

Bite-Sized Info for the Produce Industry

the SNACK

ISSUE 71 OCT 2022

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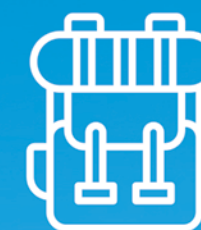


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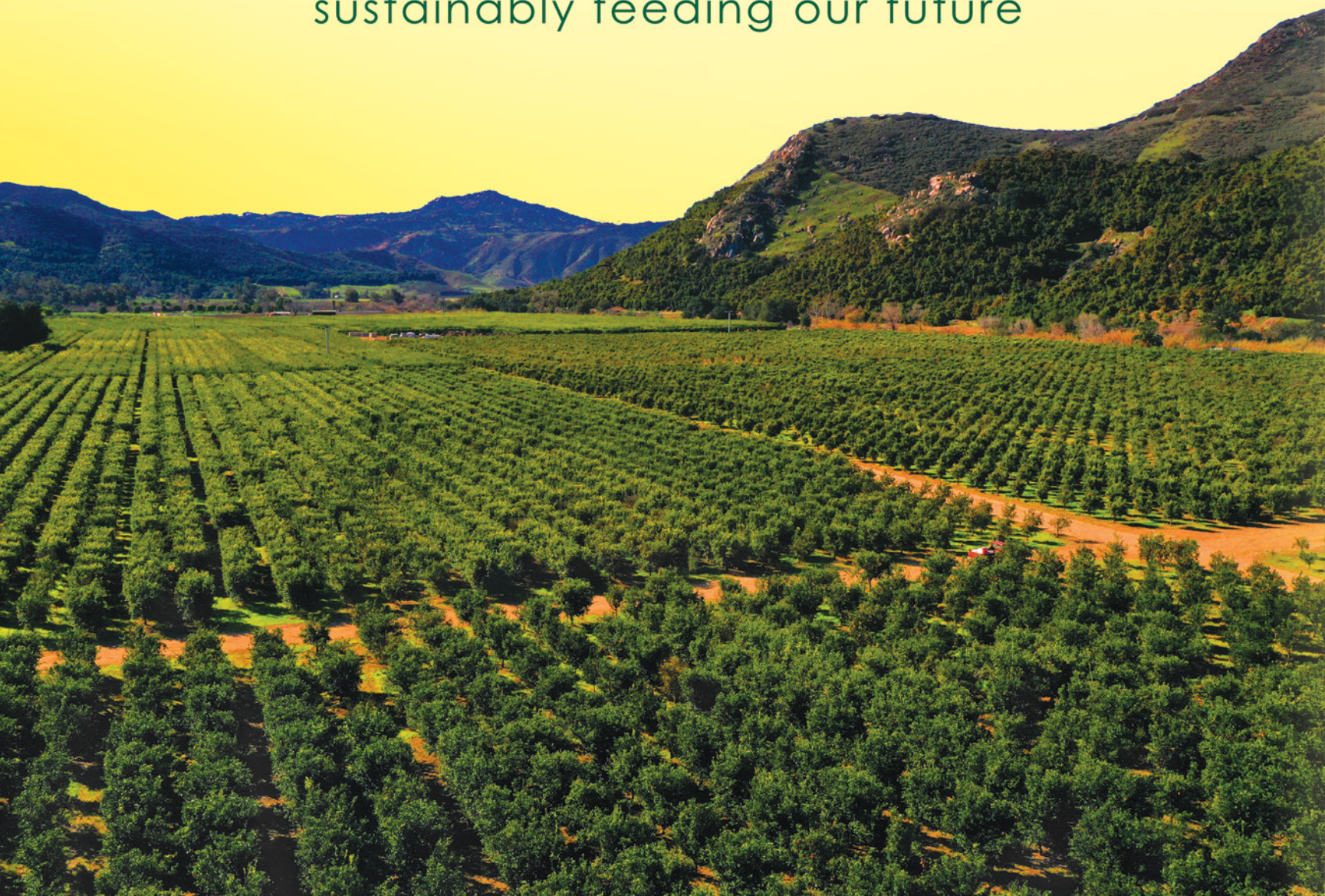
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“**T**O BE AN ARTIST MEANS NEVER TO AVERT ONE’S EYES.” The words of Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa have long been a part of how I move through the world. It has made for an intense, beautiful, and traumatic journey—a metamorphosis that happens on a continuum, casting memory back, altering stories, and defining my present. Time is a circle, as is forgiveness, growth, humility, and confidence. To be an artist, and simply human, is to see the lifecycle and reemergence of all these things—simultaneously a participant and a witness.



This space is sacred to me, and I felt a deep quake at its edges recently when I read letters written by Karen Caplan and Alex Jackson of Frieda’s Branded Produce—a mother and a daughter, both truth seekers—which we published on *AndNowUKnow*. Karen posted “A letter to my 30-year-old self” in her blog—thirty being the age at which she happened to become President of Frieda’s. Alex deepened that conversation after the “Karen’s Plate” post, sharing a letter in which she revealed and reflected on her own personal journey—how a few core years crystallized a new path for her with self-love, wisdom, and courage as its centripetal force.

Much of what we do here at *The Snack* is find how the stories of our pasts echo into the present and the future. At this moment in my life, I feel this as a kind of reckoning and also a gift.

Speaking to my team in the wake of such stories, we find a sense of solidity in our histories by looking back—not as an anchor but as an essential step in order to move forward. I asked them what advice would have proven a welcome enlightenment earlier on, had we all had the experience and foresight to grasp it. As a writing team with ages ranging from 24 to 40, it is amazing how retrospect brings us even closer together.

I believe we all share a kinship across the many lessons that took root at our table. From Lilian Diep, speaking about the ability to ask herself “What do you want?” and truly being able to distill the answer to Anne Allen echoing Karen’s lesson that she wishes she had felt more strongly that it was okay to not be concerned, first, with being liked—it’s better to be yourself. Anne’s sentiment was

matched wholly by Peggy Packer, who reflected that it is more fulfilling to worry less about being the best. Instead, just be whoever you feel like being.

Jenna Plasterer, always inspired by the great songwriters of the century, quoted Janis Joplin who said, “Don’t compromise yourself. You’re all you’ve got.”

And we have all, men and women alike, at least come across the pressure of the “married+kids” timeline we impose on ourselves or that others help us to do. As Melissa De Leon Chavez shares, at 25 she felt she was officially too old to be “young and dumb,” too old to take risks and make mistakes and then have time to learn from them. Melissa’s advice? Listen to this older version: You are still plenty young, with runway to spare, and what you were told defined success does not make it your success. As a woman of 40, I agree.

That flowed beautifully into our Chandler James, who encircled all the advice we could give ourselves with, “You have plenty of time to accomplish your goals; slow down and enjoy being a kid.”

For me, I would slough off the rugged exterior of my expectations at 30 and share a healthy helping of levity and self-compassion. Practice resilience and curiosity, and stop trying to get from one side of discomfort to the other so quickly. Listen more and talk less. Find stillness. And remember, as Rumi said it best, “The wound is the place where the light enters you.”

To Sugarbear.

With love.

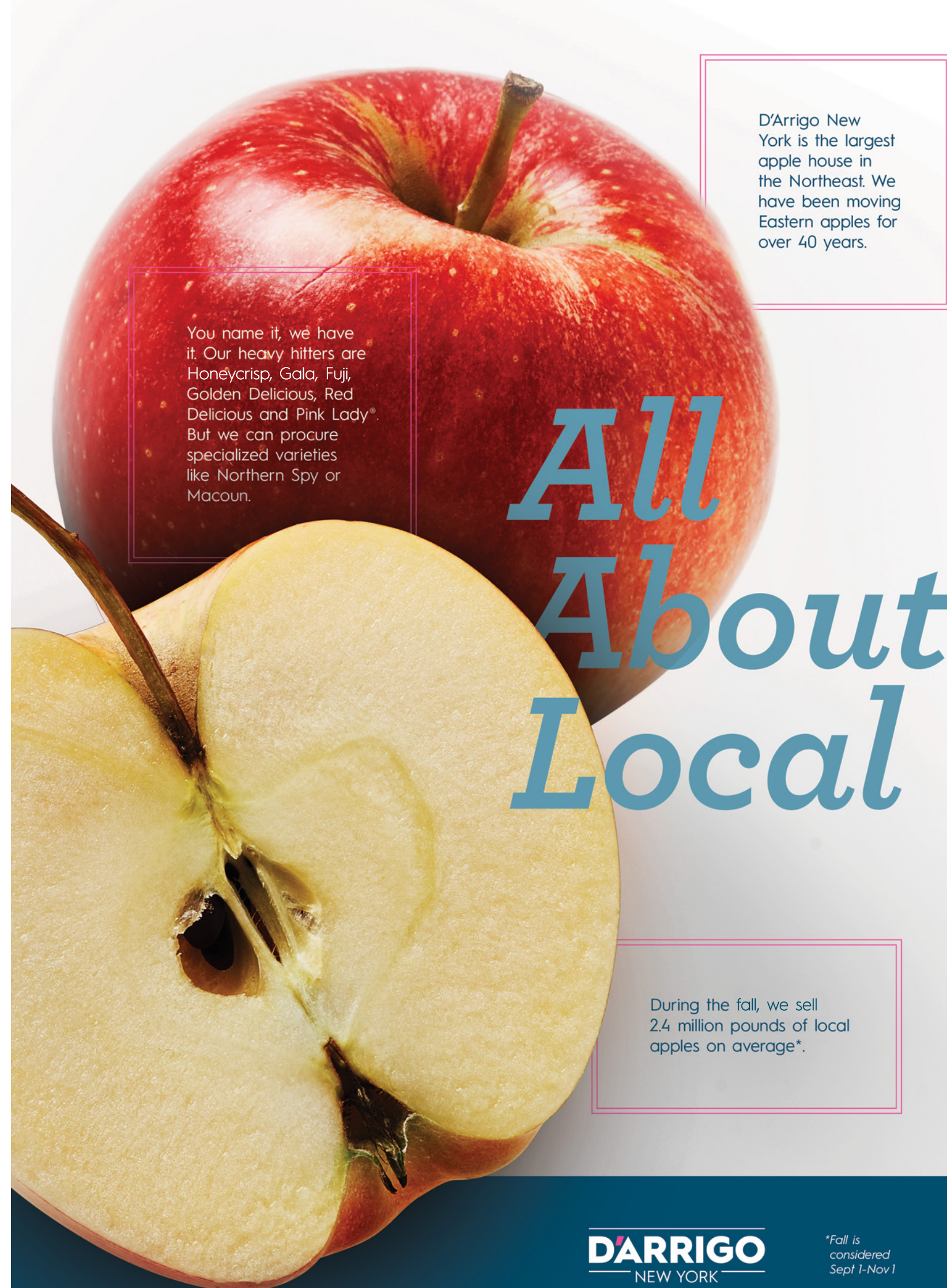
Jordy.

Jordan Okumura
Editor in Chief
AndNowUKnow, *Deli Market News*,
and *The Snack Magazine*

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SUNKIST® PHONES HOME

Bridging generations and icons this Halloween season, Christina Ward tells how the long-standing cooperative is joining forces with Universal Pictures to revive one of cinema's favorite aliens...



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The grower's Anthony Innocenti illustrates a personal approach to fresh produce, teasing exciting program developments and a pivotal venture into new territory...



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NATURIBE

COLORING OUTSIDE THE BERRY BOUNDARIES

How do we step outside the norm to come at increased fresh consumption from a whole new way? Steven Ware discusses this and more in a deep dive on new channels and strong, strategic positioning...



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Here at The Snack Magazine, people are our thing. Check out this short list of some of the names we've featured, from the produce industry and beyond...

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WTF DO I DO WITH Fuyu Persimmons ?

{ what the fork }



SMOKY PERSIMMON & BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 2** Do You Fuyu™ Persimmons, chopped (approximately 3 cups)
- 1 small** yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp** olive oil, plus more for garnish
- 1 tsp** smoked paprika
- ½ tsp** turmeric
- 1 tsp** salt
- ½ tsp** black pepper
- 1** bay leaf
- 2 cloves** garlic, minced
- ½ large** Butternut squash, peeled and chopped (approximately 3 cups)
- 2 cups** vegetable broth
- Fresh chives and heavy (or coconut) cream, to garnish

Prep Time: 15 min
Cook Time: 30 min
Servings: 4–6

DIRECTIONS

- In a large Dutch oven or stockpot, sauté the chopped onion over medium heat with olive oil until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add smoked paprika, turmeric, salt, black pepper, bay leaf, and garlic; toast for 30 seconds to open up the fragrance of the spices, taking care not to burn the garlic.
- Add the persimmon, Butternut squash, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil and turn down to simmer for 20 minutes, or until squash is soft.
- Discard the bay leaf. Use an immersion blender to blend everything to a silky-smooth texture, or blend the soup in batches if using a regular blender. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper, if needed. Garnish the soup with fresh chives and drizzle cream and olive oil on top. Enjoy!

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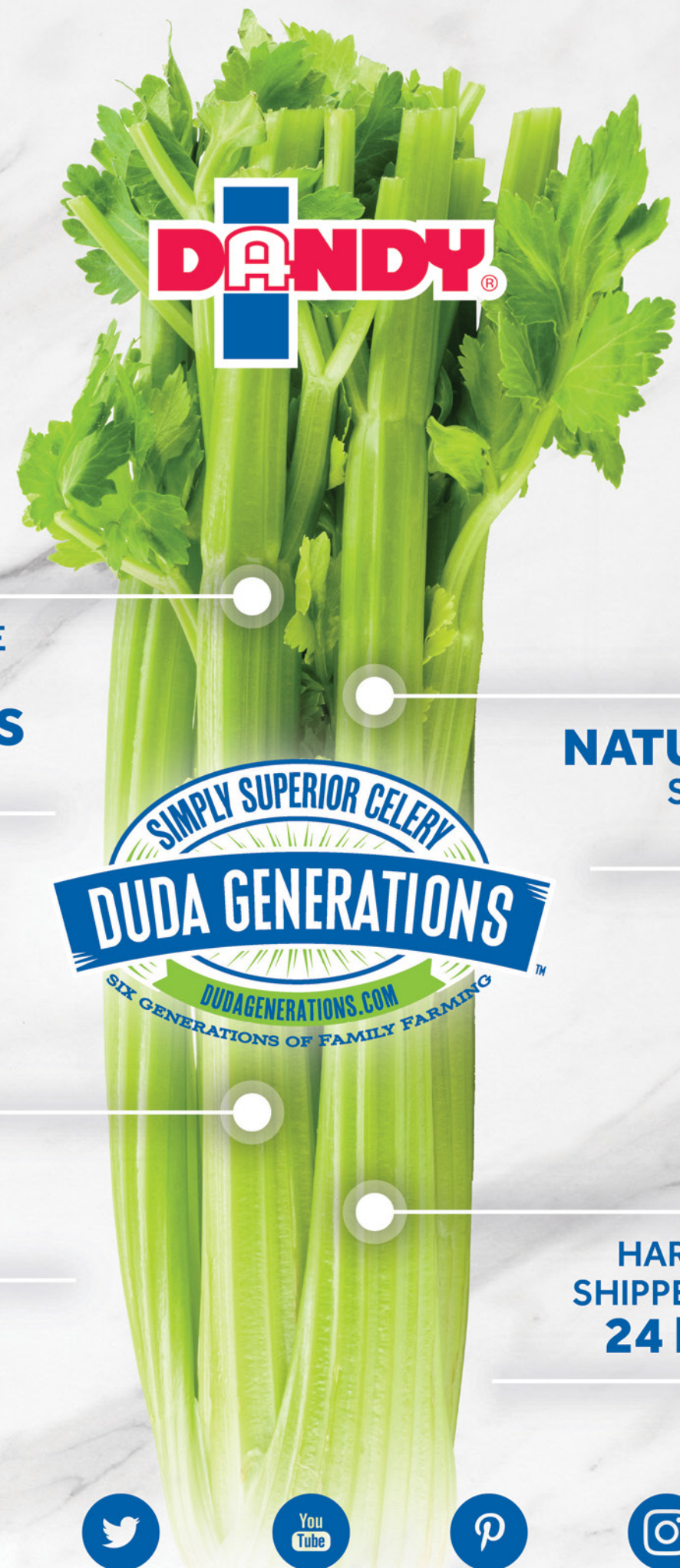


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WTF DO I DO WITH SnapDragon® Apples?

{ what the fork }



NUT BUTTER PIT STOP WITH SNAPDRAGON® APPLES

Recipe and photo credited to Marty Cowan
@TabletoTrail

INGREDIENTS

1–2 SnapDragon® Apples, sliced
½ cup nut butter (any variety)
1 tbsp pumpkin seeds
1 tbsp sunflower seeds
1 tbsp shredded coconut
1 tbsp maple syrup
Pinch of cinnamon

Prep Time: 10 min
Servings: 1 bowl

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Place all ingredients except SnapDragon Apples in a medium-sized mixing bowl and stir until combined.
- 2 Pack into a reusable container along with some sliced SnapDragon Apples to refuel on your next adventure!

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» The IF List « Jeff Cady

Vice President of Produce and Floral, Tops Friendly Markets

With **Peggy Packer**



There's nothing like a Georgia peach in July." These are the wise words that bridge the gap between Buffalo, New York, and *The Snack* headquarters here in Sacramento, California, making me feel like I already know the legend that is Jeff Cady. Though I've only just settled in to pick the brain of the Vice President of Produce and Floral at Tops Friendly Markets, Jeff's passion for fresh produce and industry innovation strongly speaks for itself. But who is the retail master when he isn't walking the produce department and bringing top quality to consumers? You know we wouldn't pass up the opportunity to find out...

» IF you could have been born in another century or decade, which would it be and why?

The '60s. Love the music, simplicity, fedoras, and, dare I say, drinking at work?

» IF you could have any actor play you in a movie, who would you want?

Kevin Bacon. He is *Footloose* much like myself and, back in the day, I resembled him.

» IF you could imagine yourself in a different industry, what would it be?

Entertainment. I love being in front of an audience. What a rush!

» IF you were another species in the animal kingdom, what would you be?

An eagle. It would be awesome to just spread my wings and fly.

» IF you wrote an autobiography, what would be the title?

A Guy Walks Into a Produce Department.

» IF you had to wear the same thing every day, what items of clothing would you pick?

I love my black slacks, dress shirt with a pocket, and some SKECHERS®.

» IF you could make everyone watch a movie of your choosing, which movie would you want them to see?

Jaws. Seriously, they needed a bigger boat.

» IF you had to choose now, what would your last meal consist of?

Brussels sprouts, pizza, chicken wings and blue cheese dressing, with a glass of Cabernet and pumpkin pie for dessert.

» IF you could re-experience an awesome day in your life, what day would you choose and why?

My wedding day—it was just an awesome day, and I would have loved to give my wife more attention.

» IF you had to choose one song to be the soundtrack of your year, what would it be?

