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From the Albany Business Review:
<https://www.bizjournals.com/albany/news/2021/07/16/bare-blends-plans-expansion.html>

Bare Blends plans fourth location, expands with franchises

Jul 16, 2021, 3:20pm EDT

The owners of Bare Blends have announced plans to open a fourth location in Glenmont.

Jessica Fuller and Ann-Marie Berdar, who co-own three Bare Blends locations in Albany, Clifton Park and Latham said their Glenmont location will be their first franchised location in New York state.

“We realized that what we were doing was really unique from our



DONNA ABBOTT-VLAHOS | ALBANY
BUSINESS REVIEW

Co-owners Jessica Fuller, left, and Ann-Marie Berdar outside Bare Blends at Glenmont Plaza.

competitors and people were gravitating towards it," Fuller said. "We also realized that it was a business model that could be easily replicated and that we could teach people how to do it and at the same time give people the opportunity to be business owners and shape their own future."

Robin Gulay, an associate director at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, will own and manage the new franchise, set to open in two months at 380 Feura Bush Road in Glenmont Plaza near Delmar.

The 1,000-square-foot space will include a mezzanine and new outdoor patio.

Benderson Development LLC, which owns the property, is funding and constructing the patio specifically for the business.

Interior renovations are being overseen by Fuller, Berdar and Gulay. A budget for the project has yet to be determined.

Fuller said the company is still narrowing down contractors for the project.

While the pandemic has continued to be polarizing for many business owners, Bare Blends has continued to find success and rapidly expand.

Fuller said the company's success is, in part, due to an increased interest in healthy, plant-based food options over the past year.

"Fortunately for Bare, it was already doing well before the pandemic and the pandemic hasn't hurt business at all," said Fuller, who also owns Hot Yoga Spot. "In fact, our business was really designed to flourish post-pandemic."

In April, she and Berdar opened their third Bare Blends location in Latham at Fresh Market Commons off Loudon Road.

The duo also said they plan to expand into Saratoga Springs, North Greenbush and the Glenville-Scotia area in the foreseeable future.

Final steps for franchises in Florida and Colorado, with the Colorado location set to finish on construction sometime next month, are also in the works.

Glenmont will be Gulay's first time owning and operating a business. She will also oversee the North Greenbush location when it opens.

Like Berdar, Gulay met Fuller while taking classes at the Hot Yoga Spot in Albany. She said she was immediately impressed by Fuller and after meeting Berdar, she knew she wanted to work with them.

"I wanted to work in my own business with other women who are go-getters and I knew that Jess and Annie were the perfect duo," Gulay said. "In addition, the Bare culture, commitment to the community and to healthy food alternatives is also something that I knew I wanted to be a part of."

Bare Blends said it works with Peter VanBortel of Ikon Realty Group to locate prospective locations in the Capital Region. Gulay said she's excited to have control over her own destiny.

"I will feel a huge sense of pride once the two businesses are up and running and I can say 'I own those,'" she said.

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