

Beachy Cream looks toward expansion

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Beachy Cream Organic Ice Cream founders Ann Ryan (left) and Beth Levine pose with their company's ice cream sandwiches at Vintage Grocers in Malibu. Chris Bashaw/22nd Century Media

A common adage says it takes a village to raise a child, and it's not far-fetched to think the same for a small business – a small village, or a close-knit town such as Malibu, may be exactly what it takes to get a small business off the ground.

That's at least the experience of Ann Ryan, a Malibu resident of nearly 20 years, who, with her daughter Beth Levine, started what is now Beachy Cream Organic Ice Cream.

"We thought we'd just get a cart with a freezer and an umbrella and we'd walk it down the beach and sell local ice cream to local people on the beach, but then we basically found out that's illegal," Levine said, laughing.

Today, Beachy Cream Organic Ice Cream can be found in all Gelson's grocery stores, the Erewhon Natural Foods in Calabasas, select Whole Foods locations, a physical storefront in Santa Monica, at Vintage Grocers in Malibu and a number of other locations.

The company is best known for its variety of surfing-inspired ice cream sandwiches, which are made from all-organic ice creams.

Ever since Ryan crafted her first ice cream sandwich – the Ginger Wipeout – in September 2009 from her grandmother’s recipe for molasses spice cookies and a cousin’s candied ginger ice cream, Beachy Cream has been expanding; but the opening of its first physical storefront in Santa Monica in 2012 marked a new period of growth.

Now, Beachy Cream is looking toward producing its products on a larger scale at a plant in Long Beach within the next few months.

Even so, Ryan still bears in mind her company’s humble beginnings, when she made her ice cream in the kitchen at Dolores Rivellino’s now-sold Godmother of Malibu Café at the Malibu Raquet Club.

“One of the biggest problems when you’re starting a food business is finding out where you’re going to make the product because you can’t make it at home and sell it in stores,” Ryan said. “Dolores said I could come and make it in the kitchen of her café, and that was a huge turning point for us. She also started selling our ice cream sandwiches at the café and used us when she was catering parties around town.”

In December 2014, Rivellino announced she was selling The Godmother of Malibu Café and Catering Company, but said she would still produce “Godmother” products, such as the tomato bisque at a location she left unnamed.

As it would come to be, Ryan is returning the favor Rivellino lent her in Beachy Cream’s infancy and allowing Rivellino to produce her Godmother products at the ice cream company’s plant in Long Beach.

“She [Ryan] started out with so little, and I thought why not let her use my kitchen?” Rivellino said. “Now we come full-circle. I’m thrilled. It’s like a miracle.”

As integral as Rivellino was to Ryan, Ryan also credited a few other Malibu businesses and people for her success.

“The grocery business is really competitive and hard to get into, but Michael Osterman from PC Greens took us in, and PC Greens was the first grocery store we went into,” Ryan said.

Shortly after appearing on the shelves at PC Greens, Beachy Cream Ice Cream nudged its way into Malibu Seafood.

“More people find out about our product from eating at Malibu Seafood than anywhere else,” Levine said. “A lot of our Twitter and Instagram hashtags come from people at Malibu Seafood eating our ice cream, and it’s almost as many as people who are in our Santa Monica store.”

Beachy Cream isn’t responsible for the creation of organic ice cream, but it endeavors to perfect the craft with more than 20 flavors comprised of organic ingredients.

Ryan said produce items such as strawberries and mint are bought at farmers markets, coffee is sourced from the Groundwork Coffee Company and cocoa and vanilla beans are bought from fair-trade companies.

“We use as much local organic produce as possible, and we make fresh syrups from locally grown ingredients,” Ryan said. “We do things differently than anyone else, and people seem to realize there’s a real difference.”