

# Brown Bag's big day

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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ALTON – Newly-minted Brown Bag Bistro hosted the public Tuesday during its much-anticipated soft opening.

The bistro, which specializes in appetizers, sandwiches, soups and craft beer and wine, is operated by Chris Velloff and DeeDee Adams. Adams, whose husband, Mark, built the interior and much of the exterior of the building, said the goal of Brown Bag Bistro was to bring something to Alton, which was similar to the daytime cafes of Europe. She said their family has roots in Italy and Croatia, and wanted to bring that aspect of European culture to the city.

“We have had people come through already who have been to those kinds of places and say it's very similar,” Adams said.

In fact, so many people came through Tuesday that the Brown Bag Bistro was nearly running out of supplies. They did not anticipate having such a large success on their first day of business, especially with a soft opening. The grand opening will be sometime in June.





“We really only told our friends and family,” Adams said. “But, we've had people coming through here since we opened at 10:30 a.m. This is the first time we've had a break all day (approximately 2 p.m. Tuesday).”

Now that it is formally open, the bistro will be open Tuesday-Saturday from 10:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Adams said patio hours will be announced as the weather gets better, meaning it will stay open until 10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Brown Bag Bistro has a full liquor license, but is only serving craft beer and wine at this time. It is not like other places serving alcohol, however. Adams said she wants a family-friendly location where parents can bring their children. It is adjacent to the 1904 General Store on Broadway as well, and owned by the same people.

Some specialties at the shop include the Sammy Roo and the Ruby Roo, which are each varieties of Reuben sandwiches named for Velloff's parents. Each has special sauce – instead of thousand island – and the Ruby Roo is made of turkey.