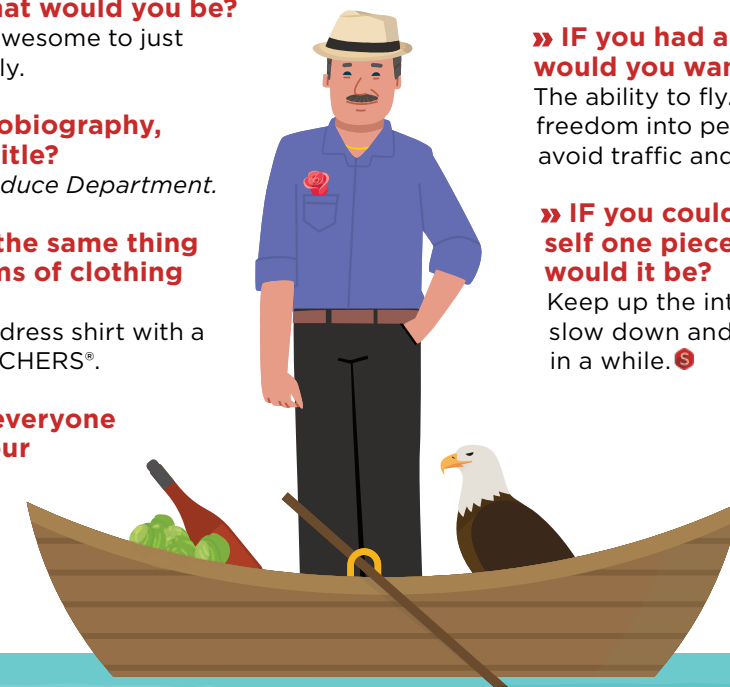
"You May Be Right" by Billy Joel.

» IF you had a superpower, what would you want it to be?

The ability to fly. Puts life and freedom into perspective, plus you avoid traffic and flight cancellations.

» IF you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Keep up the intensity and focus, but slow down and smell the roses once in a while. 🌹







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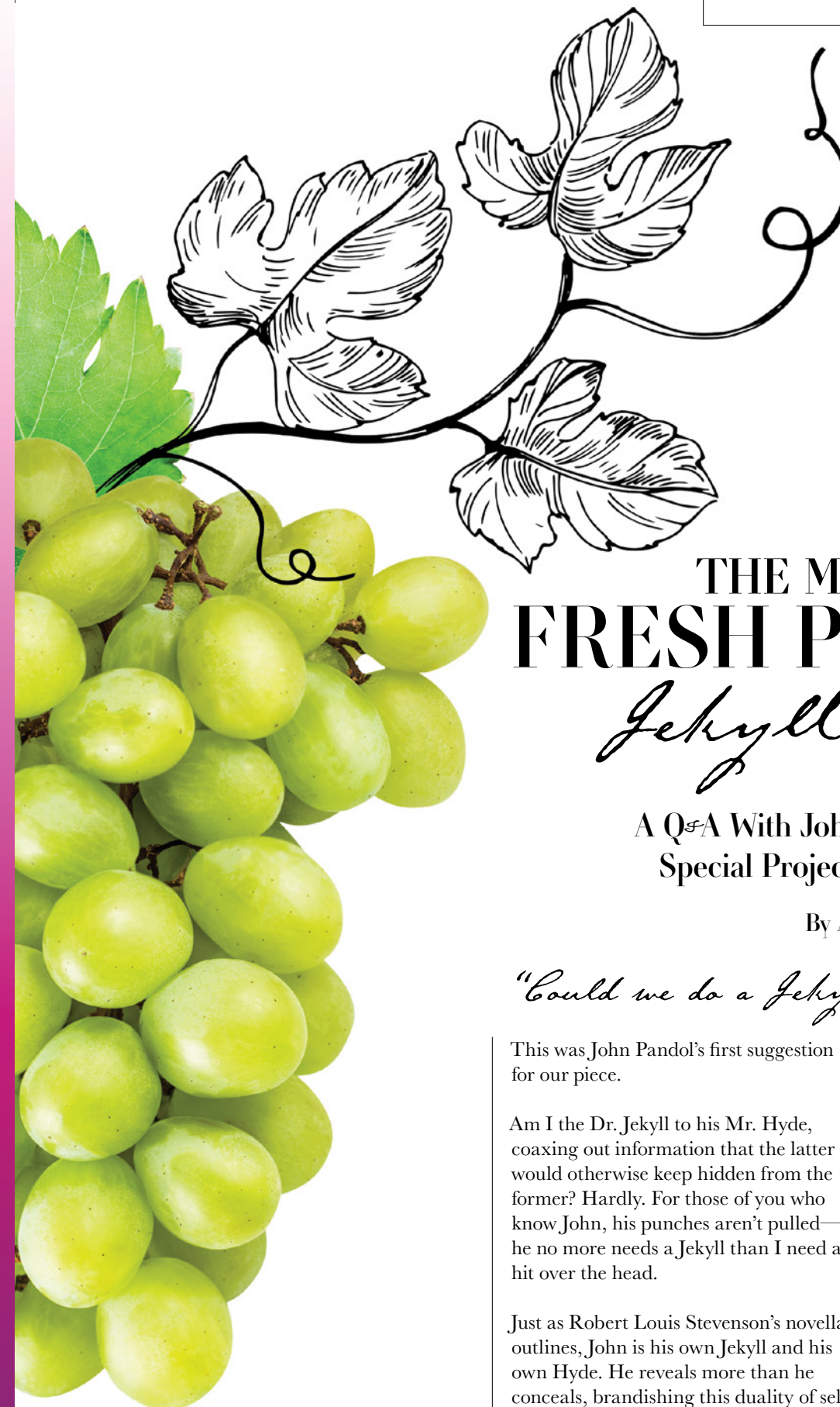
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THE MAKING OF FRESH PRODUCE'S *Jekyll and Hyde*

A Q&A With John Pandol, Director of
Special Projects, Pandol Brothers

By Anne Allen

"Could we do a Jekyll and Hyde version?"

This was John Pandol's first suggestion for our piece.

Am I the Dr. Jekyll to his Mr. Hyde, coaxing out information that the latter would otherwise keep hidden from the former? Hardly. For those of you who know John, his punches aren't pulled—he no more needs a Jekyll than I need a hit over the head.

Just as Robert Louis Stevenson's novella outlines, John is his own Jekyll and his own Hyde. He reveals more than he conceals, brandishing this duality of self with an aplomb that would make any Victorian-era antagonist proud.

But perhaps the most salient similarity between our eponymous Jekyll-Hyde

and the Director of Special Projects for Pandol Brothers is the fact that none of them can be properly represented through text. To represent John here is to offer you as much of his personality as I can through a medium that begs for color and sound.

John and I covered a lot of ground on our call, from the issues of scalability to "the tyranny of the clueless," a phrase that will soon become a standard in my verbal repertoire.

So let's dig in—and you can decide for yourself whether John is more Jekyll than Hyde.

29

Q1

Anne Allen: Right out the gate, we've got quite a phrase to unpack. "Tyranny of the clueless." What does that mean to you? And how does it tie into a mentality that you've described as young-enough-to-change-but-old-enough-to-know-better?

John Pandol, Director of Special Projects, Pandol Brothers: Not every new thing that comes down the pike is worth adopting. We're always looking at new stuff, but it's tempered by the history of having our fingers burned by going too hard, too fast and things didn't pan out. Every time some "best thing since sliced bread" or "if you're not using this technology, you're going to be outside the economy," idea comes around, I go, "Yeah, right. Here we go again."

In this business, we're catering to consumers who are swayed by anything from new technology to their own emotions. They want pure food, but they want it without any insect damage or disease and with absolutely no chemical use. It's an impossibility. So, we start chasing attributes and practices based on the perceptions of a consumer that really doesn't know what we do and doesn't know how we do it.



Q2

AA: That old-enough-to-know-better mentality must also connect with your understanding of scalability and not growing too big for your britches. How do you balance growth without outstripping your business?

JP: I know that economies maximize typically at a point that is much smaller than the engineers or the market advisors estimate. And, of course, you wonder, "If I controlled a big part of a certain market, surely that would be good." Not necessarily. Of the grocery consolidations in the '90s, how many of those organizations still exist? Not the banners, but the organizations. We're seeing the same thing in produce—not operations that are too big to fail, but that are too big to succeed.

Q3

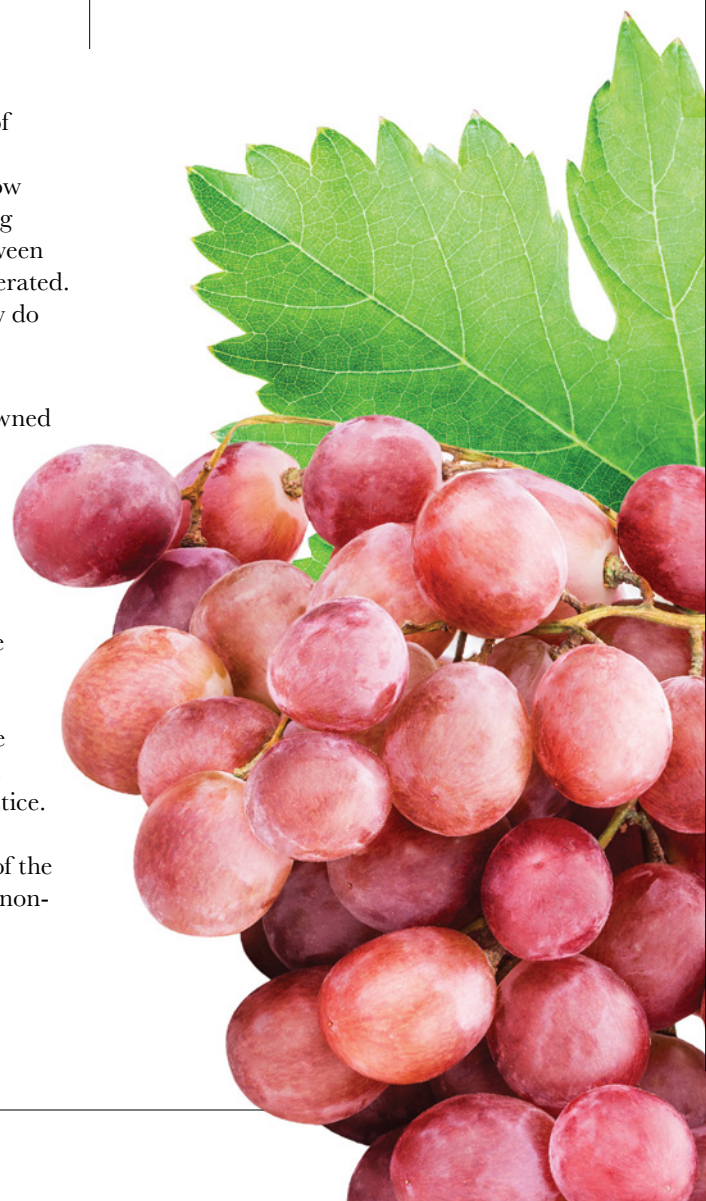
AA: Sometimes our perception of what is good as a business practice doesn't match up with reality. I know we stumble into that line of thinking when discussing the difference between being family-owned and family-operated. When taking this into account, how do you position Pandol Brothers?

JP: Pandol Brothers is family-owned but not family-managed. We went through a significant period of growth in the '70s, and we needed different levels of expertise to fill in the gaps, so we brought on sales managers and operational people outside of the family to flesh out the ranks.

It's kind of an Americana myth, the idea that a "we want to keep this in the family," mentality is a best practice. Some of the owners work here and some don't. Most of the managers of the distinct lines of business have been non-family members for decades.

“
You have to balance
the benefits between
the buy-side and the
supply-side. Because
you know what?
*They both
have to win.*”

- John Pandol, Director
of Special Projects,
Pandol Brothers



Q4

AA: With this in mind, what do you think really matters most to your customers? And what does that mean for you and Pandol Brothers in terms of being a good grape supplier?

JP: You have to balance the benefits between the buy-side and the supply-side. Because you know what? They both have to win. I would also say you need to not get distracted by all the small pieces. Focus on the big piece which, for us, is red and white seedless grapes. All these niches—the organics, the specialties, the black seedless—they all have their place. But for us, it's red and white seedless.

Another piece of the puzzle is on the service side. A small benefit you're never going to see in any ad is that our average truck is here for 25 minutes, and then we get them out. Fast loading makes fast friends.

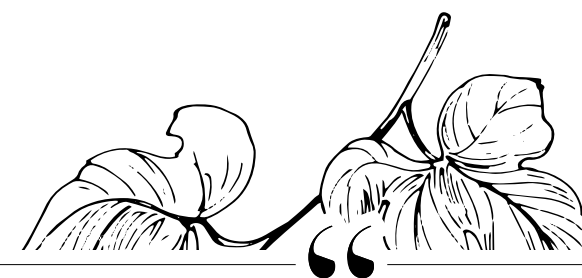
I would also say finding the optimum maturity and true shelf-life is important. In the grape world, we've ruined many good varieties by storing them too long, or picking them too quickly or too late. So, my job is to evaluate, assemble, and optimize all available seasons and sources to create the best 52-week supply. I basically curate seasonal supplies to make it look like a seamless deal. And look good doing it.

Q5

AA: High-fiving you through the phone, John! Now, you've been in this business for quite some time. When did you really find your stride?

JP: I was working in Chile and Mexico in the '80s and '90s, and in the 2000s I turned my focus to the U.S. and spent more time learning merchandising. I began to question why we didn't or couldn't sell certain things—one of the things I always say is, "Accountants live in the past, sales people live in the present, and marketers live in the future." One is looking at last year's numbers, the other is demanding more grapes to sell now and planting more than is needed five years down the road. I'd been on the supply-side of the business, so it was time to dive into the sell-side—to move from historical data-based trend tracking to forecasting.

I had a black composition book I'd take into stores and write down what I saw price-wise, the packaging, and how the packaging was being displayed. Basically, I learned merchandising from the store backward. This was a time when merchandisers were starting to make more of the decisions and not buyers. Those are the people thinking, "If I put that item in, am I going to cannibalize another better item?" So they made the decision and advised the buyer to either buy black grapes or not buy black grapes.



...one of the things I always say is, 'Accountants live in the *past*, sales people live in the *present*, and marketers live in the *future*.'



Q6


AA: This is how you came to understand what innovations you should be committing to, right?

JP: Right. And about 10 years ago, we were asking ourselves, "What do we want this business to be? What do we want it to do?" And management looked at my role and said, "You know what? You know a lot of stuff, you just need to be out and about with your eyes and ears wide open and make sure we don't get burned. Make sure we're doing the right things, and we're not wasting time with the wrong ones."



And so the Director of Special Projects was born.

Not concocted in a lab, but through a carefully observed chemical reaction called experience.

You're probably wondering whether I see more Jekyll or Hyde in him, and my response to this query is simple: John knows when to unleash Hyde—and I think we could all learn a lesson from that. 

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WTF

DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Limoneira®
Navel Oranges

?



CITRUS CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup Limoneira® Navel Orange juice
½ lime
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 cup diced onion
1 (15 oz) can fire roasted tomatoes
3 cups water
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp garlic powder
½ tsp salt
½ tsp paprika

½ tsp black pepper
1 cup corn
2 cups shredded chicken
¾ cup canned coconut milk
1 cup shredded cheese
1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 avocado
Fresh cilantro
Tortilla strips

Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 20 min
Servings: 3

DIRECTIONS

- 1 In a large saucepan, add olive oil, diced onion, and spices. Sauté for 3 minutes.
- 2 Add in fire roasted tomatoes, water, orange juice, shredded chicken, black beans, and corn. Stir to combine and let simmer for 15 minutes.
- 3 Add juice from half a lime, coconut milk, and shredded cheese. Stir to combine.
- 4 Scoop into bowls, top with tortilla strips, avocado slices, and cilantro. Enjoy!

To learn more about Limoneira®,
visit www.limoneira.com

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1893

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CITRUS SHOTS

By Melissa De Leon Chavez

Oranges, yellows, and greens paint more than just the trees this season—they paint the produce department as citrus steps into the spotlight. Perfect for the autumn aesthetics, Halloween decorations, and combating winter sickness with that powerful vitamin C, discover how you can maximize this effervescent category in the following pages...



BLOOD ORANGE

- ATTRIBUTES** Deep maroon interior with very few seeds and orange-red blushed exterior; easy to peel
- AROMA** Mildly floral with an earthy papaya-like fragrance
- FLAVOR** Rich, plum-like flavor with hints of tart cherry and raspberry undertones



CARA CARA ORANGE

- ATTRIBUTES** Rich pink pulp with orange exterior; seedless
- AROMA** Pleasingly tropical
- FLAVOR** Extremely sweet with a kiss of cranberry and cherry undertones



NAVEL ORANGE

- ATTRIBUTES** Small navel formation on the blossom end; easy to peel and seedless
- AROMA** Sweet, floral
- FLAVOR** Refreshingly sweet with rich vanilla finish and cherry undertones



VALENCIA ORANGE

- ATTRIBUTES** Differentiated from other orange varieties by thin, slightly pebbly rind and occasional seeds
- AROMA** Orange blossom
- FLAVOR** Perfect balance of sweet and tart flavors; high juice content



CLEMENTINE, W. MURCOTT, AND TANGO

- ATTRIBUTES** Unique rounded middle, flat top and bottom, medium-sized fruit with deep orange, smooth, glossy skin; seedless and easy to peel
- AROMA** Sweet, wildflower, pomegranate-like
- FLAVOR** Crisp apricot-like or candied nectar flavor with a rich aftertaste

PAGE MANDARIN

- ATTRIBUTES** Prominent circle on blossom end
- AROMA** Crisp, citrus scent
- FLAVOR** Rich flavor



SATSUMA MANDARIN

ATTRIBUTES Varying in shape from flat to necked; easy to peel and segment; seedless

AROMA Sweet honeysuckle aroma

FLAVOR Refreshing with warm, tropical hints



GRAPEFRUIT

ATTRIBUTES Yellow skin with a pink blush, flesh varies from light pink to deep red

AROMA Subtly sweet, sour cherry

FLAVOR Perfect balance of sweet and tart flavors; extremely juicy



GOLD NUGGET MANDARIN

ATTRIBUTES Bright and slightly bumpy rind; seedless, sweet, and easy to peel

AROMA Candy citrus

FLAVOR Rich and sweet, juicy flavor

MEYER LEMON

ATTRIBUTES Cross between a regular lemon and a Mandarin orange; bright yellow or rich orange-yellow color

AROMA Rich lemon blossom; floral, sweet lime, lemon, and Mandarin

FLAVOR Zesty sweet, deep citrus flavor



EUREKA AND LISBON LEMON

ATTRIBUTES Two different types that are virtually indistinguishable from each other; bright yellow with medium to slightly pebbly skin; popular citrus fruit used in cooking today

AROMA Crisp, floral smell

FLAVOR Distinct tangy flavor that complements both sweet and savory foods



PINK VARIEGATED LEMON

ATTRIBUTES Pink on the inside with a yellow-and-green striped rind

AROMA Bright, crisp

FLAVOR Slightly less acidic than conventional lemons



TEXAS RIO RED GRAPEFRUIT

ATTRIBUTES Overall blush on the exterior peel with a deep red interior color

AROMA Bright and floral

FLAVOR Surprisingly sweet with a hint of zing



ORO BLANCO AND MELO

ATTRIBUTES Oro: Slightly larger than grapefruit, thick green-yellow rind
Melo: Larger than Oro, thinner rind

AROMA Both are sweet

FLAVOR Oro: Juicy, sweet, bitter membranes
Melo: Sweet, but less than Pummelo



PUMMELO

ATTRIBUTES Largest of all citrus fruit; thick, dark green peel that fades to yellow as season progresses

AROMA Zesty; slightly tropical with a hint of jasmine and lime

FLAVOR Sweet with a candied aftertaste



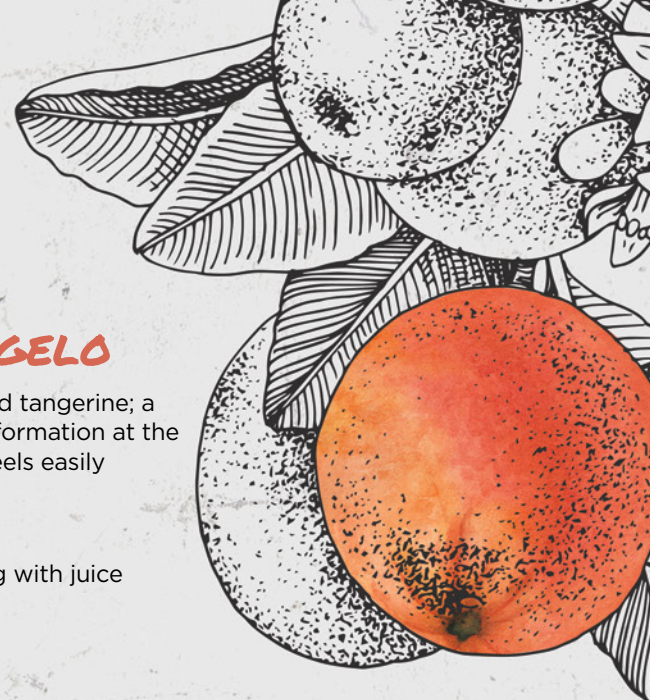


MINNEOLA TANGELO

ATTRIBUTES Cross between a grapefruit and tangerine; a deep orange with a knob-like formation at the stem end; few, if any, seeds; peels easily

AROMA Robust, tart-orange aroma

FLAVOR Bold, tangy flavor and bursting with juice



PERSIAN LIME

ATTRIBUTES Typically sold while still dark green in color, gradually turn light green as they ripen; virtually seedless

AROMA Spicy, floral

FLAVOR Distinctive limey flavor



KEY LIME (MEXICAN OR WEST INDIAN LIME)

ATTRIBUTES Generally round with straw yellow flesh and a thin, leathery skin; ranging from light green to yellow

AROMA Highly crisp aromatic attributes

FLAVOR Fresh, tangy taste



FINGER LIME

ATTRIBUTES Not related to a lemon or a lime; considered a micro-citrus with tiny fruit pearls in a wide range of colors

AROMA Unique, refreshing lime

FLAVOR Similar to a lemon-lime-grapefruit combination



Sunkist

SUNKIST[®] PHONES HOME

BY MELISSA DE LEON CHAVEZ



Iconic.

