old-timey general stores and its firing of Brad's wife – launched its first Holler & Dash last year in Homewood, Ala., and has since opened four more locations, including one in Atlanta. The fast-casual aggressively promotes its two chefs, whose résumés include far more refined – and pricey – restaurants.

Cracker Barrel is simply doing what almost everyone else is: watching the continued popularity of the fast-casual industry and wondering whether it should adopt its practices or just join the growing number of counter-service restaurants dedicated to speed, customization, quality ingredients and bargain prices.

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