

A new look for La Madeleine? Oui, oui!

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French cafe La Madeleine is franchising nationally and introducing a new look. Its Tysons Corner location will be one of the first to debut the new appearance.

The new look comes courtesy of Bethesda-based design and brokerage company Streetsense, which worked with Dallas-based La Madeleine de Corps Inc. on the new branding.

All of La Madeleine's 59 stores have previously been corporate-owned, largely in stand-alone buildings. A new, smaller store provides more flexibility on locations, said **Chris Cheek**, vice president of franchise development, and should boost interest in La Madeleine franchises.

The restaurant's size is shifting from about 5,000 square feet to 3,500 square feet. To get to the smaller size, La Madeleine reduced kitchen space rather than eliminating seating.

"It puts us in a position to be very scalable for franchising, meaning we can look at end caps and strip centers," said Cheek, referring to some of the higher-profile locations within shopping centers.

The new store has a separate bakery with an open kitchen, said **Herb Heiserman** of Streetsense, who worked with **Rhena Saar** and **Hugo Rodriguez** on the design.

"It's lighter, more modern and not as kitschy," he said.

La Madeleine will be converting existing locations to the new format and expanding to additional units as well, both corporate and franchise. The company declined to disclose how much it is investing in the venture.

As one of the initial restaurants adopting the new style, the high-traffic <http://www.bizjournals.com/> [Tysons Corner Center](#) store is moving from a stand-alone store near the mall's premises to a spot in the mall. It is scheduled to open in late fall.

Brokers **Andrew Segall** and **Joe Fleischmann** of Segall Group are working with the company to find new local corporate locations for La Madeleine. The chain has eight units in the region.

"They have a fairly good presence here already, and we're looking to fill in the obvious places where they're not," Fleischmann said, mentioning D.C.'s Central Business District as a target. The company just signed a lease in Silver Spring near the Metro station at Georgia and Wayne avenues. That restaurant will open in the spring, Heiserman said.

The privately held company does not disclose revenue figures. Paris-based Groupe Le Duff SA, which also owns the Bruegger's Bagels chain, acquired La Madeleine in 2002.

The company has not yet signed any franchisees because legally it could not enlist them until it had received certification, Cheek explained, but added that it has seen significant preliminary interest. The new-format La Madeleine will cost between \$800,000 and \$1.2 million for a franchisee to open, Cheek said.