

RENAISSANCE MALL WELCOMES APLOS

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This past year, Ridgeland, Mississippi's Renaissance Mall has seen an increase of dining and shopping options available to its visitors. Anchored by popular brands American Eagle, Loft, Altar'd State, and Sephora, it offers a diverse shopping experience. The outdoor mall additionally offers eateries such as Panera Bread, Five Guys, Another Broken Egg, and CAET, providing a rich palette to satisfy any appetite.

The current year has sparked a wave of excitement among the local community and regular visitors as the mall expands its collection. It has welcomed many new establishments, including the popular athletic apparel store Lululemon, Club Champion, and Athleta. The mall also added to its culinary landscape. Aplos, a new restaurant to the Renaissance Mall but a popular name to the Jackson Metro, has already carved out a niche for itself with its fresh and vibrant Mediterranean ambiance. This combination of retail and fresh dishes has enhanced the mall's appeal and promised an enriched shopping and dining experience.

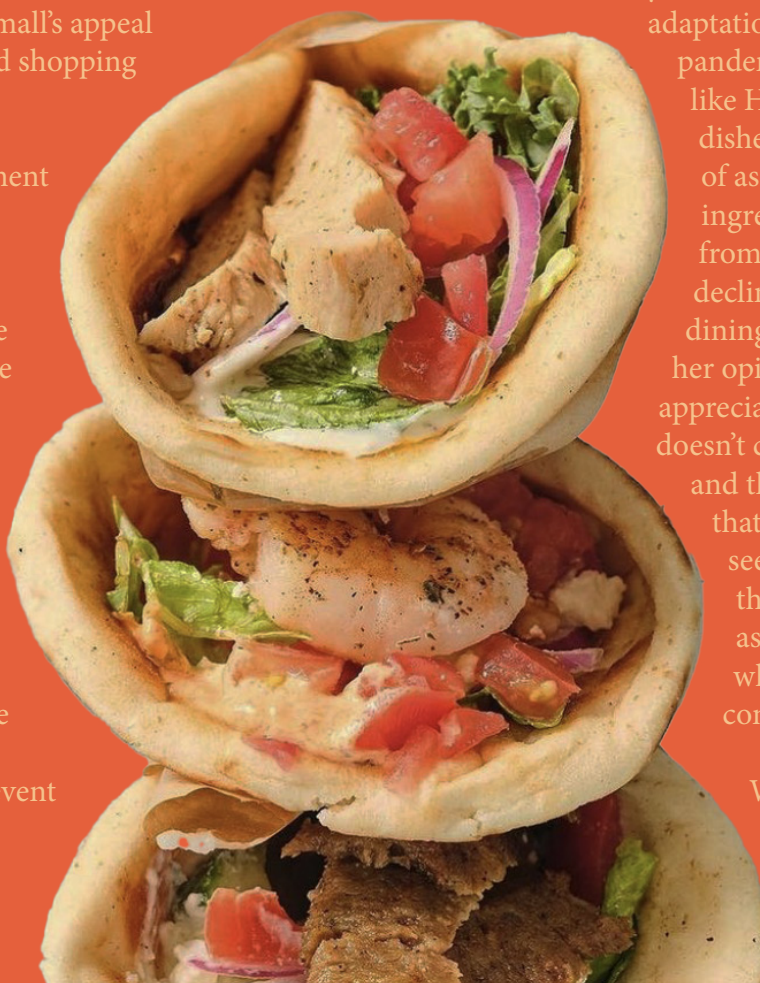
The new Aplos establishment cemented its popularity through outstanding customer service. Following its opening, the restaurant organized a live symphony on a Thursday evening, utilizing the green space just beyond its doors. This event showcased a blend of culture and dining to amplify its attraction, drawing a mix of loyal and first-time patrons to experience the new venue. The musical event built the community and showed the restaurant's

dedication to enriching the local cultural landscape. The restaurant opened its first location in 2018 in Highland Village in Jackson, Mississippi. The founder of the restaurant, Alex Eaton, introduces some of the history behind the restaurant in an interview; "This restaurant was started in 2018 as a spin-off of the background of my family," Eaton said, "My mom is Lebanese, so I was also drawn to cook Lebanese food working at other restaurants." Eaton traveled to Beirut, Lebanon, and San Francisco to study various dishes and moved back to Jackson, where he found his first location in Highland Village.

The new Aplos location in Ridgeland aims to replicate the success of its original site by transporting its signature Mediterranean design and emphasizing a fast and enjoyable dining experience. Customer Sophomore Stella Hathcock tried Aplos in 2020.

The "make your own pizza" feature—an adaptation during the peak of the pandemic—allowed customers like Hathcock's to enjoy Aplos dishes by offering the choice of assembling pizzas with ingredients supplied by Aplos from home. As the pandemic declined, Hathcock's in-person dining at Aplos strengthened her opinion of the restaurant. She appreciated the swift service that doesn't compromise on quality and the communal feeling that Aplos cultivates. Many see this restaurant as more than just a place to eat but as a vibrant social space where convenience meets community.

When it first opened in its Highland Village location, Aplos only



adhered to a Middle Eastern menu. Over time, however, the restaurant acknowledged its southern location and soon adapted it into the menu. “When we first opened,” Eaton said, “we were very strict on the menu being Middle Eastern, but then we realized, ‘Hey, we’re in Mississippi.’ So, we began incorporating familiar dishes infused with Mediterranean flavors.” This innovative union of traditional Southern and Mediterranean dishes created an even more unique dining experience. Aplos’ new range of dishes led to a menu that invited both the cultures of Mississippi and Mediterranean foods. Some of the most popular: rice bowls, fresh salads, and customized pita sandwiches created a foundation for a diverse menu. The introduction of pizzas, especially, became a highlight, accounting for a significant portion of their revenue. The integration of Mediterranean spices and herbs into the well-known southern dishes additionally allowed Aplos to maintain its culture and serve the preferences of its Mississippi clientele.

With its new location, Aplos wanted to be seen as a place that fosters social interaction rather than a retreat from it. According to Eaton, the founder, the vision was to craft an atmosphere that not only entices the palate but also serves as the perfect backdrop for memorable social media moments—a place that encourages patrons to relish their time and share it with the world. With a decor that invites photographs and conversations, Aplos aims to provide an ambiance where patrons can feel the warmth and joy akin to a sunny disposition on a dreary day. “We’re just trying to create

those experiences where you feel like it’s a beautiful day while it’s raining,” Eaton said, “We want to be that bright spot in the community.”



Make sure to visit the website for all the details: <https://www.eataplos.com>



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