



Nicole Rogers chucked her career in public relations to open **The Cupcake Spot** in Tampa. Her boyfriend, **Doug Longo**, stands behind the counter.

KATHLEEN FLYNN | Times

Bakery hits the sweet spot

Tampa takes its place in a Cupcake Nation with The Cupcake Spot.

BY LAURA REILEY
Times Food Critic

TAMPA — Babycakes was taken. So were Cupcake Cafe, The Cupcakery, Casa Cupcake, even Hello, Cupcake. All trademarked already. So when Nicole Rogers applied for a business name, she settled on The Cupcake Spot for the little storefront she opened in December on S Dale Mabry Highway in Tampa.

A perfectly lovely name, paired with a plucky, cherry-topped cupcake logo, Tampa's C-Spot is our first entry in the national cupcake craze. New York City's Magnolia Bakery is cred-

ited with starting the frenzy in the mid 1990s, its buttercreamy allures immortalized in an episode of *Sex and the City* (and later in a *Saturday Night Live* digital short).

Then Oprah brought Los Angeles' Sprinkles Cupcakes to our collective consciousness (a gift from Barbra Streisand, they were Oprah's absolute faves). Not to be outdone, Ellen DeGeneres went on to enumerate the 10 best cupcakes in America.

There are more than a dozen craven-cupcaker blogs, including one launched in 2004 by Rachel Kramer Bussel, a former sex columnist for *The Village Voice*

(www.cupcakestakethecake.blogspot.com). One blog, the appropriately named www.cupcakefetish.com, puts the number of cupcake shops at 475, spread through 13 countries.

And now we have our own.

Last year Rogers and her boyfriend, Doug Longo, took a 40th-birthday trip (they were born a couple of weeks apart) to the Greek islands. As languorous days in gorgeous settings often do, the trip caused them to take stock, rethink.

Strolling through Mykonos, they brainstormed, Longo remembers.

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