In the marketing realm, it is a standing strived for across industries, but one few truly achieve. No one can argue, though, that one image—that of a boy’s silhouette cycling across the illumination of a full moon with a blanketed figure in his basket—has successfully cemented itself into American movie culture.

I could simply point to your brow and say, “I’ll...be...right...here,” and little explanation would be needed. *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* is imprinted in cinematic Halloween history, and a few brands have soared along with it. Reese’s is one orange and gold iconic brand that has shared this spotlight, as has another staple closer to home.

“A Sunkist® orange carton donning the famous lollipop logo was sighted in the classic film *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, which was released in 1982,” **CHRISTINA WARD, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL MARKETING**, told me. “As we welcome the Halloween season and a milestone anniversary of the film, it seemed the perfect time to connect across generations.”



That’s right, as you settle into your Halloween movie list (everyone has one, right?), keep an eye out for the fresh fruit brand’s appearance. Because, as *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, Sunkist and Universal Pictures Home Entertainment are bringing the two icons back together, collaborating on an in-store and online promotion.

“We are ready to phone home with limited-time display bins and healthy Halloween recipes to showcase Sunkist lemons, Valencia oranges, and grapefruit,” Christina said with a smile. “Citrus has a way of bringing people together, and these promotions deliver a fun opportunity to engage consumers in a unique way. When we collaborate with other brands, including nostalgic movie titles, participating retailers see a lift in sales across the highlighted variety.”

As someone who just obsessively absorbed all four seasons of the ’80s-celebrating series *Stranger Things* for a second time, I am a firsthand observer to how today’s storytelling and group nostalgia are weaving together the perfect basket for E.T. to fly into today’s market across all channels. He is one of the original aliens to tug on the heartstrings of Gen Xers and millennials,

an example Gen Z has shown itself to be all too happy to follow. Reimaginings, reboots, even continuations like that of the new *Jurassic* movies show a modern audience for classic box office busters.

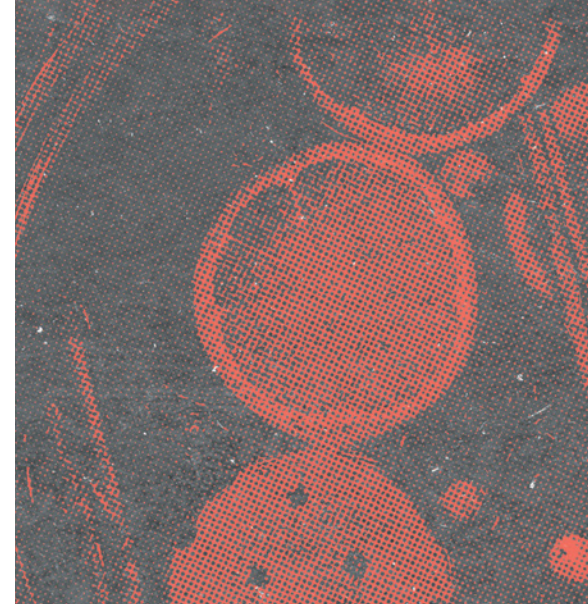
“There is a heartfelt scene when Elliot says, ‘We could grow up together, E.T.’ This resonates a lot with our brand, as we know our consumers have grown with the classic film and our iconic citrus all these years,” Christina reflected. “Many millennials and Zoomers are now serving as primary household shoppers. This campaign reaches key consumers and shares the rich growing history of Sunkist and the iconic moments that have made it one of the most beloved citrus brands in the world.”

Sunkist is the longest-standing agricultural cooperative in the nation, Christina added, and since its 1980s *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* cameo, has expanded its citrus portfolio from Cara Caras, Blood oranges, and Minneola Tangelos to Meyer lemons and Ojai Pixie tangerines, as well as to a wide assortment of organics and more.

“In-season Sunkist citrus varieties include Valencia oranges, lemons, and grapefruit, with Sunkist California Mandarins making the scene at the end of October. While Valencia oranges are known for being the perfect juicing orange, they

“There is a heartfelt scene when Elliot says, ‘We could grow up together, E.T.’ This resonates a lot with our brand, as we know our consumers have grown with the classic film and our **ICONIC CITRUS ALL THESE YEARS.**”

CHRISTINA WARD,
Senior Director of Global
Marketing, Sunkist Growers



“All of our in-season varieties can be displayed in the limited-edition *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* bins, available in square and quarter sizes, to support citrus sales in October. This is an important objective because, while candy is usually the go-to treat this time of year, we know shoppers are still looking for **IMMUNE-BOOSTING BENEFITS** from the food they consume.”

are also great as a snack and a versatile ingredient in the kitchen. Another culinary superstar is the Sunkist lemon. Through our S’alternative® program, we share how to make food taste better while cutting down on salt and sodium intake without sacrificing flavor. All of our in-season varieties can be displayed in the limited-edition *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* bins, available in square and quarter sizes, to support citrus sales in October. This is an important objective because, while candy is usually the go-to treat this time of year, we know shoppers are still looking for immune-boosting benefits from the food they consume,” Christina pointed out.

The Sunkist and *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* collaboration kicked off October 1, and the team is partnering with food and lifestyle influencers to create healthy, kid-friendly treats for Halloween, with inspiration for consumers at *Sunkist.com*, Pinterest, and Instagram.

“Consumers can benefit from citrus’ versatility by adding a pop of color with a citrus-themed charcuterie board perfect for gatherings and our Halloween-themed recipes, including fan-favorite lemon cauldrons using just three ingredients and the whole fruit,” Christina advised. “In-store is the number-one source of awareness for citrus shoppers, and we are ready to dress up the produce aisle with our limited-edition, E.T.-themed display bins. Our social media promotions during

the season will also include YouTube influencers reacting to the classic film and a weekly trivia game throughout the month.”

Most importantly, the Sunkist sales and marketing team supports these programs with an omnichannel approach to drive sales and lift the category. Ensuring the narrative continues to follow the consumer from the time they see the citrus—in-store virtually or physically—to when they are preparing to enjoy it, current purchases are satiated while whetting the appetite for future spending.

In short: offer modern ways to boost fresh consumption with classic nostalgic ties, joining forces across time to tip the scales of Halloween eating toward the produce department.

“Our memorable brand, fresh fruit, and signature packaging have made cameos in pop culture throughout the years. Sunkist has been around for a while now—in fact, we’re getting ready to commemorate 130 years as a fresh citrus cooperative, and it all began here in California. We are proudly utilizing both the past and the cutting-edge of the present to further shape our future,” Christina divulged.

An icon in its own right, it looks as though Sunkist is adding a glowing index finger to its green thumb, securing itself both on the silver screen and the grocery list. 🍊

WTF DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Nature's Bounty
Organic Citrus ?



CITRUS MORNING CAKES

INGREDIENTS

CITRUS PANCAKES

- 1 cup** flour
- 1 tsp** baking powder
- 1 tbsp** granulated sugar
- Pinch sea salt
- 1 cup** ricotta
- ¾ cup** whole milk
- 2 egg yolks and whites, separated
- 1 packed tbsp** finely grated organic citrus fruit zest (combination of Nature's Bounty Organic Grapefruit, Orange, and Lemon zest)
- 1 tsp** pure vanilla extract

CITRUS SYRUP

- 1 cup** freshly squeezed organic citrus juice (combination of Nature's Bounty Organic Grapefruit, Orange, and Lemon)
- ½ cup** granulated sugar

CITRUS TOPPING

- 1** Nature's Bounty Organic Grapefruit
- 2** Nature's Bounty Organic Oranges
- 1** Nature's Bounty Organic Lemon

Prep Time: 25 min

Cook Time: 20 min

Servings: 8–10 pancakes (4")

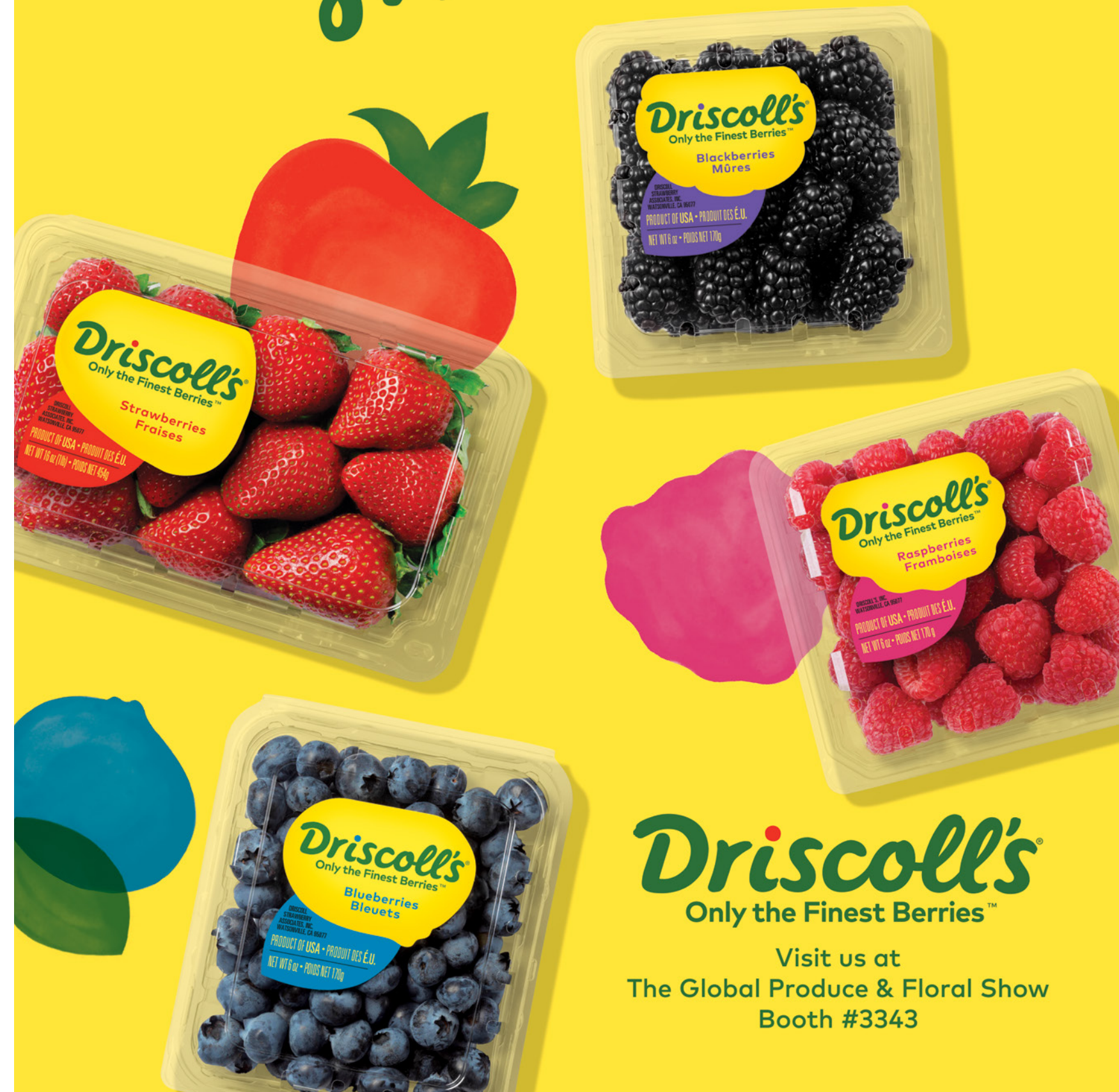
DIRECTIONS

- 1** Using a zester, zest the citrus fruits you will use for the topping and set aside.
- 2** Cut off the top and the bottom of the citrus fruits. Stand one fruit on either of the flat ends. Run a sharp knife along the fruit from top to bottom, removing the skin and pith, leaving the flesh bare. Repeat for all citrus fruits.
- 3** You can either slice or segment the organic citrus fruits. To slice, turn the peeled fruits on their sides and slice them into rounds. To segment, take a peeled fruit in one hand, and carefully run a sharp knife alongside the membranes, leaving entirely bare pieces of fruit behind.
- 4** Transfer to a bowl and set aside.
- 5** To make the syrup, combine the organic citrus fruit juice and sugar in a small sauce pan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil. Lower the heat to simmer for 8–10 minutes, or until the citrus has thickened to a maple syrup consistency. Transfer to a serving cup or glass bottle and set aside.
- 6** In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt.
- 7** In a separate bowl, whisk together the ricotta, milk, egg yolks, organic citrus zest, and vanilla.
- 8** Pour the ricotta mixture over the dry ingredients and stir gently until just combined.
- 9** Using a mixer, beat the egg whites until stiff. Use a spatula to stir a scoop of the egg whites into the pancake batter to lighten the batter, then add in the remaining whites, gently folding until no white streaks remain.
- 10** Heat a nonstick pan over medium heat. Lightly grease the cooking surface with cooking spray. Use a ⅓ cup measure to pour batter onto the hot pan. Use a spatula to scrape the batter out of the cup.
- 11** Cook the pancakes for about 4 minutes, or until the undersides are golden and you can see a few bubbles popping through the pancakes on top. Flip the pancakes and cook for another 3–4 minutes, until the pancakes are golden, puffed, and cooked through. Repeat to cook all pancakes.
- 12** Stack the pancakes on a plate. Top with pieces of organic citrus fruits. Generously drizzle with citrus syrup and serve immediately. Enjoy!

To learn more about Progressive Produce, visit www.progressiveproduce.com



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The Global Produce & Floral Show
Booth #3343

WTF DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Westfalia Fruit USA
Avocados

?



HOMEMADE GUACAMOLE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Ripe Westfalia Fruit USA Avocados, 1 mashed and 1 cubed
- 1 **tbsp** freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 **small** ripe tomato, diced (optional)
- 1 **small** chile, chopped, seeded for a milder flavor (optional)
- 3 **tbsp** fresh cilantro leaves, chopped (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Prep Time: 10 min
Servings: 4

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Gently stir all the desired ingredients together and season to taste.
- 2 Enjoy on a slice of toast, fresh bread or with savory biscuits. Try it with a fried egg on toast or omelet for a breakfast idea. You could also serve it as part of a meal, with Mexican dishes or as a dip with crudité. The guacamole makes a delicious sauce for a burger or a dip for meatballs.

Tip: Substitute spring onions with 1 small red or white onion, finely chopped. If you prefer a milder onion flavor, pour boiling water over the onions. Allow to stand for 5 minutes and drain well before using.

To learn more about Westfalia Fruit, visit www.westfaliafruit.com



WTF DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Bako Sweet®
Organic Sweet Potatoes?



GARLIC AND HERB HASSELBACK SWEET POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Bako Sweet® Tray (4 sweet potatoes)
- ¼ **cup** butter
- 4 **large cloves** garlic, minced
- ¾ **tsp** dried basil
- ¾ **tsp** dried oregano
- ½ **tsp** onion powder
- ½ **tsp** dried parsley
- ¼ **tsp** salt
- ¼ **tsp** pepper
- 2 **tbsp** Parmesan, for garnish
- 2 **tbsp** fresh parsley, for garnish

Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 55 min
Servings: 4



DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 425° F.
- 2 Add butter to a bowl. Microwave for 30 seconds or until butter is melted. Add minced garlic, dried basil, dried oregano, onion powder, dried parsley, salt, and pepper to the bowl. Mix together.
- 3 Slice crosswise slits across each sweet potato, stopping ¼ of the way through. Do not slice all the way through the potatoes.
- 4 Using no more than half of the garlic and herb butter, brush the top of each sweet potato.
- 5 Bake sweet potatoes for 30 minutes.
- 6 Remove sweet potatoes from the oven. Using a fork to gently pull apart the slices, brush the sweet potatoes with the remaining garlic and herb butter. Return sweet potatoes to the oven and bake for another 25 minutes, or until the potatoes are fork tender.
- 7 Remove sweet potatoes from the oven. Garnish with Parmesan and fresh parsley. Enjoy!

To learn more about Bako Sweet®, visit www.bakosweet.com/recipes

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Highline

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in
Organics

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By Jenna Plasterer

Imagine being an explorer, setting out into the wide world, making your way through new territories, and undertaking cartography on the land as you go. Stretching out before you are nothing but the sapphire blue waves of the ocean, the endless greenery of lush forests, or the uninterrupted desert skyline. In other words, the opportunities are boundless, and the more expertise you have, the greater possibilities lie ahead.

This is how I imagine the team at Mastronardi Produce®/SUNSET®, as voyagers. Akin to legendary navigators, nomadic natives, or American pioneers who took their chances out West, all of them sought to blaze trails and inhabit new territories.

Setting out with their compasses dialed toward innovation and backed by a wealth of consumer insights and greenhouse knowledge, adventure awaits, and discovery is always imminent.



“With over 75 years in the produce industry, innovation has come to define Mastronardi Produce,” says **Julia Shreve, Director of Marketing-Brand and Innovation**. “Our history of delivering flavorful, premium products has propelled the growing demand for quality greenhouse-grown produce.

Pushing the boundaries across all product categories will remain an integral part of our business model.”

Like any good explorer, Mastronardi Produce is gathering its findings and preparing to share them with the industry. Descending on the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) Global Produce & Floral Show later in October, the greenhouse grower has laid out its map of offerings, detailing the distinguishing features of each unique product from texture to flavor. So climb aboard and watch as the journey unfolds...

The first landmark on this exhilarating adventure is to gain insights into Mastronardi Produce’s scaled greenhouse-grown salad greens line, Queen of Greens™.

“Our expertise and decades-long partnerships with seed companies mean we can apply our ‘flavor-first’ philosophy to lettuce, a category not historically viewed as flavor-driven,” explains Julia. “We believe this approach will help to redefine how consumers understand and shop for their lettuce. It is clear that retailers are as excited about this line as we are, as the first few months of supply were pre-sold well ahead of the official retail launch.”



