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# Inc. Spot: A prototypical 'Pickle' opens in River Oaks

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The opening Monday of a gourmet sandwich shop in River Oaks Plaza launched a new concept for the Spicy Pickle Sandwich Co. chain while also fostering a family business for a father and his three sons.

With its open kitchen format and more inviting decor, the shop at 1440 W. Gray St. reflects the results of extensive research conducted over the past year, company sources said. Acoustic controls, for example, make the venue suitable for casual meetings and conversation.

The Forastiere family is a close one, and now has several locations of a sandwich shop to run, several of which are in Examiner neighborhoods.

Behind the scenes of the Houston locations is the Forastiere family, transplants from western Massachusetts.

### My Three Sons

Peter A. Forastiere Sr. and adult sons Michael, Mathew and Peter Jr., have opened four locations and plan to eventually operate 10 in greater Houston.

Michael Forastiere, a Memorial resident, said the brothers are close-knit and had long-wanted to run a family business together.

They grew up in one, as fourth generation members of a funeral services family.

When that expanded venture was sold to a Houston company,

Michael Forastiere came here with the transition and stayed, exploring other business ventures.

Meanwhile, his father "on a whim" met with the franchise company in its Denver headquarters when it was seeking entrepreneurs to open the Houston market.

Michael Forastiere said Houston's economy and reputation as a foodie city that likes to eat out were appealing to their business plans.

"We're growing as fast as we possibly can," he said.

Each brother manages his own location, though there is crossover, he said.

Spicy Pickle Sandwich Co. specializes in fresh, gourmet-style offerings made with artisan breads, baked fresh daily and piled high with top-quality meats. The menu offers a wide choice of eight cheeses, 22 toppings, and 14 proprietary spreads.

The River Oaks location is the fourth to open in two years. The family has its eyes on other suitable markets but no other shops currently in the works.

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