

## RESTAURANTS

### Rossi family adding Port Orange restaurant

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PORT ORANGE — As restaurateur Steve Rossi surveyed the jam-packed dining room at his 24-year-old South Daytona business, Rossi's Diner, he stretched out a finger pointing to table after table, noting the repeat customers.

"Locals, locals, locals, locals ... Those folks right there are from Brown & Brown. They come in for lunch all the time," he said. "My sister knows everyone by name. She's a machine," Rossi said, referring to his sibling and co-owner Bernadette, 49, with a smile and the pride of a big brother.



Steve Rossi hopes to capitalize on the family's successful South Daytona diner with a new New York-style deli restaurant the family is opening soon in Port Orange. NEWS-JOURNAL/LOLA GOMEZ

Rossi, 52, means to replicate the diner's local popularity with his family's new Port Orange restaurant set to open soon — but not its style. He's going in a whole new direction and plans to take on national chains like Chipotle and Panera Bread.

"I mean to be the hometown fast-casual," he said, adding that the launch is the culmination of a 15-year-old dream.

All meats at the new eatery named Rossi's Side Street Cafe will be sourced from Jacksonville-based Raikes Farms and are antibiotic-free, said the owner. And the cafe's menu, which is posted outside Rossi's Diner for those who are curious about the new digs and has prices from around \$3 to \$7, is a mix of American fare reminiscent of a New York-style deli. But the new building is not stuffy and cluttered like many of those northern city staples. Instead, its large glass windows make it open and airy — more like an upscale coffee shop.

And like a coffee shop, Wi-Fi will be offered in a section of the cafe where couches, high-back chairs and a row of barstools greet customers near the entrance.

The new 2,450-square-foot building is at 910 Village Trail in Port Orange, across from the Publix-anchored Dunlawton Square shopping center on Nova Road.

"We're all ready," Rossi said, adding that the family business is just waiting on the city's OK. "We're just getting all the kinks worked out."

"We're still waiting on the final building inspection and the final site inspections," said Port Orange senior planner Gwen Perney.

As Rossi worked with the contractor to get last-minute items in check, his daughter Angelina climbed a ladder to a chalkboard display at her father's new restaurant.

The 20-year-old carefully filled in the outlines of a key phrase on the family's new menu — "Eat here, not there."

When opened, Rossi's Side Street Cafe will serve lunch and dinner from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.