QUEEN OF GREENS™ LETTUCE

- Washed and ready-to-eat
- Greenhouse-grown locally in the U.S., beginning in Kentucky
- Sustainably grown using systems that are land, water, and energy efficient
- High-tech growing processes allow for a hands-free growing and packing process and extended shelf-life
- Pack sizes: 4 oz and 8 oz Topseal trays

Featuring six premium-crafted blends, these salad greens are robust, vibrant, and flavorful. Not to mention they are hydroponically produced with no pesticides or herbicides, so there is no risk of soil contamination, and there is a consistent supply all year long.

We travel from hydroponic lettuce to the supplier’s newly launched SUNSET dippers products. Ideal for shoppers looking for convenience, freshness, and taste all rolled into one, Mastronardi Produce’s Qukes™ & Dip and Angel Sweet® & Dip items are great snacking options for consumers on the go.

“Both products pair our fresh produce with a clean-ingredient, shelf-stable, creamy ranch dip that will delight kids and parents alike,” Julia shares. “These multi-unit offerings performed exceptionally well in consumer testing, and because they satisfy the value-add and convenience trends in the snacking category, there is potential for incremental category growth.”

Each snack pack comes in single-serve packaging in a familiar three-pack tearaway format, which is optimal for lunchboxes or quick on-the-go snacks.

Since this voyage has made its way to Angel Sweet & Dip, it is only a short walk to our next set of coordinates which takes us to a land of wonders—SUNSET® Wild Wonders® Harvest Medley, that is.

Adding a fun fall twist to one of Mastronardi Produce’s well-known offerings, the grower has introduced a limited-edition Harvest Medley carrier that will increase basket share by playing to shoppers’ love of autumn and the food-focused holidays that take place during



QUKES™ & DIP

- Fresh, crunchy, and cool, these two-bite cukes are perfect for dunking and dipping
- Popular among consumers for their small size, which is fantastic for little hands
- Mini cucumbers are the fastest-growing cucumber segment nationally over the last 52 weeks
- No slicing required
- Year-round availability
- Only 100 calories per serving



ANGEL SWEET® & DIP

- Features Mastronardi Produce’s award-winning Angel Sweet tomatoes
- These bite-sized tomatoes are packed with extra-sweet flavor for a perfect healthy snack
- Only 110 calories per serving

“Pushing the boundaries across all product categories will remain an integral part of our business model.”

Julia Shreve,
Director of Marketing-Brand and Innovation,
Mastronardi Produce®/SUNSET®

the season. With a rich combination of red, orange, yellow, green, and brown hues mimicking the changing leaves, this unique packaging update will draw consumers to the tomato section of the produce aisle.

Exploring creative and visually striking packaging, Mastronardi Produce next shows us its Sugar Sweets line of snacking tomatoes.

After moving across the colorful landscape of Wild Wonders and Sugar Sweets, the following stop is just a hop, skip, and jump away as we land in the berry patch.



SUNSET® WILD WONDERS® HARVEST MEDLEY

- Unique leaf-shaped design and colorful components create a festive snacking display
- A seasonal-specific variety of colorful and flavorful tomatoes, this limited-edition item is perfect for gatherings and holiday entertaining
- Perfect for salads, snacking, and appetizers
- Available throughout fall 2022
- Pack Sizes: 20 x 14 oz Topseal clamshell



SUGAR SWEETS

- A medley of Mastronardi Produce’s sweetest varieties of snacking tomatoes
- Has a high Brix to rival candy while being a healthy snacking option for kids
- Fun packaging resembles a gumball machine, appealing to both kids and kids at heart



ANGELBERRY™ RASPBERRIES

- Miraculously sweet
- Large but delicate, deep pink raspberries
- Deliver heavenly sweet flavor and aroma with every bite



MOONBERRY™ BLACKBERRIES

- An eruption of brilliance, sweet the whole way through
- Big, beautiful, and bursting with flavor
- Consistently sweet, not tart, with notes of vanilla and a juicy bite



FROOTIES™ BLUEBERRIES

- Plump and packed full of sweet flavor
- Great for kids' lunchboxes
- Year-round availability
- Pack Size: 20 x 100 g Topseal clamshell

"Mastronardi Produce has already made a splash in the category with our award-winning line of premium WOW® Berries, including our dreamberry™, pearberry™, and lolliberry™ strawberries," Julia shares. "Adding to our success, we will launch new angelberry™ raspberries as well as moonberry™ blackberries commercially over the next few months, changing expectations for how a berry should taste."

As we meander our way through the berry patch, something new appears on the map: another variety that is playful and packed with sensational taste.

"Offered in a single-serve pack, our new Frooties™ Blueberries provide on-the-go convenience. All shoppers have to do is peel back the film, rinse, and enjoy," Julia imparts. "They can be a sweet addition to a morning meal or eaten straight from the clamshell. The opportunities are endless. We've also created a whimsical packaging design that mimics Sprinkles®, drawing kids toward healthy produce snacks while they go grocery shopping with their parents."

"...we will launch new angelberry™ raspberries as well as moonberry™ blackberries commercially over the next few months, **changing expectations for how a berry should taste.**"

Whether new or familiar, this expedition through the greenhouse maven's portfolio of cutting-edge products leaves me awestruck and ready to see where it will set course for next as it seeks to extend each category's boundaries on its innovation map.

While many think that adventure only lies in visiting exotic destinations, if you are a true explorer, you can find it right in the produce aisle, just like Mastronardi Produce. All you have to do is use this guide, and set out on your own journey to success, uncovering brand loyalty, innovation, and merchandising opportunities galore along the way—don't forget your compass! 🗺️



Lil Snappers®

kid size fruit

Delighting Kids



WTF

DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Crystal Valley Foods
Asparagus ?



STEAMED ASPARAGUS WITH DILL DIP

INGREDIENTS

1 bunch Crystal Valley Foods Asparagus
Assorted veggies

DIP

½ cup low-fat mayonnaise
1 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt
¼ cup fresh dill, chopped
½ tsp salt
½ tsp garlic powder
½ tsp onion powder
1 tsp dried parsley flakes

Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 5 min
Servings: 1 bowl

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Prepare asparagus for dipping. In a large saucepan, bring 2 cups of water with salt to a boil. Add asparagus. Cover and cook 2 minutes. Remove asparagus from water and immediately dip into ice water until cold. Drain.
- 2 Clean and prep the other vegetables and arrange on a plate.
- 3 Mix mayonnaise, Greek yogurt, dill, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, and parsley together. Get dippin'!

Tip: You can also use convenient Crystal Valley Fresh Asparagus in a microwaveable bag. Just pierce the bag, pop into the microwave for 2 minutes (do not cook the full time as instructed on the bag) and immediately plunge into ice water.

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Located in the Pacific Northwest, care for the environment and the lush soil is a top priority for Rainier Fruit Company. Technological advancements flourish daily, and Rainier is continuously searching and implementing new ways to do it better. This effort takes around-the-clock commitment from people passionate about doing the job right. Rainier's efforts to work with Mother Nature rather than against her are proven in the company's premium Honeycrisp program, year-round Washington-grown organic offerings, and 100 percent organically grown blueberries.



1 CARE FOR THE LAND

Rainier grows fruit in some of the most beautiful country in the Pacific Northwest. If Rainier had one legacy to pass on, it would be the ongoing culture of trying to do the right thing as a steward of the land. And after decades of growing in the Pacific Northwest's vastly different microclimates, that means a whole host of things, from protecting pollinators with the company's Bee Better Certified™ program to optimizing natural resources with new technologies to creating the company's own humus program. Rainier believes the more you give back to Mother Nature, the more Mother Nature will give back to you.

2 PASSION TO DO IT RIGHT

Martin Prado, one of Rainier's Area Managers, embodies farming. The 28 year old grew up working with his dad, doing every job there is while managing an orchard. "It makes me feel great when we're able to turn a pretty white flower in May into a cherry by July or an apple by September—especially the way we do it, putting the land and the trees first," Martin expressed. "I couldn't see myself doing anything else; this is my passion. The secret to enjoying your life is loving what you do, and I love to work outside with great people. I know at the end of the year when our fruit gets in the barn, it's some of the best in the industry. That's rewarding."

3 STAYING COOL

With a mission to optimize resources and work toward a more sustainable system, Rainier installed foggers to keep its canopies cool while only using 1.6–2.3 gallons of water an hour. As Martin spends a majority of his time outside with the team, he reports this advancement helps reflect the sun, reducing temperatures by an average of 10 degrees, keeping workers cool, and creating better ground conditions for fruit.



RAINIER FRUIT COMPANY INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT represents individuals and ideas making a positive impact in the community through their work, volunteer efforts, sustainability, or health and wellness initiatives.



APPLES, PEARS, CHERRIES & BLUEBERRIES



WTF

DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Jasmine Vineyards
Table Grapes ?



HALLOWEEN GRAPE SKEWERS

INGREDIENTS

6-8 Jasmine Vineyards Green Table Grapes
6-8 Jasmine Vineyards Red Table Grapes
6-8 Jasmine Vineyards Black Table Grapes
16 oz block orange Cheddar
16 oz block white Cheddar
6-8 pieces of prosciutto or smoked tofu
Bamboo skewers

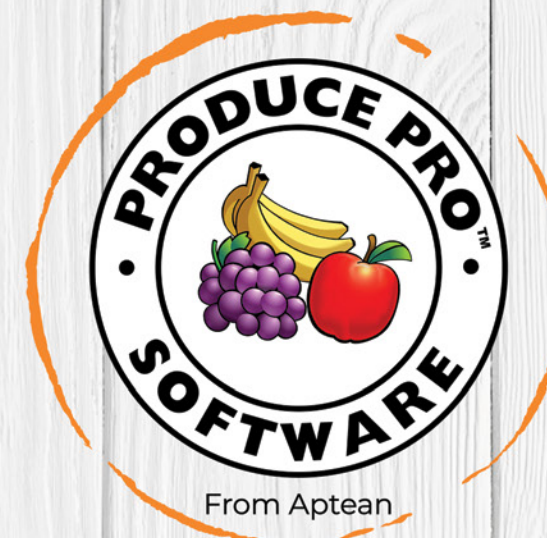
Prep Time: 15 min
Servings: 6-8 skewers



DIRECTIONS

- 1 Slice cheese into 1/2" thick squares, then carve into shape of ghosts and pumpkins (small cookie cutters may also be used).
- 2 Roll prosciutto into small rolls or fold into little squares. If using smoked tofu, cut into small cubes.
- 3 Place ingredients on the skewers, alternating shapes and colors.
- 4 Place skewers in decorative glass jar.
- 5 Enjoy your spooky treat!

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WTF DO I DO WITH { what the fork } LIV Organic™ Butternut Squash ?



BUTTERNUT SQUASH & PESTO CROSTINI

INGREDIENTS

4 cups LIV Organic™ Butternut Squash, sliced 1/2" thick
1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
1/3 cup plus 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
1 1/2 cups basil leaves
1 cup baby spinach

1 large clove garlic, chopped
2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
2 tsp lemon zest
2 tsp lemon juice
8 slices dark rye bread
4 oz burrata cheese

Toasted pecans, chopped
 Ground black pepper
 Salt

Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 35 min
Servings: 16

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 400° F. Toss together LIV Organic Butternut Squash, red pepper, and 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil. Season with salt and black pepper. Bake on rimmed baking sheet until tender and light brown, about 25 minutes.
- 2 Combine basil, spinach, garlic, and remaining olive oil in food processor or blender. Process until blended and smooth. Stir in Parmesan, lemon zest, and lemon juice. Season with salt and black pepper.
- 3 Cut each bread slice into 4 pieces. Bake on a baking sheet until lightly toasted, 8–10 minutes. Top crostini with burrata, LIV Organic Butternut Squash, pesto, and pecans. Season with salt and black pepper.

To learn more about LIV Organic™, visit www.livorganicproduce.com



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Chris Jorgensen

Food Lion, LLC
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David Heetderks

SpartanNash's Forest Hills Foods
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Fred Meyer Stores, Inc.
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Harris Teeter Super Markets
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WTF DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Jacobs Farm
Organic Sage ?



SAGE UMAMI SALT

Recipe and photo credited to @myherbalroots

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tbsp** Jacobs Farm Organic Sage leaves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp** Aleppo pepper
- 2 tsp** white pepper, finely cracked
- 1 tsp** smoked salt, Alderwood or Cherry
- 2 tsp** orange zest
- 4 medium cloves** black garlic, chopped super fine (it will clump a bit)
- 1 cup** Maldon flake salt
- 1 tsp** maple syrup

Prep Time: 15 min

Cook Time: 20 min

Servings: 1 cup

DIRECTIONS

- 1** Preheat oven to 220° F.
- 2** Mix together fresh herbs, spices, zest, and black garlic in a medium mixing bowl. Gently fold in the salt and then the maple syrup. Use your fingers to mix, making sure the herbs and spices are totally incorporated into the salt. The black garlic in particular needs to be pulverized into the salt with your fingers, as it's super sticky and likes to clump. (Note: Some of the clumps will dry out in the cooking process, and you will use your fingers again to pulverize them after they are dried).
- 3** Spread the salt-herb mix evenly and flat across a baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Place in the oven, and bake until the herbs have lost most moisture, about 20 minutes.
- 4** Turn off the oven, and let the salt cool totally in the oven. Once it is cool, remove from the oven. Again, begin to pulverize the black garlic clumps more, and mix them into the salt. Store in a little bowl on your countertop for up to a few weeks. Enjoy!

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Live Deliciously®

A Closer Look at Pure Flavor® Uno Bites™ Nano Cucumbers


By Chandler James

Move over, kitchen prep. There's a fresh, bite-sized contender in town. Gone are the days of snacktime prep, as Pure Flavor® has a convenient—and adorable—offering that is out of this world: Uno Bites™ Nano Cucumbers.

Crunchy, flavorful, and nutritious, these nano cukes are a triple-threat in the produce aisle. Consumers will return to this item again and again as a snacking solution that leaves them with less work and more time to enjoy their eating experience. Display them prominently in multiple locations throughout the store to remind shoppers how versatile Uno Bites are.

Cross-merchandising opportunities include herbs and spices like dill and mint; dips and spreads like hummus and tzatziki; meats and cheeses like Parmesan and smoked salmon; and veggies and legumes like arugula and chickpeas. While they're perfect to enjoy by the handful, they can also be sliced and diced in a number of ways to add a fresh crunch to various recipes.

Uno Bites are low in calories and have no cholesterol, are virtually sodium- and fat-free, and are a great source of vitamin K. They contain 95 percent water along with other important nutrients that play a part in hydration, like the electrolytes magnesium and potassium. With these health benefits on deck, the mini cucumbers serve as a nutritious snacking option to power kids' lunchboxes, working parents' briefcases, or anyone's end-of-day snack time.

Pure Flavor utilizes its impressive greenhouse growing operations to ensure Uno Bites are available year-round. So, you won't have to miss a beat in bringing this fresh snacking solution to your consumers. 

UP CLOSE



GROWING Against the GRAIN

By Peggy Packer

I'm sure many of us, especially in the year 2022, know what it's like to live and die by the email. This convenient form of communication has continuously bridged the gap between countries, industries, companies, you name it. It's no wonder such a service has become a staple in our day-to-day lives.

Even as I sit at my desk on a Tuesday afternoon to outline this article, a small icon sits in the corner of my laptop screen with a steadily rising number urging me to click and find out what I may be missing.

Companies that have adapted to this tech-forward method of business and found ways to thrive despite the transformation of face-to-face interaction are proof that fresh produce is not immune to this shift in communication. In the 21st century, sales can be made through a screen—and they often are.

However, there is something to be said about those who choose to go against the grain, differentiating themselves with a proven approach to flourishing in fresh produce. Take LIV Organic™ Produce, for example: a vertically integrated supplier of organic citrus, potatoes, squash, and onions whose dedication to remaining a reliable partner trumps the convenience of a quick email conversation.



“Produce is in real-time,” **Anthony Innocenti, Managing Partner**, imparts to me as we explore this idea on an early morning phone call. “Nowadays, everyone strongly relies on email, and unfortunately, produce has fallen into that trap as well. Produce was built on human interaction because of the ever-changing variables in our industry. I was trained by the old school produce peeps who didn’t use email, and everything was done instantaneously. This is one of the key benefits of LIV Organic. A majority of our communication is

still done by phone, and I think that demonstrates our respect for the buyers out there. There are no delays, nothing rolled over into the next day. Everyone on our staff is empowered to make the most informed decisions in the best interest of our partners on the same phone call. We’re always on it, even if that means answering calls at two, three, or four o’clock in the morning.”

Immediately, I think back to my own tired eyes browsing my inbox at 7 a.m., and LIV Organic’s commitment to standing as a strong, reliable ally for its retail partners becomes even clearer. As some companies undergo strategic transitions to adapt to a more mechanized future, this supplier is taking the road less traveled. This is not to say LIV Organic is not harnessing the might of technological advancements where it sees fit, but the company has tactically achieved the perfect balance between tech and human experience.

While doubling down on the strengths that have brought the brand to its current position in the industry, LIV Organic’s dynamic business model also grants the company a competitive advantage when it

comes to fulfilling retail demands across the categories it serves.

“LIV Organic, along with our tenured grower partners, is committed to sustainable farming for years to come,” Anthony divulges. “Being the sole grower, shipper, and distributor also means we always know what’s going on from start to finish, from the moment the first seeds go into the ground. This is a big deal because when supplies are limited, we are still able to fulfill our orders in total. Customers lean on us because we are known for providing this reliability. Even when supplies get tight or erratic, we stay the course.”

Further elevating LIV Organic as a premium partner for grocers, the retail-focused supplier also deviates from the increasing industry norm by going straight to its customers with unique opportunities and promotional planning. Harnessing a well-rounded operation and an extensive knowledge of its categories, the organic producer is able to map out a direct path to increased purchases, substantially benefiting its allies in the retail sector.

“We are a very proactive—not reactive—company,” Anthony prides. “We have a strong retail presence, and we are always working behind the scenes to continue increasing what we are doing. We don’t wait for our customers to come to us; we go to them. I think that’s the big difference. At LIV Organic, our goal is to make retailers’ jobs easier by helping them plan without having to ask us. We do our homework and completely set it up for them, so they can focus on increasing sales.”



“Customers lean on us because we are known for providing this reliability. Even when supplies get tight or erratic, we stay the course.”
Anthony Innocenti, Managing Partner, LIV Organic™ Produce

Not only does the fresh producer place a heightened value on its retail partnerships, but LIV Organic also provides the ultimate support to its grower network, which plays a vital role in the company’s ability to guarantee 52-week fulfillment. By upholding its strong grower partnerships and making key investments in their operations, the supplier wields a unique edge across its four major categories.

“We are there for our growers through thick and thin. We don’t just drop them if they don’t have a great crop one year, because that’s not a partnership,” Anthony continues. “We frontload major dollars on all of these crops to ensure our growers have the resources to buy seeds and supplies. Our growers are a huge part of what we do because our network is what allows us to have constant fulfillment, giving us an edge up on competitors.”

Another key facet of LIV Organic’s role as a supply-side partner is its high level of transparency, which takes its allies beyond cell phones and computer screens to get a closer look at its in-depth processes and operations.

“We have a complete open door policy on our packing houses. Any one of our growers can come at any given time and watch their fruit be packed,” explains Anthony. “This really makes our growers feel valued because there’s no disconnect. In addition to getting weekly updates, they have the chance to see it for themselves.”

