

BUSINESS IN THE BLUFF



Give Yourself What Nature Intended

By Jill Ferguson

Tru Nature Juice Bar at 2225 East Broadway has been a thriving neighborhood business since June 2014. But you may not know that Tru Nature's owner, Raj, also lives in Bluff Heights. Raj said he bought his house here in 2013, and while walking the beach every morning, he noticed and didn't like that he couldn't find high-quality refreshing, cold beverages in the neighborhood—only coffee.

His cousin visited him from New York and would bring him juice, but he didn't like the taste. It wasn't as fresh or vibrant as he remembered from the juices he had as a youth, when his parents treated everything with healthy, ayurvedic juices.

On one of his walks, he spied what was then a small shop selling Hello Kitty merchandise. He thought it would be the perfect place for a juice bar. The shop rarely seemed to be open, so Raj tracked down the landlords of the property and asked if he could take over the lease. The landlords were hesitant but Raj was persistent, including showing up on Christmas in 2013.

That day, they gave him the lease. Originally Raj thought he'd be open Thursdays through Sundays, starting with juices and smoothies. But the response from the community was strong, so Tru Nature met the demand to be open seven days a week, blending fresh fruit, spices, and non-dairy milk into delicious smoothies and pressing veggies and fruits into awakening juices.

Eventually Raj expanded the menu to acai bowls and pitaya bowls, along with wellness shots and select packaged items such as organic vegan cookies and food bars and cans of organic Weird Tea. Raj said his favorite things on the menu are the Hangover Cure (spinach, parsley, ginger, lemon, turmeric, apple, celery, and beet); the Buddha Belly Bowl (acai, blueberry, banana, almond butter, dark chocolate almond milk, and dark chocolate); the Happy Buddha bowl (acai, strawberry,

blueberry, banana, dark chocolate almond milk, and vegan chips); the Coco-Spin Smoothie (banana, spinach, coconut milk, coconut water, cardamon spice, and agave); and the Date Shake (dates, banana, cardamon, cinnamon, vegan chocolate chips, agave, and almond and coconut milks).

"I always wanted to give to the community, and it is God's blessing that I have you guys as my customers," Raj said. He loves when he hears people say, "Your juices helped us so much."

Many of Tru Nature's menu items can be ordered ahead of time through [ChowNow](#) for pick-up or delivery. All bowls, smoothies, and juices are made on-site after the order is placed, so you get the health benefits of fresh, raw ingredients.

Raj also supports our community by frequently donating gift certificates to be used as prizes for events sponsored by the Bluff Heights Neighborhood Association board. We are grateful that Raj is an active member of our community and that he started his first juice bar here. (Tru Nature has since expanded into a total of five locations in two states.) *Tru Nature is open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.*

Jill Ferguson is an artist, best-selling author, coach, consultant, entrepreneur, and founder of Women's Wellness Weekends. She lives in Bluff Heights with her husband, Rick Heckt, and their very smart dog Coconut and very energetic dog Casper.

