

High-end KoP mall food court adds N.J. taqueria, nears completion

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A New Jersey-based restaurant group known for its "abuela-approved" Mexican cuisine will be the last piece of the [King of Prussia Mall's](#) high-end food court when the restaurant opens its first outpost in Pennsylvania in December.

The King of Prussia Mall completed and opened its 155,000-square-foot **expansion project** this year that included a high-end food court called Savor King of Prussia, which brought a slew of new restaurants, both national and Philadelphia-based to the massive shopping mall.

So far, restaurants that have opened to the public at Savor are The Fat Ham, sweetgreen, Melt Shop, Shake Shack, Nicoletta Pizzeria and Hai Street Kitchen.

In mid-December, New Jersey's The Taco Truck will be joining that list. The restaurant is located adjacent to Nicoletta Pizzeria. No specific opening date has been announced yet.

[Jason Scott](#) and [Chris Viola](#) first opened The Taco Truck in 2009 as a food truck, and the first brick-and-mortar location opened in 2010 in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Scott's previous career at retailer Urban Angler allowed him to travel, and along the way he "fell in love with authentic taqueria." He lived in Hoboken at the time, and he "selfishly wanted to bring it to Hoboken," and make the taqueria concept more mainstream.

Now with additional New Jersey locations in Morristown (opened in 2012) and Princeton (2014), the partners will take their concept across the Delaware River to King of Prussia.

"We have been looking at the Philadelphia area for quite some time," said Scott, who added that Viola and other Taco Truck executives have roots in Philadelphia.

Scott and Viola were approached by King of Prussia Mall owner [Simon Property Group](#) (NYSE: SPG), which visited The Taco Truck outpost in Princeton when Savor was still being built out, Scott said.

"Once we heard the lineup of operators they were going to bring there, it was a very compelling case for us," Scott said.

The store's design will be "different, and head and shoulders above anything we've done," he said, with new menu items and more regular specials.

The expansion project, which broke ground in 2014, added 50 new retail and dining storefronts, including the restaurants at Savor, and retailers Carolina Herrera, Altar'd State and Diane von Furstenberg.

Others relocated to the expansion, including Hermes, Louis Vuitton and Tiffany & Co.

"The feedback we've received so far regarding Savor from both customers and restaurant operators has been extremely positive and further confirms that unique dining experiences and a diversity of options are very important to customers," said [Kathy Smith](#), the mall's director of marketing and business development.

"The opening of The Taco Truck rounds out our tremendous, new fast-casual restaurant options, truly making Savor the destination it was designed to be," Smith said.

As for The Taco Truck's expansion in the Philadelphia area, Scott said at least two additional locations are planned for 2017. Specific areas are still being scouted and vetted, but the Rittenhouse Square and University City areas are "high on the list."

In 2018, the group will look to fill in additional markets in New Jersey and other East Coast markets like Washington, D.C., Westchester County and Long Island in New York, and Connecticut.

But for immediate expansion, the Philadelphia region is the farthest the restaurant group will go beyond its core areas.

"We really want to be involved," Scott said. "We need to be close to home so we can make sure we're firing on all cylinders."

Although the company's name is an homage to its food truck beginnings, Scott said the focus will be on brick-and-mortar locations moving forward. The current truck is undergoing a refresh, and it will hit the streets of the Philadelphia area before and after the opening at the [King of Prussia Mall](#).

"We expect to offer catering in the area," Scott said. "We're getting our truck in the market and letting people connect with the brand and connect the dots on why we're called The Taco Truck."

The King of Prussia Mall has been adding a number of eateries for the past year and has plans to add even more next year.

Pizzeria Vetri in October opened adjacent to Urban Outfitters in the area anchored by The Cheesecake Factory, and Yard House and Outback Steakhouse **will open** in the former Sears Auto Center near Primark and Dick's Sporting Goods.

A concept called Mistral, which first opened in Princeton, New Jersey, will also open in early 2017. It will take up about 3,700 square feet of space at the entrance between Neiman Marcus and Lord & Taylor.

Phoenix-based True Food Kitchen will **also open** its first Pennsylvania outpost near the Shake Shack. It is under construction with a summer 2017 opening date.

"Knowing the importance of dining to King of Prussia's customer, Simon's leasing team is always assessing the best, most creative use for every space and speaking to local and national restaurateurs about innovative concepts and opportunities," Smith said.

The Taco Truck also joins other restaurants in the King of Prussia area that are either open or are under construction:

At the King of Prussia Town Center, the following restaurants have opened or will open: Naf Naf Grill, Mission BBQ, Founding Farmers, b.good, honeygrow, Davio's Northern Italian Steakhouse, City Works, Paladar Latin Kitchen & Rum Bar, and Fogo de Chao. (Click **here** to see their opening dates.)