LIV Organic’s vertically integrated model, paired with its reputation for reliability, is part of the reason its programs have seen such impressive success, leaving the company well-positioned to continue meeting consumer and retail needs. Its expansive portfolio brings top-quality organic produce to shelves, and the buy-side has even more opportunities in store as the supplier unveils the advancement of some of its staple programs.

One significant program expansion currently taking root is the company’s foray into the conventional space, as LIV is welcoming conventional Navel oranges to its lineup.



LIV Organic™ Produce’s vertically integrated model and 52-week fulfillment network make the company well-positioned to continue meeting consumer and retail demands



LIV Organic™ Produce has a robust hard squash program that features several varieties, including Butternut, Kabocha, Spaghetti, and more

With this addition, the grower-shipper-distributor is looking to complement its year-round organic citrus program while also streamlining loading opportunities for current partners that support LIV in the full citrus category organically.

“This expansion of our portfolio is guided by consumer demands as they request conventional fruit, as well as buyers who are consolidating their time and have asked us if we’ve ever thought about delving into conventional citrus,” notes Anthony.

LIV Organic is also arming buyers with organic red, white, sweet, and yellow onions, as the company has secured additional acreage to help solidify the fulfillment of its 52-week supply.

“We’re also very excited about potatoes this year,” says Anthony, pointing to another category buyers should be on the lookout for. “Not only do we have increased acreage across all three organic varieties—reds, Russets, and yellows—we are also ramping up production on Fingerling potatoes and baby potatoes. When it comes

to these products, we have the ability to do any size pack, as well as custom private label.”

Last, but definitely not least, Anthony turns my attention to yet another core category for LIV Organic: squash.

“The fall season is a great time for retailers to promote our Southern California-grown organic hard squash. This crop is produced in a microclimate that creates some of the finest hard squash in the country. While some growers may opt for varieties with higher yields and less flavor, we have worked in the other direction to truly grow a premium piece of squash. Our Southern California squash is rotated on the vines by hand before it’s cut and fully cured to ensure maximum uniformity in color. Yes, there is a higher cost involved in this process, but it sells better and has a much more appealing flavor.”

Each of the company’s SKUs is available under the LIV brand or can be packaged for custom private label products, a move that further plays on the company’s differentiation factors and maximizes its reach in the produce department.

Try wrapping all of that up in an email!

As Anthony makes clear to me, more exciting growth lies in LIV Organic’s future, especially as the organic category witnesses a steady rise.

“We continue to see steady growth in organics, which puts us in a really good position,” he shares. “We are a relatively young company who, thankfully, has represented our growers well. We are seeing strong growth based on the premium products we pack. Because of our very consistent supply chain, fulfillment, and core values, we are probably ahead of the curve in that aspect of growth.”

While the road more traveled often houses a clearer footpath with fewer obstacles, my eyes tend to look in the other direction, at the trailblazers who have powered through such challenges for the benefit and success of their brand.

LIV Organic has built its foundation on the road less traveled. This industry innovator is forever going against the grain, never afraid to go the extra mile. And by doing so, the company has placed itself on a ceaseless path to brilliant, long-term business. 🍷



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Pass the Remote:

The Progression of Remote Working in Fresh Produce

By *The Snack* Editorial Contributor Julie Marcik, Senior Director, Joe Produce SearchSM

While vacationing in several states this summer, I was conscious of all of the people who appeared to be working remotely. When we first wrote *The Next Normal: Post Pandemic Pivots as an Employer* in the 2021 September issue, we knew then that the workplace had changed. But where is it going from here?

With the unique challenges specific to the produce industry, we have to evaluate which jobs can truly be done remotely. Essential workers, relationship-based partnerships, and long hours can complicate this. Not to mention, a large part of our industry relies on commodity sales, where keeping your finger on the pulse of daily markets and communicating closely with one's team is critical to getting the job done. On the other hand, as a larger focus sharpens on brand development, value-added products, and program sales, there are more positions that fit within remote parameters.

There are two things our industry will need to accept, regardless of whether or not remote work remains a constant in the future: Leadership positions are becoming remote and our talent pool is aging. In order to make this work, companies have to think about the strength of their teams and leaders. Strong leadership and clear expectations are as crucial as ever.

The younger generation has a different view of professional life, prioritizing balance and flexibility while still joining cultures that care for them and encourage growth. We have seen some companies lose good people due to a lack of flexibility and balance, which is extremely important to the younger folks. It is important to be realistic about this if you want to attract and retain people who are in the first 10-15 years of their career.

It can feel counterintuitive to think about how to accommodate the younger generation of workers—who want to work remotely—but also need development and mentorship. Speaking as an executive recruiter, employee, and senior leader, I can safely share that performance, communication, and teamwork are three key factors that make bosses more comfortable with remote working situations.

With all this in mind, the onus of whether or not the position you're hiring for is remote, hybrid, or in-office lies with you, the employer. You can make it work in whatever ways best suit your business. Costs of technological investments and travel figure here as well if the traditional in-office experience is not an option.

Whatever position they choose—remote, hybrid, or in-office—you should never waver on an employee's integrity and dedication to the job.

For Employers

Expect

- The same quality of work, if not better
- The same level of confidentiality and discretion
- Adherence to company policies


Accept

- Managing performance differently; you can manage what you can measure in many cases
- Less team interaction/bonding
- Fluctuation in work hours

For employees, working remotely might mean putting in extra time to make sure you get the high level of mentoring you'd receive while in the office. This means communication—yes, it goes both ways!



Remote work is changing the industry. We've had a few surprises with clients lately who were never flexible before and are now willing to offer remote and hybrid positions. Time will tell where this trend takes us, but it's never too early to evaluate where your company stands.

There is no guarantee that remote work will remain prevalent in produce regardless of what the allover data and projections tell us regarding remote working trends. The work has to get done, and here in North America, we will need to remain competitive with other parts of the world who, according to the data, have not strongly embraced the concept of remote work. We know our industry requires a specific breed of work ethic and drive, and that, at the very least, is one point from which we'll never waver. 

For Employees

Expect

- The proper tools and training to do your job
- Opportunities to develop your career
- Boundaries when it comes to your personal time

Accept

- Less face time with colleagues and decision makers in your organization
- Inability to observe and learn from others as they perform their job while working in the same space
- Remote work is a privilege, not a right, and can change if the employer wishes it to

Julie Marcik leads the JOE Produce SearchSM team, leveraging more than 20 years of experience in executive search.

Produce is not a job, it's a lifestyle. Once you "check the boxes" on skills and experience, the real job becomes matching the people with the culture of the business and leadership. This takes time, expertise, and a robust process Julie and the JOE Produce SearchSM team know well.

JOE Produce SearchSM is composed of experienced search consultants and produce professionals. Placements range from middle management to C-level positions throughout North America, covering a wide range of produce and produce-related businesses.

JOE Produce Search



Julie Marcik,
Senior Director,
JOE Produce SearchSM

WTF DO I DO WITH ?

{ what the fork }

GR Fresh Bell Peppers, Roma Tomatoes, and Cucumbers



SALMON CEVICHE

INGREDIENTS

1 GR Fresh Red Bell Pepper, chopped
1 GR Fresh Green Bell Pepper, chopped
1 GR Fresh Roma Tomato, chopped
1 GR Fresh Cucumber, peeled and chopped
8 oz fresh salmon
2 limes, juiced
¼ **bunch** fresh parsley, chopped
1 **tsp** salt
4 **tsp** olive oil

Prep Time: 5 min

Chill Time: 2 hrs

Servings: 4

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Chop up the salmon into small pieces.
- 2 In a container, add the salmon, lime juice, red bell pepper, green bell pepper, cucumber, Roma tomato, fresh parsley, olive oil, and salt. Mix well.
- 3 Place in the fridge for 2 hours.
- 4 Serve with tostadas, tortilla chips, or breadsticks. Enjoy!

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MENTORS IN THE MAKING

Raina Nelson

BY MELISSA DE LEON CHAVEZ

MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP, SIBLINGS BUT NOT SYNONYMS, often get layered in a way that can misplace the value each brings to our lives and careers.

“Leaders motivate, influence, and inspire groups of people or organizations to innovate or act toward a common goal. Mentors have a concerted and intentional relationship that is a two-way street,” Raina Nelson explained. While she has been coming into her own as a leader, she is also on her way to becoming a mentor. “Both mentors and leaders can change lives, drive personal and professional development, and—ultimately—life performance, but mentorship is a very special and personalized experience.”

Now President and Chief Executive Officer of Westfalia Fruit USA, it’s nearly impossible to fathom Raina on a different path. But, when she came to the produce industry, it was not to be a business operations leader.

Studying premed at the University of Florida, Raina realized she could blend her past as the daughter of a citrus grower with her present passion to help save lives in food safety. “I can make the supply chain safer, save people, and make a positive contribution to an industry that feeds our nation?” she recalled. “Check!”

With the guidance of a wise professor—Dr. Keith R. Schneider, Ph.D.—who said she could make a great impact, Raina left academia and entered the industry.

“I initially took a job at Fresh Del Monte Produce, where I learned a lot before I found an opportunity with Rosemont Farms in food safety and quality systems, and that was when I met Andrew Schwartz,” she told me.

The Co-Founder of Rosemont Farms gave Raina a defining moment that was, she shared, the catalyst for both her present career and her journey with mentorship.

“I certainly looked up to and respected him—he could enter a room and command it, convey himself so well—but when I handed in my two weeks notice and he said, ‘No,’ is when he became my mentor,” Raina laughed. “He asked if I’d consider stepping into and learning how to manage the import piece of our business. I thought he was crazy—I don’t have an MBA and had no experience. But Andrew had watched me and trusted I was going to figure it out.”

While this third option may seem natural to Raina now, she quickly clarified it was not a fairytale, saying, “There were times when I messed up and he had to have some very hard conversations with me. But those were some of the most significant teaching moments in my career. So for that, I was really thankful for him.”

Ultimately, Andrew’s third door not only transitioned him to a mentor for Raina, but set her onto a path that would see her become that changemaker her professor initially saw.

Raina’s next chapter would be forging a new channel of business for rising value-added label Renaissance Food Group (RFG), a primarily West Coast company seeking her rapidly acquired business acumen to build its presence on the East Coast.

While she introduced the company to a new market, it would introduce her to a mentor who is the metaphorical right brain to Andrew’s left.

“I reported directly to Jim Catchot, President of RFG at the time. Andrew taught me to look at everything from a 360-degree view to anticipate how I might mitigate any possible issues. So, I came to Jim with a 360-degree evaluation, and that was not his style,” Raina burst out laughing at memories of her transition. “He was so great in mentoring me about the gut, the retail feel of the business, and the relationship aspect. I really loved Jim’s perspective and his zest for the people. We would call RFG our family, and it truly was that. He had our best interests in mind and really just poured into us from a very familial manner.”

If Jim and Andrew are complementary sides of the mind, Raina’s third voice of wisdom, Rick Estess, is the heart.

“I call Rick my produce dad. He’s a lovely person with the biggest heart,” Raina told me, explaining that Rick’s wisdom came as she was becoming



Raina Nelson,

President and Chief Executive Officer, Westfalia Fruit USA

more involved in the Southeast Produce Council (SEPC). “He was the catalyst to my involvement in STARS—Southeast Top Agricultural Recruits Scholarship—which is now so near and dear to my heart. He truly is a visionary who was there at the beginning of SEPC’s Southern Roots and advocating for something like it long before. Rick was and is one of the major supporters of women in the industry.”

With such different yet equally impactful voices to help guide her, Raina said it was the variation in her mentors’ styles that helped teach her about the beauty of diversity, with no set formula to success.

Looking ahead to her own mentoring potential, Raina’s advice is to remember the whole point: to help grow and develop on this journey that is life.

“I think the key is the chemistry of the mentor-mentee relationship, no matter how it evolves or begins, and the final output of its success is joy,” she concluded. “Of course, you use your own instincts and listen to your own heart and soul, but, I’m just so thankful for Andrew, for Rick, for Jim to always take that time. And to Dr. Schneider for starting it all.”

To take the lead is to make the final call. A mentor sees the decision is not theirs to make, entrusting the mentee to take that risk; to be willing to step through door number three. I cannot wait to see what doors Raina discovers for herself and those she will lead.

THE MENTORS

Here is what they have to say about Raina...



Jim Catchot,

Chief Commercial Officer, FreshRealm

Raina Nelson is someone I thought had great potential, so I hired her. At that time, women in the produce industry were working hard to move into leadership roles, and I wanted to give Raina every opportunity to maximize her potential. I put on my mentor hat, and Raina did the rest. Today, I look at Raina’s accomplishments, personal growth, and achievements and see an industry leader making a difference. Proud mentor.



Andrew Schwartz,

Manager, JAL Agro

“Raina came into the organization to run food safety as it was becoming clear companies had to formalize their processes. Raina did a wonderful job; she was engaged, completely committed, and successful in putting our organization in a strong position. I saw how people were responding to her—authenticity is very important to her, and others recognize that. It became apparent even customers were following and looking to Raina for guidance, and it clicked for me then that, if she wanted, she was destined for different things. She did have to learn, but, in true form to a leadership role, she jumped in and was willing to take risks. The wonderful thing about mentorship is, if you are present and effectively do your job, you are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to affect people’s lives, and I’m grateful I could do that for Raina. It has to be within that person to pursue a new path, and Raina has always wanted to excel and be the best she can be; she’s a mentor by example.”



Rick Estess,

Business Development Manager, RPE

A good mentor is a person who has seen the value of mentorship first hand. They are willing to give back and pass on their experiences and knowledge by mentoring others. Some nine years ago, I met Raina Nelson and had the opportunity to mentor her early on in her career. Raina was always asking questions, she was starving for more information, and looked for different opinions. Bottom line, Raina is willing to learn from the people around her. Seeing her today and watching her mentor others in the produce industry shows me that our time together was well spent, and I am very proud of her.

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WTF DO I DO WITH Trinity Fruit Company Juicy Gems® Pomegranates ?

{ what the fork }



SPRING MIX SALAD WITH FRIED GOAT CHEESE AND POMEGRANATE VINAIGRETTE

INGREDIENTS

POMEGRANATE VINAIGRETTE

½ cup Trinity Fruit Company Juicy Gems® Pomegranate Arils
1 tbsp grated shallot
1 tsp Dijon mustard
¼ cup white wine vinegar
1 tbsp honey
½ tsp salt
½ cup olive oil

SALAD

½ cup Trinity Fruit Company Juicy Gems® Pomegranate Arils
5 oz bag spring mix salad blend
1 package goat cheese (chèvre)
1 egg, well-beaten
1 cup seasoned Panko breadcrumbs
½ cup olive oil for frying
 Flaky salt

Prep Time: 30 min
Cook Time: 5 min
Servings: 4

DIRECTIONS

- 1 For the pomegranate vinaigrette, in a blender combine shallot, Dijon, vinegar, pomegranate arils, honey, and salt. Blend well while slowly adding the olive oil until well-combined. Cover and chill.
- 2 Slice cold goat cheese into 1" pieces. Dip each slice into beaten egg then into the Panko breadcrumbs, pressing slightly and coating well on all sides. Place the slices on a plate and set into freezer for 15 minutes.
- 3 Heat oil in shallow skillet. Add slices to skillet in small batches, frying on each side for 1 minute or until golden brown. Remove to a paper towel-lined plate and sprinkle with a pinch of flaky salt.
- 4 Arrange salad greens, top with warm goat cheese and drizzle over pomegranate vinaigrette. Finish with fresh pomegranate arils and flaky salt. Enjoy!

To learn more about Trinity Fruit Company, visit www.trinityfruit.com



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WTF DO I DO WITH DOLE® Bananas ?

{ what the fork }



SPOOKY HALLOWEEN FRUIT PLATTER

INGREDIENTS

- 4 ripe DOLE® Bananas, peeled and halved crosswise
- ½ lb DOLE Green Grapes
- 6 whole DOLE Mandarin Oranges
- 1 large DOLE Red Apple, halved, cored, and thinly sliced
- 2 tsp gluten-free mini dark chocolate chips
- 2 tbsp gluten-free white chocolate chips
- 3 tbsp caramel topping
- 2 tbsp roasted unsalted peanuts, chopped
- Black edible marker

Prep Time: 30 min
Servings: 8

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat white chocolate chips in a small microwave-safe bowl in microwave oven on high for 40 seconds or until melted, stirring every 20 seconds; transfer to small zip-top plastic bag and snip bottom corner with kitchen scissors.
- 2 Pipe white chocolate onto grapes for white part of “eyeballs;” place mini chocolate chip in center of each for “pupils.” Dry completely.
- 3 Draw jack-o'-lantern faces on oranges with marker and dry completely.
- 4 Press chocolate chips, pointed side down, into bananas to make “ghost faces.”
- 5 Arrange apple slices on a serving platter. Drizzle with caramel and sprinkle with peanuts. Arrange “ghost bananas,” “eyeball grapes,” and “jack-o'-lantern oranges” on serving platter. Enjoy!

To learn more about DOLE®, visit www.dole.com



HALLOWEEN SnackChat

By Lilian Diep

**DOUBLE, DOUBLE TOIL AND TROUBLE.
FIRE BURN AND OVEN BROIL.**

This season's merchandising opportunities are ripe for the taking, and fruits and veggies are an easy way to make the holiday come to life. Our industry has many an expert to weave a web of promotions, so I would like, if I may, to take you on a fresh produce journey...





RAINA NELSON,
President and Chief Executive
Officer, Westfalia Fruit USA

"At Westfalia Fruit USA, we grow, source, ripen, pack, process, and market quality avocados year-round—sustainably. October is the perfect time for retailers to make shopping easy and fun while driving basket size by merchandising avocados around fall gatherings! Whether it's for Halloween or tailgating get-togethers, avocados make every occasion more fun—and delicious! We recommend merchandising your avocados in-store with guacamole ingredients, local beers, and other seasonal items near the front of the department. Don't forget to keep avocados merchandised by ripeness level, as it will make it easier for your shoppers to find the ideal ripeness they are looking for."

"October is not just spooky season, it's also Fair Trade Month! Our Fair Trade Certified® watermelons from Mexico are at peak of season right now, and it's the perfect time to encourage a fun twist on Halloween festivities. Why not try a carved jack-o'-melon? Giving consumers ideas to incorporate produce into their lives in a variety of ways will help boost consumption. Plus, every sale of our Fair Trade Certified produce generates premiums that go directly to farmworker communities in Mexico, making fair trade a perfect tie-in for any retailer's social responsibility messaging."



KRISTA BECKSTEAD,
Marketing and Brand Specialist,
Starr Ranch® Growers

"Halloween always means we are deep into our harvest season, which is the most exciting time of the year for us. Our apples are just freshly picked at the peak of quality and shipped to retailers. Halloween also means we get to enjoy our favorite seasonal apple recipes, like caramel apple pops, which make enjoying a traditional caramel apple easy and fun to share. Another dish your shoppers will love to make is our 'spooky charcuterie,' our favorite for fall Halloween entertaining!"



MEGAN GORGISHELI,
Director of Marketing
Administration,
Giumarra Companies



"We love Halloween at Dole! As a mom of two young children, I see the importance of continuing holiday traditions—with some healthy twists. Halloween only comes once a year, so it's okay to indulge every once in a while. If we include fruits and vegetables in everyday meals and snacks, having them on special occasions becomes part of an expected healthy routine. This year, we created several produce-based Halloween dishes, like our Spooky Halloween Fruit Platter, that families can create together that clearly don't sacrifice fun."

And since Halloween is also an adult holiday, we have other easy creations that will be the star of any grown-up party, such as our new Dole Pumpkin Spice Whip using fresh DOLE® Pineapples and Sweet Potatoes. It's so easy, I may just whip it up for our Halloween party!"



