

## LOCAL NEWS

### Hearts and flowers amid mountains and mochas: Couple opens new espresso and ice cream shop

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This Valentine's Day, Umesh and Zillie Bhuju will be celebrating more than their marriage; they'll celebrate the grand opening of Zumi's Espresso and Ice Cream on Market Street.

Zumi's carries espresso and coffee beverages, baked goods, ice cream, and their own coffee/ice cream creations.

Umesh, a native of Nepal, said they wanted the shop to appeal to people who love adventure. Umesh spent time as a guide in the Himalayan mountains and helped others raise money for to climb Mt. Everest.

The walls of the shop are lined with photos from Essex mountaineer Mark Richey's travels in Nepal and Peru. Customers are invited to bring photos and postcards from their own adventures to be posted on bulletin boards at Zumi's.

Umesh came to America in 1990 as a YMCA counselor, working with kids in soccer and rock climbing (naturally). Years later, he met Zillie, a first-generation Greek-American, when they both worked at a residential program for autistic children.

At the League School of Boston, Zillie worked in the afternoon program and Umesh worked overnight. Zillie knew of another Nepali counselor coming to the program and thought that he and Umesh might become friends. As it turned out, it was Zillie and Umesh who became friends ... and then some.

On a trip to Nepal, Umesh proposed to Zillie at 18,000 feet as they climbed Mt. Pumori, the mountain next to Mt. Everest; it is called the daughter of Everest.

They were married in June 2000, and for years talked about starting their own business. Zillie, a social worker, wanted to do something related to children, and Umesh wanted to involve coffee. He had worked as a shift supervisor for Starbucks in Boston as he earned his degrees, and he enjoyed the business.

He even thought he could do it better and cheaper.

To welcome children into the business, they added ice cream to the menu and plan to have a blackboard available to keep little hands busy.

The Bhujus chose Ipswich because they had ties to the North Shore - Zillie grew up in Topsfield and they live now in Essex. Ipswich was right in between.

Zillie's father owns Topsfield House of Pizza and has offered the young couple useful advice about running their own business in the food industry.

But he didn't need to give them advice on choosing a name: it just came to them. Their 2-month-old daughter is named Uma Pumori, after the mountain.

Before Uma was born, the Bhujus didn't know her gender. Friends started referring to the baby as "Zumi," a combination of their names. Since they were planning the shop at the same time, it only seemed natural to carry on the name.

-- PHOTOGRAPHS --



Umesh and Zillie Bhuju will see a dream come true at the grand opening of Zumi's Espresso and Ice Cream on Market Street tomorrow. (Photo by J.B. Shelleby)

Zillie will continue to do the behind-the-scenes work while Umesh will be at the shop to welcome customers with a smile.

A basket on the counter invites suggestions and comments from customers, and here's a good reason to give some: customers who invent a drink the owners think is good enough to add to the menu will have the drink named after them.