

BUSINESS

Arby's is latest fast food chain to storm back to Manhattan

By Lisa Fickenscher

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After years of losing ground to Chipotle and other hot fast-casual chains, fast food is mounting a comeback in the Big Apple.

Arby's, the 3,400-unit Atlanta-based sandwich chain, is the latest fast-food heavyweight to beat a path to Manhattan in the past few months — after pulling up stakes here about seven years ago.

The chain, owned by private equity firm Roark Capital Group, which also owns Auntie Anne's, Cinnabon and more than a dozen other brands, will open a Midtown store at 40th Street and Eighth Avenue in mid-December.

"There are many chains who wouldn't consider doing business in NYC for years," said restaurant consultant Arlene Spiegel. "They feared high rents, labor costs, taxes and regulations until they learned about the revenue upside."

Arby's plans to open several more restaurants here during the next couple of years, according to Arby's Chief Operating Officer John Bowie.

The Big Apple Arby's is the smallest in the nationwide chain, with just 48 seats spread over just under 2,000 square feet. ■