MELANIE MARCUS,
MA, RD, Nutrition and Health
Communications Manager,
Dole Food Company



LINDSEY DALESKY,
Sales and Marketing
Representative,
Bay Baby Produce

"You Don't Know Squash?! Bay Baby Produce grows, packs, and distributes organic winter squash because we believe 'Squash is Savvy!' Winter squash is a great value to your customers' health and pocketbook. Boasting a long shelf-life, our Savvy Squash is great for single households or large families. From Delicata to Butternut to Carnival Acorn, your shoppers can use winter squash in plant-based entrées, create snacks ranging from baked chips to dips, or replace traditional starches in endless applications. This healthy alternative is high in fiber, low in calories, full of antioxidants and vitamins—and it's delicious!"



LUKE FOUNTAIN,
Sales, Atlas Produce &
Distribution

"I love a Medjool date split open and filled with chunky peanut butter. The pair make for a sweet and healthy snack without having to feel guilty about the candy I will indulge myself with, and I know shoppers will have the same sentiments. It's easy to cross-promote and make for gatherings, a win-win! I'm also known to make a date shake with a dash of spiced rum to enjoy by the fire; now that will make for a great display in both the produce and liquor aisles!"



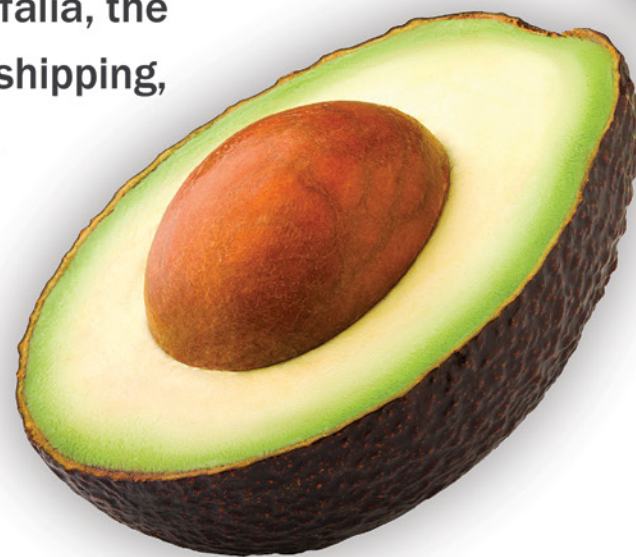
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DelFresco
Pure

Cultivating a

A Q&A With
Ray Mastronardi,
Vice President of Sales,
DelFrescoPure®

By Peggy Packer

Legacies ring all around us in the world of fresh produce. Just within the pages of this magazine alone, you will find stories that have been built over generations and generations, with each year passed constructing a stronger foundation for the industry's future evolution.

DelFrescoPure® is a family-owned grower whose long-standing success exemplifies its commitment to quality, reliability, and innovation, and the company's forward-thinking mindset guarantees its growth for years to come. Such a history can only stand as a testament to the dedication of the supplier to bringing top-tier, greenhouse-grown items to consumers and serving as a reliable ally to its retail partners. In my first few minutes of writing this piece, sparked by a profound

conversation with Ray Mastronardi, Vice President of Sales, I find myself stilled by the question, "How do I fit such a massive legacy within the constraints of these few pages?"

After all, as we look back on DelFrescoPure's past, its prestige in the present grows ever stronger.

The Snack's very own Jordan Okumura said it best when she wrote, "A legacy is not just a foundation on which you continue to build with one eye on the past, but one that can be an intention set on the horizon, with groundwork laid today."

DelFrescoPure is among those in our industry continuously fortifying its standing for the future by staying true to the pillars the company was originally founded upon. This grand lineage dates back over 70 years, and I foresee no near end as Ray sets aside a moment to explore the company's accomplished history and propitious future with me.

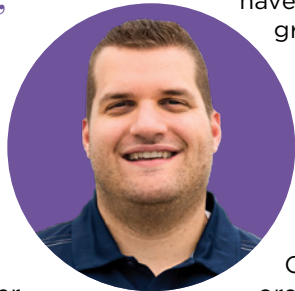
Q1

**Peggy Packer:**

Ray, let's dive right into DelFrescoPure's first-rate product portfolio. I know the company has witnessed notable growth through its winter and spring programs. What offerings make up these programs, and how do they play an essential role in the company's lineup?

Ray Mastronardi,
Vice President of Sales,
DelFrescoPure®:

DelFrescoPure is a fully functional hot house providing Canadian tomatoes as well as strawberries year-round, with our spring program also producing an organic mini cucumber line. The advantage to this is we can guarantee our partners have DelFrescoPure tomatoes any time of year, no matter the season. Providing this kind of reliable availability is key to ensuring our customers are happy.



PP: From what you've told me about these programs so far, they seem to be ever-evolving, and with great benefit to DelFrescoPure's buy-side allies. What expansions and developments have bolstered these segments recently? Why was it important for the company to focus on these aspects of growth?

RM: Our spring organic program is continuously growing, and the main feature is our organic mini cucumbers. Several of our customers have requested we continue to grow these cucumbers, and we have happily expanded the program as demand dictates. Over the last few years, our organic mini cucumber program has doubled in size.

On top of that, we also have organic tomatoes on-the-vine and peppers that are grown as a part of our spring program.

DelFrescoPure is always working on new projects and looking for innovative products to add to our portfolio. We expect our organic

program to continue to increase over the upcoming years, adding new items to the lineup, in addition to ramping up production for the organic mini cucumber program in the coming season.

Q3

PP: When it comes to product innovation and development, DelFrescoPure definitely maintains a strong competitive edge. Can you share some of the greatest benefits provided by the company's dynamic portfolio?

RM: The main advantage of our program is our ability to grow all year long. By growing year-round, we are able to ensure our customers and retail partners will never have to experience down seasons on items, as we are prepared to fill in all gaps.

Supplying locally grown produce is also a key benefit because it requires less transportation and reduces the miles associated with the product.

In addition to this, what truly makes us stand out in the industry is the service we provide. We are able to anticipate the needs of our

Q4

PP: I definitely think that is a testament to DelFrescoPure's commitment to quality, service, and leadership, especially knowing these growing practices have been passed down the family tree for over seven decades now. Looking back on the company's long-standing legacy, how else has DelFrescoPure's operation evolved in recent years, and since its creation back in the 1950s?

RM: DelFrescoPure has changed a lot from its inception until now. We started with a small list of items grown and sold from a local roadside stand. Beginning with only five offerings, we now have over 50 products! Since then, we've advanced alongside our

Q5

retail partners, providing better-suited custom programs to fit each specific retailer's needs, increasing efficiency within our greenhouse, and packing and shipping our commodities quicker to lock in freshness. DelFrescoPure is always testing out new ways to streamline our system while minimizing waste and broadening our selection of products.

"Several of our key customers have requested we continue to grow these cucumbers, and we have happily expanded the program as demand dictates. Over the last few years, our organic mini cucumber program has doubled in size."

-Ray Mastronardi,
Vice President of Sales, DelFrescoPure®



So, what is it that distinguishes the DelFrescoPure legacy?

Whether you look back over seven decades of innovation, commitment, and expansion or at the inevitable growth, sustainability, and development of the future, there is no simple way to define it. This supplier's reputation is as resolute as the growing operations it holds, seeking to deliver an elevated experience to buyers and consumers alike.

And, as Ray and I reflect on an illustrious history of successes today, the DelFrescoPure team is hard at work ensuring this legacy forges far on into the future. 🍅

Libations

FOR ALL OCCASIONS:

THE BLACKBERRY & SAGE GIN AND TONIC



By Andrea Allen

I live for fall. Truly, when the month of September hits, I'm breaking out the Halloween decor and enshrouding my house in shades of green, purple, and black.

To capture the spirit of those witchy vibes, I mix up my own version of a witch's brew: The Blackberry & Sage Gin and Tonic. A spin on the classic G&T, the sage adds an earthy, peppery bite to the tart sweetness of the blackberries. The drink itself ranges from subtle red to a delightful violet color depending on how many blackberries you use—I skew toward more than most. No matter what, it looks right at home among my

Halloween accoutrements.

Regrettably, I don't have a magic wand with which to craft retail merchandising displays, but if I did, I know this would look stunning in full Halloween regalia. Blackberry clamshells stacked on spellbooks nestled next to cauldrons full of gin bottles surrounded by sage leaves—can you imagine the crowd it would draw?

For a drink worthy of a witch, going all out isn't optional; it's imperative.

Now that's one devilishly good concoction. 🍷

INGREDIENTS

SAGE SIMPLE SYRUP

4–6 sage leaves (or more, depending on how pronounced you want the flavor to be)

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

COCKTAIL

6–8 blackberries, plus extra for garnish

½ oz sage simple syrup

Splash of fresh lemon juice

1½ oz gin

San Pellegrino

Sage leaves, for garnish (optional)

Time: 15 min

Servings: 1 cocktail

DIRECTIONS

1. To create the simple syrup, combine sugar and water in a small saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil and stir until sugar is dissolved.
2. Remove pan from heat and add the sage leaves. Cover and let steep for 10 minutes.
3. Remove sage and strain into a glass container for storage. Store syrup in the refrigerator for up to 6 weeks.
4. In a cocktail shaker, muddle blackberries with sage simple syrup and lemon juice.
5. Fill the shaker with ice. Add gin and shake for 30 seconds.
6. Strain the contents of the shaker into a tumbler. Top with San Pellegrino and garnish with blackberries and/or sage leaf if desired.
7. Happy witching!

Recipe inspired by The Charming Detrouiter



Photography by Craig Wheeler



FOXY.COM

Enter *the* Valley *of* Fresh

By Jordan Okumura

State Route 68 to Highway 101 is not just a thoroughfare, a point of conjunction, or a topographic illustration representing a stitch in the land. This connective tissue is a vein, carrying the pulse of an agricultural region through California's Central Coast and beyond. It is a lifeline, connecting growing regions, families, visionaries, and stewards together in a way that is rare, unparalleled, and comprehensive.

Transporting such a vital lifeline to the International Fresh Produce Association's (IFPA) Global Produce & Floral Show this October is the task of great leadership, with a swath of the region's trailblazing companies bringing the features, advantages, and benefits of California's Salinas Valley region and beyond to Orlando, Florida, at the coveted event's Grower-Shipper Pavilion.

Nine growers, shippers, and suppliers from the Valley will exhibit the tools of their trade on October 29 and 30, 2022, with the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California serving as the coordinating organization for its members. This region, affectionately and accurately dubbed the "Salad Bowl of the World," brings a one-stop shop to customers far and wide, from the retail shelf to the foodservice table.

With the challenges facing today's industry, from inflation to supply-chain efficiency, this IFPA event creates a cost-effective way to have the association's members from California's Salinas, Pajaro, and San Juan Valleys promote together and allow customers to learn all about the products in one contiguous, dynamic exhibit space.

Follow this vein with me through California's Central Coast growing regions, as we travel into the heart of an industry lifeline.

Baja Son Growers

With full control over the supply chain as a vertically integrated grower-shipper, Baja Son Growers can consistently provide superior quality product with augmented food safety and certification adherence adding the utmost confidence to every purchase. Supplying year-round availability, Baja Son Growers accounts for much of the asparagus volume and green onion volume out of Northern Mexico for the industry. As demand increases, Baja Son is continuing to invest in personnel, improving ground selection, and updating its facilities. Baja Son Growers has generational experience as well, allowing the team to provide an exceptional and consistent product backed by expertise and reputation.

“At the 2022 IFPA Expo, Baja Son Growers will be showcasing both of our items—asparagus and green onions. We will also be discussing the consistency of supply and quality out of Mexico. Baja Son Growers is rooted in a strong foundation and setup for generational

success. We are the only asparagus and green onion supplier you’ll ever need,” Robert Leonard, Director of Sales, shares. “Our year-round and consistent supply and quality comes from one of the premier growers in Mexico. We are backed by a dynamic sales team that has the ability and flexibility to tailor our program to the needs of our customers. Our focus this year is to continue to build our green onion program, and we are excited to share more of our vision with attendees and customers.”

For all your asparagus and green onion needs, visit booth #4250 and find out more about a company built on and continuing to build a legacy of tradition.



Robert Leonard,
Director of Sales,
Baja Son Growers

Booth
#4250



Church Brothers Farms

Church Brothers Farms is synonymous with ingenuity and excellence in our industry, bringing a legacy of service and innovation in the Salinas Valley that spans multiple generations. The vertically integrated, family-owned and operated company produces a full line of fresh vegetables year-round with an in-house farming/harvest program and state-of-the-art processing plants in the United States and Mexico.

“Church Brothers Farms will be highlighting two redesigned whole leaf lettuce clamshells and a new Petite Romaine pack at this year’s IFPA show. We are targeting retail markets and consumers that are in search of a high quality, ultra-versatile leafy greens experience,” Alex McCloskey, Vice President of Retail Business Development, comments. “The Whole Leaf, Green Leaf, and Romaine clamshells have been fully rebranded to highlight the convenience of the product, with a high-impact ‘Ready to Use’ call-out. They are packaged with a peel and

reseal film to reduce plastic and allow consumers to maintain freshness in storage across multiple uses. We are also featuring our new 2-count Petite Romaine which is packed in a stand-up, gusseted pouch. This unique hybrid variety highlights the best of Romaine and the best of Iceberg lettuces. It inspires a range of versatile dishes from healthful lettuce boats and tasty burger wraps to a sweet and crunchy base for any salad. Church Brothers continues its growth in both retail and foodservice channels with a full line of value-added and commodity products destined for restaurants and consumers alike.”

This company warrants a top spot in your buy-side itinerary, so stop by booth #4053 to learn more.



Alex McCloskey,
Vice President of Retail Business
Development, Church Brothers
Farms



Booth
#4053



Braga Fresh

Braga Fresh is known for many areas of excellence in this industry, with its continued commitment to sustainability. Its deeply rooted legacy and stewardship of the land began in 1928 when Sebastian and Josie Braga started farming the fertile soil of Salinas Valley. Today, Braga’s third generation continues the family values of sustainable, organic farming. The Braga family sets aside 10 percent of farmland to beneficial habitat and has the goal of being carbon neutral by 2025.

Now vertically integrated, Braga Fresh combines innovation with tradition to grow, harvest, and process fresh vegetables and leafy greens through the Josie’s Organics and Braga Farms brands.

“At the 2022 Global Produce & Floral Show, we invite you to visit Braga Fresh, home of Josie’s Organics, for a closer look at our new products, reduced plastic packaging, and ‘on-farm’ sustainability solutions including regenerative farming trials,” Kori Tuggle, Vice President of Marketing and Product Development, shares. “We are excited to debut our new chopped salad kits, our new Easy Pan Veggies™ product line, and the reduced plastic packaging options for 16 oz organic Baby Leaf containers.”

Booth #4244 awaits, as does the vision for a sustainable and regenerative future. Just follow the roots that Braga Fresh has laid.



Kori Tuggle,
Vice President of Sales and
Marketing, Coastline Family Farms



Coastline Family Farms

Founded in 1991, Coastline Family Farms brings a passion for produce as an independent, privately held, and vertically integrated year-round shipper of more than 25 top-quality fresh vegetable products. With California, Arizona, and Mexico as Coastline’s major growing regions, the company can supply premium produce and nurture a range of buy-side relationships across business types and needs. With a 30-year history of producing premium vegetables, controlling its own coolers, and exceptional service levels, Coastline will provide certainty in uncertain times.

“Now is the time to secure your supplies for

2023 from Coastline Family Farms. We offer and will plant-to-order contracted volumes of Romaine, Romaine Hearts, mini Romaine, Iceberg, broccoli, cauliflower, green onions, and dry bulb onions,” Tami Gutierrez, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, revealed. “Due to the ongoing drought and impending irrigation water restrictions, we encourage long-term contracting to ensure your source of produce is secure, reliable, and available. By matching our production to customer demand and needs, we can better align all inputs and avoid food waste while maintaining a trusted, steady supply to meet buyers’ needs during these uncertain times.”

Discover Mini Crunchy Romaine—a versatile, sweeter, and crunchier variety with great shelf-life—as well as the company’s full portfolio by visiting booth #4045 at IFPA 2022.



Kari Tuggle,
Vice President of Marketing
and Product Development,
Braga Fresh



Booth
#4244



Booth
#4045

Ippolito International

Looking for the largest supplier of fresh Brussels sprouts in North America, who can also load a full assortment of Western vegetables and value-added products onto your truck? You've found the company. As a staple and standard in California's Salinas Valley, Ippolito International is a second-generation family-owned business and an integrated grower-shipper-processor operating year-round. In order to achieve such value and quality, Ippolito utilizes seasonal operations in California and Arizona and offers a robust product line of conventional and organic premium-quality vegetables under the Queen Victoria brand.

"Ippolito International puts focus, responsiveness, and service at the top of the list when it comes to servicing our customers," Lara Grossman,

Director of Marketing, shares. "From packaged and bulk fresh veg to value-added convenience solutions, Ippolito provides one-stop-shop value and consistency to our customers. We consider our responsiveness to be the cornerstone of our 'everyday hustle' and communication between our field and plant operations and customers really drives our business. This has allowed us to grow. At this year's IFPA show, we will showcase our value-added salad offerings, along with a new field pack product line."

To see the new, the exciting, and the innovative, check out Ippolito at booth #4153 in Orlando, Florida.



Lara Grossman,
Director of Marketing,
Ippolito International

Nature's Reward®

Nature's Reward® is owned and operated by the Huntington Family, which builds on a legacy of greatness: great products and great relationships. The Huntington family's roots run deep in the Salinas Valley soil, and the company is one of the few remaining family-run agricultural businesses in the Salinas Valley. A company as concerned with its culture and community as it is about its product portfolio, Nature's Reward is proud to support local teams, schools, and other philanthropic organizations.

"Nature's Reward proudly markets Iceberg lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, Romaine Hearts, leaf lettuces, celery, mixed vegetables, and strawberries in the Nature's Reward label. We specialize in servicing our clients' needs with special packs, contracts, and private labeling. Direct communication between sales and our production supervisors assures

your needs are met," Greg Beach, Vice President of Sales, states. "Customers appreciate our comprehensive line of premium fresh Western vegetables, including colored cauliflower, and we are one of the only veg shippers offering strawberries as well! We're looking forward to discussing how we can help grow your business with our solid approach to customer engagement and satisfaction."

With an invitation for open dialogue and a one-stop shop for fresh produce to boot—highlight, schedule, and get excited to visit Nature's Reward at IFPA booth #4248.



Greg Beach,
Vice President of Sales,
Nature's Reward®

Misionero

Misionero is dedicated to the continuous pursuit of bringing fresh veggies and convenience to the consumer plate. In the supplier's words, it is simple: Real people, creating real food. The company produces organic specialty salads, organic and conventional washed and trimmed lettuces, as well as meal solution salad kits, and more. Misionero serves a new generation of consumers who are more mindful than ever of how their food is grown, processed, and distributed, and continues to build trust by delivering the freshest products, grown with love.

"What makes Misionero special is our products and our people. Misionero was founded 48 years ago with the belief there was a place in the Salinas Valley for a produce company to succeed if it treated its people with respect and balanced the choice between growth and quality," Nicole Zapata, Marketing Director, expresses. "We've come a long way in the last five years since our management

group, The Harbinger Group, acquired Misionero. We've remained committed to innovation and best-in-class service for our customers and we have stayed focused on our core values by earning Equitable Food Initiative (EFI) certification for more than four years. In the last year, we've expanded our partnership with EFI with two new pilot programs—Produce and Reduce, a Zero Waste initiative, as well as a Process Improvement and Upskilling Program. In 2021, we announced our partnership with Grupo Altex to offer complete product lines of hydroponic lettuces, cauliflower, broccoli, and salad kits. This operation is the largest hydroponic lettuce and leafy green producer in North America and the only fully integrated process of its kind in Mexico."

