



ORGANIC ZONE – A COMMUNITY BUSINESS BUILT ON GOODWILL, GENEROSITY AND PARTICIPATION

‘At the heart of the Organic Zone shopping experience is *organic and local first.*’ says owner Allister McGregor. ‘We’ve been committed to that principle since the beginning and the strong connections we’ve developed in the process have helped us come through some grueling times.’ McGregor is referring to the recent challenges Organic Zone experienced due to an expansion plan that saw two new stores open and close within the last four years.

Over the last 15 years, the Organic Zone team has worked hard to build resilient relationships with their organic farmers, suppliers and a loyal, supportive community of customers. ‘I’m grateful that due to the goodwill built into the foundation of these relationships, along with the help of new, forward thinking partners, we’ve been able to overcome a difficult time, maintain our footprint within the organic community, and possibly be in a position to take carefully planned, new steps into the future.’

Initially a veggie box-scheme in 2003, Organic Zone opened its doors in 2008 as a store which soon became known as a vibrant and energetic hub for all things organic. Customers appreciate Organic Zone’s extensive range of organically grown fruit and vegetables, organic groceries, personal care and artisanal baked goods. It’s become well-known too for its excellent grass-fed meats, pastured, free-range poultry and eggs, raw pet food and deli foods such as ghee, yoghurts, fermented foods and cheeses.

The Organic Zone kitchen produces its own range of ready-made meals, snacks and ready-prepped fruit for smoothies, which are popular with customers. ‘We started making our own deli range of foods so we can control the inputs that go into our pre-prepared meals. We offer our customers premium

ingredients in our ready-mades such as using organic olive oil and our own sauces, without compromising on freshness and flavour, or by using additives and preservatives,' says McGregor.

Organic Zone aims to offer their customers a consistent and complete one-stop shopping experience. The greatest challenge however, is sourcing enough produce from organic farmers, especially when it comes to fruit. 'If it's available, we'll buy it, however the short supply of organic produce reflects the reality of how relatively few organic growers there are in South Africa,' maintains McGregor. 'If we are unable to source organic, we buy the most sustainable alternative from our community of farms.'

'We source ethically and locally wherever we can and stock imported organic products so we can offer our customers a wider range. Our approach is that as we grow the demand for organic imported goods such as tinned tomatoes, beans and so on, we hope to create the incentive for South African producers to fill in the gaps and so increase the number of locally produced organic foods and goods,' says McGregor.

Organic Zone suppliers participate in the local [PGS](#) (Participatory Guarantee Systems) which plays a significant role in helping farmers get organic certification. It's affordable for smallholder farmers, designed as a short supply chain for nurturing local organic produce into the market thereby enabling farmers to get fair prices and for consumers to get food they can trust.

These days, the words 'organic' and 'sustainable' have almost become clichés. How does Organic Zone make a unique contribution in the organic world?

Organic Zone sees itself primarily as a service to the community of farmers, suppliers and customers it has grown around the business. They have helped small, local producers and farmers develop their products and bring them to market, making them available to a growing community, eager for minimally processed and nutrient-dense foods and eco-friendly household products.

'Organic Zone customers are extremely knowledgeable and well-researched,' says McGregor. 'I see them as collaborators and participants in how we grow further. Through their feedback, comments and requests, they help drive new product purchasing decisions and development.'

Organic Zone clearly has staunch customer support. Regulars enjoy the friendly service, warm, relaxed atmosphere and wide selection on offer. An added bonus is that shoppers can order a great cup of organic coffee and delicious, healthy snacks while they shop.

‘Right now,’ says McGregor, we’re concentrating on making Organic Zone the best place to come to for all things organic; there are very exciting, creative plans for the future in the pipeline. Watch this zone.’

For more information please contact:

Allister McGregor CEO at allister@organiczone.co.za

Visit Organic Zone at 1 Main Rd &, Putter Rd, Lakeside, Cape Town

Call: 021 788 3133

www.organiczone.co.za