

In the Biz: Mama Mia's Pizza and Cafe on Ballston Avenue to add Italian pastry cafe

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The owners of Mama Mia's Pizza and Cafe on Ballston Avenue were in luck when their next-door neighbor moved out earlier this summer. Giuseppe and Lauren Grisio are looking to pair their 7-year-old pizzeria, located in the Price Chopper plaza, with a traditional Italian cafe and pastry shop now that the Dream Sleep Mattress Outlet has moved to Washington Avenue and left a vacancy.

The cafe will feature Italian coffees and espresso, homemade Italian pastries and bread, plus gelato, beer and wine, at both bar and table seating. A lounge in the back could seat 70 for birthday parties, bridal showers, sports team banquets and the like. "We were turning away a lot of parties," due to lack of space at the restaurant, said Lauren Grisio.

The Grisios are planning a January opening in the nearly 3,000-square-foot space. They expect to hire about 10 new employees to staff the cafe. The family-oriented Mama Mia's restaurant already serves espresso, homemade bread, tiramisu and cheesecake. The cafe would be an extension of its old-world ambiance, but with earlier opening hours, owners say. "For the local people, it's easier to come over here," rather than go to Albany, Latham or Schenectady for an authentic Italian cafe experience, Giuseppe Grisio said.

For more information, call Mama Mia's at 583-7783 or go to www.mamamiaspizzaandcafe.com.