Looking to connect further with Misionero? There is plenty more to share, especially since the team recently expanded its footprint with a new facility in Baltimore, Maryland. Visit booth #4043 at IFPA's show to learn more.



Stephanie Cantero,
Communications and
Marketing Coordinator,
The Nunes Company

The Nunes Company

The Nunes Company based in Salinas, California, is a family-owned marketer and shipper of conventional and organic fresh vegetables, selling products domestically and globally under the Foxy® and Foxy Organic® brands. The Foxy brand has over 70 different conventional and organic vegetable items, available year-round with growing regions in California, Arizona, Nevada, and Mexico.

"We are pleased to return as an exhibitor and be part of the inaugural International Fresh Produce Association's Global Produce & Floral Show," says Stephanie Cantero, Communications and Marketing Coordinator. "Foxy-brand produce is grown on more than 22,000 crop acres, with third and fourth-generation Nunes family members at the helm today. We are excited to share our vision with industry attendees at the 2022 Global Produce & Floral Show."

Mark your map to stop and re-energize at booth #4143 to visit the Foxy brand family under The Nunes Company.



Nicole Zapata,
Marketing Director,
Misionero



*Booth
#4043*



Pacific International Marketing

Pacific International Marketing was founded on passion and a vision to supply the nation with quality, fresh produce. These tenets have created a company that continues to instill its values in the land, its people, and its customer relationships. Pacific International Marketing benefits from farming partnerships that stretch across Central and Southern California, into Yuma and Phoenix, Arizona, and down to Mexico. The company farms approximately 20,000 acres of conventional produce and 5,000 acres of organic produce, progressing every year. Being vertically integrated, the Pacific International Marketing team has its diligence and commitment imprinted in every aspect of its supply chain, ensuring the operation is making good on its promise of providing the best produce to customers.

“We are excited to be a part of the the Grower-Shipper Pavilion at the IFPA Global Produce & Floral Show 2022 in Orlando, Florida. This show is a great

time to talk about new innovations and products with our customers,” Kim Fellom, Marketing Manager/Sales Executive, shares. “This year, we are also going to take the time we have in front of our customers to share our continued commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and the impact the farming industry is currently facing with the water shortage and the possible long-term effects this may have. It is very important to us that we are transparent with our partners, so we all get through this together.”

Have Pacific International Marketing slated for your itinerary yet? Now is a great time to double-check that landmark at booth #4049.



Kim Fellom,
Marketing Manager/Sales
Executive, Pacific
International Marketing

Booth
#4049



Laura Lauritzen,
Marketing and Public Relations,
Independent Consultant

While you explore and adventure through the storied fields of fresh produce greatness on the show floor in Orlando, do not forget how the road goes both ways—making you, the customer, an essential element of California’s Central Coast as well. Our potential only grows when our roads converge together.

“We are pleased to continue to offer the pavilion as a go-to destination. With great minds at the table, it is limitless what we can do together,” said Laura Lauritzen (née Hastie), Marketing and Public

Relations Consultant for the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California.

Navigating our fresh produce future is not a one-human job, but will take us all. Traversing California’s paths of golden opportunities and fresh produce excellence may be a far trip for many, or in their own backyard for some. One thing I can say for sure is that this October, these Salinas Valley leaders will meet where all roads intersect and where the pulse of the industry will find its heart: the Grower-Shipper Pavilion. All intrepid travelers welcome. 🍅



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SNACK CHAT

By Lilian Diep

 runchy, zingy, and tasty, celery holds its own as a produce heavyweight. With its nutritious benefits and juicy composition, this easy-to-use veg goes great in any stir-fry, blended juice, or snack platter. Consumers need little convincing that celery deserves a spot on the plate, but why not entice them anyway with fresh insights from these category experts?

Lara Grossman



Director of Marketing,
Ippolito International

"Of all the veggies, celery probably has the most legitimate claim to fame as the original 'healthy' snack. In the 1950s, the Ants On a Log recipe may have been the first kid-approved, mainstream nutritious snack. Peanut butter and raisins truly elevated the celery-eating experience, and America was never the same! Today, we find this item is still a produce mainstay. It has a consistent appearance, slices uniformly, and carries all types of savory proteins in its perfectly proportioned groove. It does not wilt, keeps its color, and resists mechanical damage, making it ideal to sit on a plate for an indefinite length. Celery juice is also extremely popular, and social media has seen this trend exploding. 'Celery crack' is a compelling (and yes, slightly addictive), easy celery recipe trend. Cream cheese, onion soup mix, and dill mixed together and then spread on the tops of freshly-cut celery sticks may seem like an appetizer after-thought, but watch those stalks fly off of the plate!"

Nichole Towell



Senior Director of Marketing and Packaging Procurement,
Duda Farm Fresh Foods

"We've seen an increase in popularity for celery from juicing trends that exploded a few years back, and while this still rings true today, there are other ways that the vegetable is being used among consumers. From dessert snacks to skincare (yes, you read that correctly), celery is becoming more recognized as a versatile product thanks to online marketing and social media efforts! Retailers are encouraged to capitalize on this with in-store displays and unique cross-promotions, like celery and sweet cream cheese or black bean dip to give consumers more ideas on how to incorporate it into their lifestyle."

John Chobanian



Celery Commodity Manager,
Ocean Mist® Farms

"At Ocean Mist® Farms, celery is grown on a year-round basis in Coachella, Oxnard, and the Salinas Valley in California. Our biggest tip for retailers is to refrigerate the product on display and to merchandise multiple celery SKUs near one another to offer shoppers options. Merchandising celery vertically with vegetables that provide color contrast is a great way to cross-promote, such as carrots and radishes for soup or stuffing during the holidays. Celery is a very versatile vegetable, as it can be eaten either cooked within a dish or snacked on raw. This product makes for a great item to include in lunches at school or the office, and it will be a big hit this season."

Gabriela D'Arrigo



Vice President of Marketing and Communications,
D'Arrigo New York

"Celery is a great category to highlight and merchandise with this season. One of our customers in Chinatown here in New York, New York, gave us a really helpful tip when storing celery. After cutting the stalks, place them in a container or cup of water in the refrigerator to extend the shelf-life. Your shoppers will not only appreciate the tip, but they will look forward to coming back to a produce section they can trust."

Stephanie Cantero



Communications and Marketing Coordinator,
The Nunes Company

"Celery is a versatile vegetable high in water content and dietary fiber while low in calories. With its mild flavor, this crisp and nutrient-packed vegetable can be added to just about any dish, making it a staple for countless recipes. As we head into fall and approach the holiday season, celery will be a key vegetable to merchandise as recipes this time of year typically list celery as a key ingredient for soups, stews, and holiday dishes. The Nunes Company markets and sells both conventional and organic celery under the Foxy® and Foxy Organic® brands, so be sure to stock up to meet these seasonal demands!"

Russ Widerburg



Sales Manager,
Boskovich Farms

"Celery stick consumption is still in an upward trend. With more consumers being concerned and aware of what they are eating, celery remains a front-runner as a clean and healthy ready-to-eat snack, topping, and even a quick juice to take on the go. Our hydrating celery juice is easy for your shoppers to make at home and to advertise on your produce floor; the recipe uses three packs of Boskovich Farms celery hearts, four green apples, one lemon, two English cucumbers, and two thumbs of ginger. Wash produce and prep as needed for juicer. Juice ingredients one at a time, and whisk once complete. If there is foam at the top of the juice, use a strainer to pour into a fresh pitcher or jar. Serve chilled or over ice for a refreshing, healthy celery juice."

WTF DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

DelFrescoPure®
YES!Berries® ?



STRAWBERRY QUINOA SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package** YES!Berries® Strawberries, hull removed, cut into bite-sized pieces

2 Mini Crunchers Cucumbers®, cut into disks

4 Sweetreats Mini Peppers®, seeds removed, finely diced

¼ cup red onion, finely diced

5–6 leaves fresh basil, chiffonade
- 1 cup** quinoa (regular or mixed)

1 cube vegetable stock

2 cups mixed greens

½ cup sliced almonds
- 1 tbsp** fresh-squeezed lemon juice

1 tsp liquid honey

Salt and pepper, to taste
- DRESSING**

1 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp fresh-squeezed orange juice
- Prep Time:** 10 min

Cook Time: 10 min

Servings: 2

DIRECTIONS

- 1** Place sliced almonds in a small skillet and spread across the surface. Place over medium heat for a few minutes, stirring occasionally until almonds are toasted golden. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

2 In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, orange juice, lemon juice, and honey.

3 Cook quinoa with stock cube to add flavor. Alternatively, use ready-made stock in place of water.

4 Assemble salad in a large serving bowl. Combine cooked quinoa and mixed greens, then top with all other ingredients. Add dressing and enjoy!

To learn more about DelFrescoPure®, visit www.delfrescopure.com



► MY FAVORITE THINGS ◀

ROCHELLE BOHM

Vice President of Marketing, CMI Orchards

With **Chandler James**

Fruit fanatic, mother, world traveler—these are but a few of the words used to describe the brilliant Rochelle Bohm. Outside of her role as CMI Orchards’ Vice President of Marketing, Rochelle plays just as hard as she works. The world is her treasure map, and she is mining the gold of fresh apples and cherries both in the office and in the kitchen. Hear what else makes up her list of favorite things...

1

Two little creatures with the same sense of humor as me.

2

I am so lucky to live in apple country, Washington, where delicious apples are aplenty!

3

I'm on a life mission to master the perfect steak, from the sous vide to smoking on the Traeger®.

4

I'm a fairly new fan. My partner, Adam, got me hooked, and we don't miss a Portland Trail Blazers game together!

5

Taking my '66 Silverstreak on the road for a glamping adventure.

6

I love the adrenaline and challenge of fighting cougars on my own (should they appear).

7

Meat pies, Vegemite, and my family down under.

8

The rolling hills, sheep, and my homeland Aotearoa.

9

Honestly, not marketing hype—these are the very best cherries!

1

My Kids, Peter and Emmy

2

Apples

3

The Perfect Steak

4

Rip City

5

Tin-Can Camping

6

Solo Backpacking

7

Australia

8

New Zealand

9

Skylar Rae® Cherries

106 / OCT 2022

THESNACK.NET / 107

THE *peak* OF pursuit

BY PEGGY PACKER

In the coveted landscape of California's San Joaquin Valley lies an operation rooted so deeply in excellence its name has become synonymous with greatness. In a relentless pursuit of innovation and growth, Jasmine Vineyards harnesses the might of a dynamic toolkit and wisdom that spans generations to solidify its spot at the peak. And still, the only way to go is up...

I know how the saying goes: Never say never. But I highly doubt the soles of my hiking boots will ever grace the ground atop Mount Everest. Beyond having an aversion to cold weather and a lack of physical strength needed to conquer such a massive feat, I know it takes the utmost level of passion, perseverance, expertise, and fortitude to make this nearly 30,000-foot ascent. Though, I can imagine how good it must feel to summit the peak.

As I embark on a metaphorical climb up Earth's highest mountain, I am simultaneously exploring the demanding journey of a fresh produce grower.

When Jon Zaninovich, President of Jasmine Vineyards, steps away from a busy field of table grapes to detail a success story 75 years in the making, I conjure up a mental image of how it must feel to stand at such a high peak and what it must take to get there. Fresh air hits your face embodying new heights and opportunities while a look below uncovers each of the individual accomplishments that created this path to greatness.

Standing atop that mountain must evoke an immense amount of pride—75 years is a lot to celebrate, and Jasmine Vineyards is harnessing the expertise gained over these seven-plus decades to push ahead into its next era of growth.

If you are anything like me, you're probably wondering, what was the vision behind Jasmine Vineyards when it was first founded, and how has it continued to evolve every year since?

"My father, Martin, and uncle, Vincent Zaninovich, founded Jasmine Vineyards in 1947," explains Jon when I ask this very question. "We're talking about two young men—a couple of 20-somethings—starting a table grape growing operation. What was their vision? I can't speak to that, but I do know grape-growing was in their blood. I imagine they shared a sense of post-war prosperity with other young visionaries of the time and, in their case, a desire to feed the world. Over the last 75 years, Jasmine Vineyards has stayed true to our roots in honoring our Croatian family heritage and by growing consistently premium-quality table grapes for the world to enjoy."



Since the '40s, Jasmine Vineyards has remained committed to providing a premium portfolio of high-quality table grapes while staying true to its roots and Croatian family heritage

"WHEN IT COMES TO
EVER-CHANGING
CONSUMER AND
RETAIL DEMANDS,
WE STAY ON
TOP OF TRENDS
WHILE ALWAYS
REMEMBERING THAT
**DELIVERING THE
HIGHEST QUALITY
AND BEST-TASTING
GRAPE IS OUR TOP
PRIORITY."**

Jon Zaninovich,
President, Jasmine Vineyards



"CONSUMERS
TELL US AGAIN
AND AGAIN HOW
THESE ARE
**THE BEST
GRAPES
THEY'VE EVER
HAD."**

Jon and his partner cousins—George, Andy, and Damian Zaninovich—remain steadfastly committed to that mission.

With 75 years of brand success comes the need for swift adaptability, continuous innovation, and an understanding of retail and consumer needs. Unsurprisingly, Jasmine Vineyards checks off each of these boxes. From a 29,000-foot view, these are just a few of the traits that have guaranteed the table grape provider's ongoing growth since Martin and Vincent first brought the Jasmine Vineyards operation to life in the '40s.

"When it comes to ever-changing consumer and retail demands, we stay on top of trends while always remembering that delivering the highest quality and best-tasting grape is our top priority," Jon divulges. "If the trend measures up and fits within our program, we'll consider the next steps. We're also not afraid to test out our own ideas and invest in something we feel is innovative and fits a market need."

Just as a mountain climber must adapt to the changing weather conditions and altering terrain, Jasmine Vineyards has advanced alongside the industry, meeting the varying demands of the market decade after decade.

"One change we are excited about is the growing online marketplace for fresh produce," Jon says as he shares just one of the many ways the industry has progressed in recent years. "There are the direct-to-consumer platforms and the emerging business-to-business marketplaces, both of which put our product in front of more customers. It's a great example of how technology responds to demand, and in turn, helps growers like us expand into new markets."

In addition to e-commerce and trends in purchasing, Jasmine Vineyards is also regularly adapting to the new varieties in the table grape category.

"Staying on top of the variety mix is a balancing act that involves both awareness of consumer trends and evaluating if and how a new variety fits into our program," Jon shares. "Jasmine Vineyards is always on the lookout for an exciting new variety to keep our customers wanting more. We love hearing from our grape fans who tell us how much they love our grapes. The kind words we get via email and social media, and sometimes even snail mail, tell us we're doing something right. We are committed to serving these grape lovers with delicious seedless varieties, including Great Green, Sweet Celebration, Summer Crunch, and Sweet Globe."

While keeping a tab on consumer trends as well as driving category growth through its own innovations, Jasmine Vineyards also remains committed to being as progressive as possible as the needs of industry packaging change.

"Packaging is a big concern these days," Jon tells me, echoing a sentiment heard throughout the fresh industry. "We've offered backyard compostable and free pack options, along with our full line of packaging so grocers can make the best choice for their customers. Retailers know their shoppers best, after all. As a grower-packer-shipper, we see it as part of our job to help retailers meet these needs. Sometimes they want to test out our sealed punnets because they see how popular they are in the Pacific Island market; sometimes it's an updated custom



A unique mix of table grape varieties, a team of highly skilled employees, and in-depth food safety procedures all contribute to the growth of this progressive California ranch

clamshell they want. In most cases, we have the in-house capabilities to get retailers exactly what they need, when they need it. As always, we will continue to explore eco-friendly options while ensuring our products stay fresh and safe.”

In such a competitive landscape as the fresh produce industry, Jasmine Vineyards maintains a commitment to ongoing improvement—a constant upward climb with a distinct goal in sight. That goal is to provide consistent quality, sweetness, color, juiciness, crunch, size, and shelf-life across its table grape portfolio, a target that is much more achievable with 75 years of grape-growing experience at hand. The Jasmine Vineyards mindset is that there is always something to improve, whether it be through investing in a new fleet of high-efficiency tractors, test-growing a new breed of berry, or partnering with a company that enhances the shelf-life of its delicious grapes.

“In the produce aisle, it’s the quality you see in the Jasmine Vineyards grape bag—the size, color, the fresh green stems—that really differentiates our brand,” remarks Jon. “Consumers tell us again and again how these are the best grapes they’ve ever had.”

There is no single step or practice at Jasmine Vineyards that could neatly sum up its steadfast ability to bring only the highest quality table grapes to market. If we envision ourselves back on the snowy slopes of Mount Everest, each of the assets Jon lists is akin to a vital tool in the company’s rucksack.

“There are a few aspects of our operations that stand out when it comes to delivering consistently high-quality table grapes to our partners,” Jon assures. “We have extremely skilled employees who know how to take care of the land and the fruit—from soil prep to manual harvesting, to packing bunches into our bags, clamshells, and punnets. Our loyal

employees, including our field crew who return year after year, make this whole operation run smoothly.”

Next up in Jasmine Vineyards’ essential tool set are its comprehensive food safety procedures, to which Jon also attributes some of the company’s successful track record.

“As Luis Katsurayama, our Food Safety Manager, says, ‘Food safety isn’t just a clipboard and a checklist. It’s part of everything we do.’ And, once again, we have our employees to thank,” notes Jon. “They are the ones who receive training and skills to follow these procedures and help us exceed the industry guidelines for food safety.”

Wielding these elements to continue sharpening its competitive edge, the table grape maven is now celebrating its 75th anniversary, taking the opportunity to host a few gatherings to wine and dine with its partners and industry friends.

“Since our 75th anniversary is a celebration for them as much as it is for us, we’ll be showing our appreciation with gifts and raising an extra glass or two,” adds Jon. “Aside from that, we’ve marked the year with an anniversary edition of our 2022–2023 toolkit, which includes historical photos from the table grape industry. We wanted to acknowledge our past mentors who navigated the sometimes rocky table grape terrain to forge a smoother path—one that continues to sustain us into a vibrant future.”

While some may think there’s nowhere to go but down once you’ve reached the peak of a mountain, it would be absurd to find such a statement true for Jasmine Vineyards. For this fresh pioneering company, the climb goes on and on, and I’d imagine the view gets even better as it endlessly reaches new heights. 🍇

User

QC

Warehouse 1

Iceberg

Total Qnt: 460

Total Pallets: 10

Vendor: Famous Farms

PO: #100689

Qnt: 88

Pallets: 2

QC Score

Excellent

Sample Qnt.

Avg. Weight

Avg. Temp

Avg. Count

2

20.38

50.5

30

Characteristics

Inspection

Inspection Date

Inspected By

Cleanliness of Trailer

Oct. 1 9:22 AM

Joe B.

Good

Sample Averages

Sample 1

Correct Label

Appearance

Average Size

Yes

Good

Lg to XLg

Sample 2

Correct Label

Appearance

Average Size

Yes

Good

Lg to XLg

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WTF DO I DO WITH 4Earth Farms™ Organic Brussels Sprouts?

