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NEW GROCER TO BE A CUT ABOVE

City's new Roche Bros. not your average market

By **DONNA GOODISON**


RETAIL

Roche Bros. employees were busy stocking shelves, cutting blocks of cheese and learning to make hot charcuterie sandwiches at the grocer's Downtown Crossing store in Boston yesterday in preparation for its Wednesday opening.

Workers installed the red Roche Bros. sign on the former Burnham building and downstairs in the former Filene's Basement space, large white letters were applied on a wall of Boston neighborhood names behind one of two checkout rows, where a queue management system will direct shoppers to open registers.

Customers entering the store's 3,000-square-foot upper level on Summer Street can expect to be hit with the aromas of hot cinnamon buns in the morning and Roche Bros.' signature chocolate chip and walnut cookies the rest of the day.

That part of the store will focus on grab-and-go hot and cold food and beverages, including self-serve Peet's coffee and tea. "In the morning we'll have big bakery peels with fresh danish, croissants and other bakery items,"

marketing director Dena Zigun said.

The escalator down into the main 23,000-square-foot store puts shoppers in front of a rotating selection of 64 ready-to-eat prepared entrees, sides and salads.

"Upstairs, everything is built for speed," Zigun said. "Downstairs, if you want to customize things, you have the opportunity to do that."

A catering desk sits to the side of the produce section. "We've added a whole business-focused lunch menu just for this store," Zigun said. Based on focus group input, packages will include sheet cakes, balloons and flowers for special events.

A "chop shop" has 40-plus varieties of prepared produce, including sliced fruit, chef cuts of vegetables and seasoned, ready-to-roast veggies.

A floral section with flower arrangements and plants well-suited for apartments and offices is next to a large cheese shop, which includes a New England product case. Shoppers can watch workers



STAFF PHOTOS BY ANGELA ROWLINGS

SUPERMARKET SETUP: Workers prepare for the grand opening of Roche Bros. in Downtown Crossing.

make fresh mozzarella in the store.

A charcuterie sandwich station has seven hot options made to order. There is also a deli, salad bar, sweet and savory focaccia, a wing bar and seafood section.

The meat department carries all certified Angus and Angus prime beef, with tradi-

tional cuts displayed on Boos chopping boards and restaurant cuts in cast-iron skillets.

The store is Roche Bros.' second in Boston, but first downtown. "The logistics are probably the biggest challenge," Zigun said. "Getting a box truck down Hawley Street can be challenging."

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