

Soup Spoon owners to open Greek-inspired sports bar in Williamston

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WILLIAMSTON - The owners of The Soup Spoon Cafe and The Urban Cup now plan to open a Greek-inspired gastro-pub sports bar in the city's downtown next year.



The future home of Niko's Taverna, a Greek-inspired pub and sports bar that the owners of Soup Spoon Cafe plan to open by April of next year, seen Monday, Dec. 5, 2022, in downtown Williamston. © MATTHEW DAE SMITH/Lansing State Journal

The new restaurant, Niko's Taverna, will be "a fresh start" for the space at 151 S. Putnam St., said Keith Buchele, general manager for property owner Gavrilides Management. The site was previously home to Gracie's Bistro, which closed earlier this year and was also owned by Gavrilides Management, he said.

"It's a reanimation," Buchele said. "We want to bring it back as something new, completely different from what's been there before."

And while plenty of Greek-inspired dishes have been served at The Soup Spoon Cafe, including orzo and lamb, Niko's Taverna will feature a menu with "all the classic Greek dishes, but not fine dining versions, more sports bar versions," Buchele said. "So someplace where you can have a really nice beer, have a glass of wine, some food and watch a game."

The 60- to 70-seat sports bar could open by April, Buchele said.

Space to get a new look, menu

Gracie's Bistro's closure in the fall was pandemic-related, Buchele said.

"That restaurant kind of fell victim to the inevitable that a lot of places saw, which is when you close a dining room for that long, you just kind of lose momentum and it becomes kind of impossible to recover after a certain point," he said.

Ownership at Gavrilides Management will use the Greek recipes they've served at The Soup Spoon Cafe as a springboard for creating the dishes for Niko's Taverna, Buchele said.

"With Niko's, the idea was to narrow that focus a little bit, and really be able to deliver something that is not represented as much as we would like it to be in the area," he said.

Williamston is the perfect community for it, Buchele said.

"I was like, 'Well, we have this beautiful space, it's a beautiful town, the people are wonderful. They've been incredibly gracious with us so we're going to keep going in the same direction.'"

A 'contemporary Mediterranean feel'

When it opens, the new restaurant's interior will have a "contemporary Mediterranean" feel," Buchele said.

Niko's Taverna will also feature a full bar with "a limited, seasonal cocktail list that will be rotating, put together by our bar managers and inspired by whatever is going on at the time," he said.

Management is already soliciting applications for open kitchen, bartender and server positions. They will begin hiring in January. The eatery will likely open with a staff of up to 15 people, Buchele said. Anyone interested can apply at www.nikoswilliamston.com.

"We do already have some of our key staff in place," he said.

Area residents can follow the restaurant's progress through its Facebook page at ["Niko's Taverna."](#)

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