



# KITCH *has found its* NICHE

## Red Bank & Beyond

“One table can feed...Everybody!” say Joe Durso and Rick Ivone, Jr., co-owners of Kitch Organic, the new health-oriented eatery that opened in October on Red Bank’s West Side. “Of course, it helps that people love what they eat once they’re here!” With more than a 60% customer return rate, Kitch Organic is doing something really right.

A case in point: when the free range, organic turkey meatloaf was dropped from the menu—a deliciously inelegant dish intended as a short-term special—customers’ reaction said a lot. “People were screaming at us about it,” says Joe. Now, it’s back, along with entrees that include ginger glazed tempeh and a host of vegan, vegetarian, and other options. The cold-pressed juices, and gluten and wheat-free baked goods are popular menu items—all fresh, all organic, sourced from local markets and top-tier distributors.



Joe loves food as much as the next guy, in this case his business partner, Rick Ivone Jr., a life-coach and personal trainer turned restaurateur. “It’s great seeing how happy everyone is when they eat here,” says Rick. “We serve nutrient-dense food. People are radiant when they leave.”



The goal at Kitch Organic is to offer the healthiest, most delicious and nutritious life experience at a place where everyone can eat and connect at one table. That means a person who is a vegan can dine next to a friend who is a meat eater and they’re both happy.



The idea came from The Plant Café Organic, a restaurant in San Francisco Rick had visited in 2010 with a friend. He came away asking, “Why don’t we have anything like this back in Red Bank”? When Rick shared the experience with Joe a couple of years later, the “big idea” clicked—but it would take a couple of more years of planning and more than a dozen trips to the West Coast to realize the dream. Although Joe and Rick were both new to the restaurant business, they had a love of good food and healthy eating in common.

Joe, a 2005 Christian Brothers Academy graduate and talented baseball player, seriously injured his shoulder in a post-college pro tryout. He went to work for his father, a local financial advisor, and later, at a hedge fund in Manhattan. Through his father, he met Rick, a fellow Red Bank local. When Rick asked Joe what he *really* wanted to do, Joe told him he had always wanted to get into the food industry. This resonated with Rick, a Type One Diabetic, whose own health and 30 year career in wellness had proven an important truth for him: “Healthy food is an integral part of building a healthy life through lifestyle.”

The owners describe the painstakingly renovated space Kitch Organic occupies on Leighton Avenue as “a West Coast-driven building with a kind of East Coast mentality and a very Napa Valley, clean industrial-feel interior.” Inside, there are 20 seats; outside, tables seat 12. The restaurant is BYOB and both Joe and Rick are inspired when it comes to creating mixers with cold pressed juices.

Jennifer Freeman, a graduate of Natural Gourmet in New York who has worked at prestigious area restaurants, is central to the team. To Joe and Rick, she’s the “backbone (and backyard) of our business.” A master gardener, she is in charge of planting, raising and harvesting Kitch Organic’s backyard crops. She also makes a mean Bloody Mary mix.

What’s the next “big idea” for Kitch Organic? There are plenty of them. Expanding catering...more juice programs...cooking classes and workshops in the spring. And don’t be surprised to find more Kitch locations cropping up soon.

**KITCH ORGANIC**  
75 LEIGHTON AVE, RED BANK  
732.741.5400 | KITCHORGANIC.COM