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New Businesses in Focus: Staten Island's La Vida Massage (photo gallery)

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This business employs about 12 employees and also offers custom facials, waxing, spray tanning and designer peels. (Staten Island Advance/Bill Lyons)

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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Darren and Michele Carbone wanted to be the first to bring a popular massage business franchise to the New York City area.

The brother and sister team felt the perfect location for such a business was the bustling Charleston retail plaza, South Shore Commons.

Formerly in the restaurant industry, the sibling business partners wanted to make the leap into the spa business due to their love for therapeutic massages.

"Our children are in the field and we heard great things about this business, so we decided to venture into it," said Carbone.

"Even though it's a franchise, it's not a corporate monster like some other stores. We have a gender neutral atmosphere that is family-friendly."

With nine massage rooms -- including one "couples room" -- and one aesthetic room for other services, you automatically get a feeling of tranquility when entering the seating area decorated in chic, contemporary styling.

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