Roots of Success
Mother Juice turns the fruits of its labor into a new brick-and-mortar spot.

MATT MARTINELLI

It's been three years since food trucks hit the streets in Boston, and the fear that they'd cannibalize business from brick-and-mortar eateries has proven folly. In fact, for many operators, a truck is a step on the road to a restaurant. The latest example is Mother Juice, slated to open a storefront in Kendall Square this month—a move that was always part of the plan.

“In the back of our minds, the idea was always to move to a brick-and-mortar. We just wanted to test the waters first with a truck and see what the demand was like,” says partner Ellen Fitzgerald, who started the Mother Juice food truck with Laura Baldini in April 2013. “We got a great response, so we started looking for storefront spaces.”

The space they found is small at 700 square feet, but will do the trick, with seating for up to 15 at three white tables and four counter seats, plus outdoor seating in the courtyard across the way. The vibe is minimalist, with a few well-placed plants, counters made with reclaimed wood from New England barns and works from local artists, including a mural of an “emblem of fruits and vegetables.”

Those fruits and veggies will also be all over the menu. Juice junkies can expect a new flavor that Fitzgerald says is “sweet and heat,” made with beet, carrot, celery, jalapeno and pineapple. In addition to truck standbys such as vegan smoothies and cold-pressed juices, there will be salads with homemade dressing, cauliflower couscous, zucchini and squash noodles and breakfast items such as an acai bowl with hemp granola and fruit.

“The idea is to keep the supply chain the same, but just offer it in different ways,” Fitzgerald says.

The roots of Mother Juice trace back to that supply chain. A couple of years ago, Fitzgerald mused about juicing fresh produce right at the farmers market in Davis Square. That idea led to the Kickstarter campaign, which led to the food truck, which led to the Kendall Square spot. Fitzgerald hopes Mother Juice will be another successful branch in a generation of restaurants that all share a similar origin story.
“There’s been a lot of food trucks that have successfully moved into brick and mortar. It’s sort of like, ‘OK, they get their name out there. It’s great marketing. They test their product. Then you have foothold,’” Fitzgerald says. “And I think it’s really helpful for us, where we’d already run the business. We knew the operational side, and we just wanted to take it to a permanent location.”

Mother Juice, 625 West Kendall, Cambridge (617-286-6580) motherjuicesboston.com