{ what the fork }



ROASTED BRUSSELS AND BUTTERNUT SQUASH SALAD

INGREDIENTS

ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

3 cups 4Earth Farms™ Organic Brussels Sprouts, ends trimmed and halved
3 tbsp olive oil
 Salt to taste

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH

1½ lb Butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cubed (about 4 cups of cubed squash)
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp maple syrup
½ tsp ground cinnamon

2 cups pecan halves
1 cup dried cranberries
 Maple syrup to taste

Prep Time: 20 min
Cook Time: 20 min
Servings: 6

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 400° F.
- 2 Toss halved 4Earth Farms Organic Brussels Sprouts in olive oil and salt. Roast in oven for about 20 minutes.
- 3 Toss cubed Butternut squash in olive oil, maple syrup, and cinnamon. Roast in oven for about 20 minutes.
- 4 In a large bowl, combine roasted Brussels sprouts, roasted cinnamon Butternut squash, cranberries, and lightly roasted pecans. Add some maple syrup and toss. Enjoy!

To learn more about 4Earth Farms™, visit www.4earthfarms.com



naturipe snacks

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A Q&A WITH STEVEN WARE, VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER OF VALUE ADDED, NATURIBE

By Melissa De Leon Chavez

A signature aspect I have always appreciated about fresh produce is how singular it is among the other options available in any given grocery store. Where some segments might give parameters, neat borders within which buyers and consumers alike can color and categorize cleanly, fresh produce will splash far outside the lines in disruptive patterns, bringing beauty and chaos. This, of course, is a double-edged sword. To be unique is to bend or have your own set of rules, and is often misunderstood, falsely categorized, or blatantly mismanaged—the Einsteins that failed school; the Steven Spielbergs turned away from dream universities; the Netflix concepts refused by Blockbuster. Sometimes, it's easier to be “normal.”

But, normal is not for the produce industry.

Showing these previously produce-adjacent departments the benefits of welcoming fresh into its fold, Naturipe is playing by a different set of rules. The team has introduced successful snacking and cross-category value-added items—in league with similar successes in fresh produce introductions—with eyes on a different prize: non-fresh-related departments.

With data, wiliness, and a sense of adventure when it comes to its partnerships, I sat down with Steven Ware to dig into shaking up this already dynamic category.

Q1



MELISSA DE LEON CHAVEZ: Steven, the Naturipe team and Naturipe Snacks continue to propel new opportunities for

how a berry item might be defined, and therefore sold. Can you tell me a bit about the power driving this and what retailers should know?



STEVEN WARE, Vice President and General Manager of Value Added, Naturipe: The success of Naturipe

Snacks comes from the power of the fresh berry category. Fresh berries are the largest segment in fresh fruit at over \$7.8 billion and growing in double-digits. We take the powerhouse that is fresh berries, wash them, then add in the perfect complementary components that are healthy and delightful with extended shelf-life. It is an exciting time to bring these products to market.

Q2

MDC: It sounds like the company is taking that step even further by recognizing not just the pairing options, but where shoppers are seeing them. Can you tell me about that?

SW: Yes, one of our key achievements thus far is how we have opened up new sales channels that have not historically seen a lot of fresh berries.

We are excited to be in the convenience stores arena as well as the drug store channel while maintaining our well-known, high-quality fresh offerings. We are diversifying our resources to further strengthen our position as an ideal supply partner and changing how our product is defined.



Q3

MDC: How do these new channels follow changes you have been seeing on the berry scene in recent years, and what can push those changes even further?

SW: Through consumer research, we have found that people love their berries and want to be able to enjoy them in even more ways. We created our Naturipe Snacks products to fill a demand gap in the market, and to help shoppers incorporate more berries into different parts of their lives. The ready-to-go snacks make it easier to have berries at breakfast, lunch, during school and work, after school, and even during holiday travel.

Q4

MDC: Coming off of back-to-school and going into the holidays, this seems like an especially great time for that! What are some creative ways retailers can capitalize on berries for fall and winter, especially Naturipe's growing snack offerings?

SW: Retailers can offer Naturipe Snacks as the shopper solution for staying energized with all the after-school activities and for the daily office grind.

Naturipe Snacks' product line includes bento boxes Boost Bentos™ and Bliss Bentos™, which offer a mix of nuts, cheeses, and, of course, Naturipe berries; Berry Parfaits, to make morning meals easier for everyone; and Smart Cups, the all-fruit cups in different flavor combinations that make great at-school snacks. These convenient snacks are perfect for families and those on the go this fall. With school

Q5

Fresh berries are the largest segment in fresh fruit at over \$7.8 billion and growing in double-digits. We take the powerhouse that is fresh berries, wash them, then add in the perfect complementary components...

STEVEN WARE, Vice President and General Manager of Value Added, Naturipe

in full swing and the upcoming holidays, everyone's schedules are jam-packed. Naturipe Snacks' line of products is healthy, filling, and convenient.

The time of year is no longer a reason for your shoppers not to enjoy healthy and delicious berries.

Q5

MDC: I continue to mentally adjust to the idea of these sweet fresh options even being an option this late in the year, so I imagine some retailers are too. What should buyers know about Naturipe's offerings amid the winter time frame?

SW: Naturipe Snacks are available year-round from our bicoastal production facilities, and our berries are farmed in the most optimal seasonal growing regions to ensure consistently high-quality products throughout the year. Additionally, Naturipe Snacks are available across the country, as our distribution continues to increase.

Whatever it takes is exactly what food innovation requires.



Libations

FOR ALL OCCASIONS:

FIGGY ME TIMBERS



By Chandler James

Climb aboard, mateys! Get ready for the ride of your life, because this is one libation sure to make you feel like you are navigating a real-life *Pirates of the Caribbean* adventure.

Sidle up to Jack Sparrow and his crew mates with a few sips of this Old Fashioned-inspired drink with a fresh produce twist. Okay, so maybe you don't need to don a menacing eyepatch to enjoy the spirited concoction, but it doesn't hurt!

Sure, you could take the easy route and buy some premade fig jam for this excursion, but why take the fun out of it?

I like to gather a couple handfuls of fresh figs and make my own jam to accompany the dangerously delicious drink. Top her off with some orange bitters, lemon juice, a twisted orange peel, and voilà! Let the fresh produce party begin.

Shoppers will be hooked once they see these fresh ingredients merchandised alongside their favorite Bourbon on store shelves. Or, who knows? Perhaps a similar recipe will grace the pages of foodservice menus one day. Either way, this is one libation fit for a pirate and sure to make any consumer say “Argh!” 🍷

INGREDIENTS

FIG JAM (MAKES ¾ CUP)

½ lb black figs
¼ cup sugar
⅓ cup water
1 tsp lemon juice
½ tsp vanilla extract

LIBATION

3 oz Bourbon
3 dashes orange bitters
1 tbsp fig jam
1 tsp lemon juice
1 orange

Prep Time: 5 min
Cook Time: 5 min
Servings: 1 drink

DIRECTIONS

1. First, make the fig jam. Destem the figs and place into a food processor. Pulse until a chunky paste forms.
2. Add the paste to a pot and add in sugar, water, and lemon juice. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to medium. Simmer until mixture reaches jam-like consistency and remove from heat. Add vanilla extract to the mixture and store in an airtight container.
3. To make the libation, fill a cocktail shaker with ice and add in all ingredients. Cover the shaker and shake for 15 seconds.
4. Fill an Old Fashioned glass with ice and strain in the cocktail mixture. Garnish with a thin orange slice and serve.



Photography by Craig Wheeler

WTF DO I DO WITH Shuman Farms RealSweet® Sweet Onions?

{ what the fork }



PUMPKIN AND SWEET ONION SALSA

INGREDIENTS

1 medium RealSweet® Sweet Onion, diced
1 red onion, diced
2 Sugar pumpkins, chopped and blanched
2 large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
2 jalapeño peppers, diced small (remove seeds for less heat)
1 clove garlic, minced
1½ tbsp brown sugar
½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped fine
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 bag tortilla chips
 Salt to taste

Prep Time: 20 min
Cook Time: 3 min
Servings: 10

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Blanch chopped pumpkin in boiling water for 3 minutes. Remove from water. When cooled, place on paper towel for 2 minutes to get excess water out. Salt lightly.
- 2 Combine all ingredients, drizzle with the olive oil, and salt to taste. Cover and let sit out at room temperature for 2 hours. Serve with tortilla chips or refrigerate until ready to use. Enjoy!

To learn more about Shuman Farms, visit www.shumanfarmsga.com



ALWAYS on the RISE

A Q&A With Rick Bravo, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Ocean Mist® Farms

By Peggy Packer

I have long been a fan of sunrises. In my hometown of Phoenix, Arizona, the start and end of each day are marked by the most exquisite fusion of red, orange, pink, purple, and yellow hues. This could be why I often find my eyes to the sky, scanning for whatever may be waiting on the horizon.

There is something extremely promising about always looking toward the future, even if you don't know what the universe is gearing up to send your way. In the fresh produce segment, there is an added level of excitement when gazing ahead. If we consider the passion and dedication of those within our industry, the only thing we can be sure of about the future is that it will bring more innovation, development, and overall growth.

Among the joys of being a trade news writer in the fresh arena is the chance to sit on the precipice of industry advancements, joining supply-side aficionados to explore the produce world's next phase of progression—one product, program, or strategy at a time.

If not made obvious over multiple paragraphs boasting my affinity for seeing into the future, this writer has been let in on a little secret. A conversation with Ocean Mist® Farms' Rick Bravo, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, revealed a trio of additions to the Castroville, California-based grower's product selection, and Rick was feeling generous enough to divulge some of the details.

Join me in, once again, looking to the horizon. You just may discover the next greatest sales boon.

Q1



**PEGGY
PACKER:**

Rick, one of the coolest parts of my job is getting a sneak peek at some of the inventive new products soon to hit the produce department. So, tell me, what upcoming releases does Ocean Mist Farms have in store for the retail sector, and when are they set to officially land on store shelves?



We are gearing up to launch our new 32 oz value-added packages of broccoli florets, vegetable medley, and Brussels sprouts. The main benefit of these fresh-cut items is the larger pack size they come in. These products are more conducive to larger-portion recipes that are better suited for special occasions, bigger households, and families who typically consume a lot of vegetables. During key selling seasons when we know shoppers are feeding large crowds, these items also provide a fantastic home-meal-prep solution.

This is perfect as we expect our first cases to be shipping out in November 2022, just in time for the holiday cooking rush. We will also be highlighting these new items during the International Fresh Produce Association's Global Produce & Floral Show, giving attendees a closer look at what they have to offer.

Q2

PP: As a consumer who is always looking to save as much time as possible, especially around the holidays, this launch definitely makes my ears perk up. How long have these value-added offerings been in development, and how can they help retailers meet the current needs of the market?

RB: Ocean Mist Farms has been working with our retail partners over the last year to determine what value-added solutions would bring the most benefit to them and, ultimately, their shoppers. As we are all aware, the pandemic created additional challenges for bringing new products to market as retailers' attention turned to current inventory management and overarching supply chain concerns. Through it all, we've remained focused on learning what innovative solutions can benefit our customers and working to bring those solutions to life.

Q3

PP: While the pandemic has continued to have various impacts on retail operations and the overall supply chain, it seems to have also been a driving force in changing consumer buying behaviors. As consumer and retail demands continue to diversify, what shopper trends encouraged Ocean Mist Farms to pursue this strategic portfolio expansion?

RB: As with all industries, the tightening of the labor force required many of our customers to seek alternative solutions in their stores. Our larger, value-added pack sizes are a huge benefit to families where convenient, on-the-go meal solutions are top of mind and meet trending shopper needs.

These newly added items are also Ocean Mist Farms' way of further tapping into the opportunity of the value-added sector. It's no secret that the value-added category continues to see growth.

One data point that comes to mind is from Future Market Insights' recently released *Power of Produce 2022* report,



Q4

PP: In addition to offering much-desired convenience to busy shoppers, I know these products promote an array of unique merchandising opportunities. Do you have any retail tips to share? How can these products be merchandised to ensure high sales and category growth?

RB: There are so many different opportunities for merchandising Ocean Mist Farms' versatile, value-added products. The broccoli florets, Brussels sprouts, and vegetable medley can all be merchandised alongside complementary vegetable seasonings or sauces to offer up a full side dish option.

To make the purchase even easier on shoppers, we also encourage cross-merchandising these items with various proteins that can help consumers find a complete meal solution. With these products, retailers have a great opportunity to seize more sales across multiple departments, further maximizing the potential of the fresh produce department.

Q5

PP: All of these exclusive insights definitely have me counting down to the month of November! I know these three new additions are just a few of the many components of Ocean Mist Farms' unceasing portfolio growth. As a fresh produce supplier with nearly a century of experience, I'd love to know, how has the company's lineup developed and flourished since it was first founded?

RB: Ocean Mist Farms is deeply rooted in artichoke production; that's how we got our start almost 100 years ago. By the early 1930s, we had started growing broccoli, and during the 1950s and '60s,

we expanded our farming to include fava beans, English peas, Cardone, cabbage, and fennel. By the '80s, our portfolio had already grown to include asparagus, cauliflower, celery, green onions, leeks, Iceberg lettuce, mixed lettuce, and rapini.

Over the years, we have continued to add new offerings for our customers such as organic products, fresh-cut vegetables, and even our award-winning microwavable Season & Steam packaging technology that allows shoppers to season their vegetables and reseat the package prior to cooking for a completely customized meal solution.

Today, Ocean Mist Farms' product line includes over 30 fresh vegetable items. We remain the largest grower of fresh artichokes in North America, and one of the largest growers of Brussels sprouts and spinach in the United States.


Q6

PP: Now that you've given me a look at the supplier's long-standing history, let's talk about what else Ocean Mist Farms has up its sleeve moving forward. What will be some vital areas of focus as the company eyes future growth and achievement?

RB: As shoppers continue to seek more time-saving solutions both outside and inside the kitchen, Ocean Mist Farms wants to be a brand that supports that need. We are always exploring new value-added vegetable concepts as well as fresh meal products. It's important that we work with our retail partners to identify what their most relevant needs are at the time, and we focus our attention on those aspects so our resources remain invested in developing the most timely solutions.



Though we can never be too sure about what each day may bring until it arrives, our industry's constant elevation is dependent upon fresh produce trailblazers' willingness to always look toward the future.

Ocean Mist Farms is thinking about the demands of today, tomorrow, and beyond to guarantee not only its success, but that of its partners. Just as the sun rises every single day to give the Earth exactly what it needs, so, too, does Ocean Mist Farms, continuously planting the seeds for the next era of industry evolution. 



WTF DO I DO WITH Lipman Family Farms® Greenhouse Roma Tomatoes?

{ what the fork }



CREAMY TOMATO PUMPKIN PASTA SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

5 Lipman Family Farms® Roma Tomatoes, roughly chopped
2 tbsp olive oil
1 large white onion, roughly chopped
5 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
½ cup pumpkin purée

1 tbsp sea salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tbsp basil spice
1 tsp cinnamon spice
½ tsp clove spice
¼ tsp red pepper chili flakes

Fresh basil leaves for garnish

Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 25 min
Servings: 2 (with pasta)

DIRECTIONS

- 1** Into a large saucepan, add all your ingredients apart from the fresh basil.
- 2** Simmer on low heat for 25 minutes with the lid on. Stir occasionally to avoid burning.
- 3** Blend in a high-speed blender.
- 4** Serve with pasta of your choice and garnish with fresh basil leaves. Enjoy!

To learn more about Lipman Family Farms®, visit www.lipmanfamilyfarms.com




A Closer Look at West Pak Avocado Party Pak

By Lilian Diep

It's not no party like a West Pak party, 'cause a West Pak party don't stop. Your shoppers will be put in an instant celebratory mood when they spy these colorful, distinct bags and realize West Pak Avocado's Party Pak is available year-round.

Shining brightly in an array of colors with scannable QR code recipes on the back befitting each season, these new Party Paks are geared toward several different eating occasions for each quarter, such as Viva la Fiesta, Grilling Gatherings, and Healthy Happenings.

As we ease into the last quarter of the year, your shoppers will be put in a festive mood with the aptly gold-themed design of Holiday Goodness. The larger pieces of fruit are perfect for entertaining, feeding a bigger family, or simply for enjoying, making shoppers sing praises up and down the aisle as they gather other components to finish their meal planning.

Keep it funky with West Pak, and your shoppers will dance through your registers with these bags in tow. 

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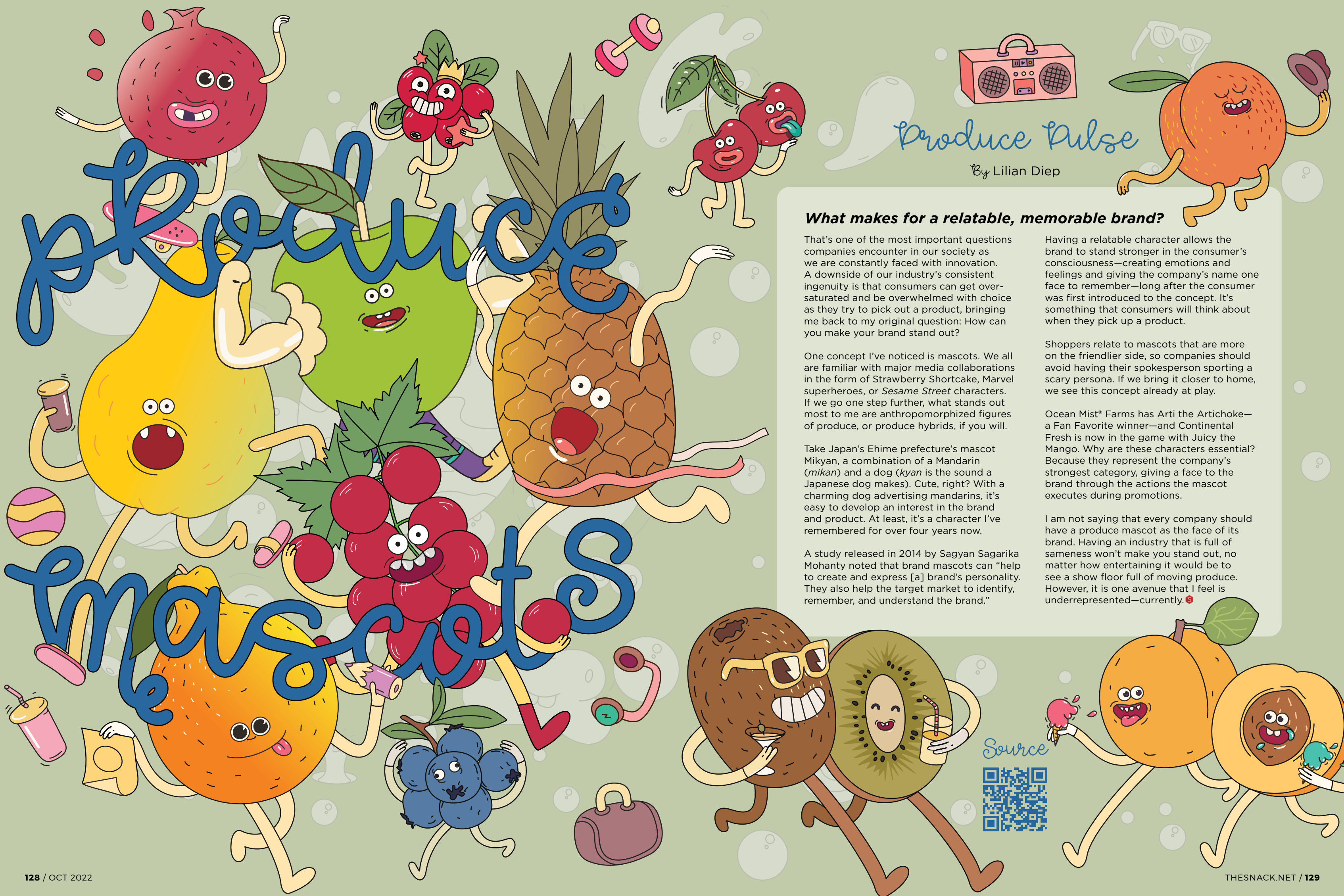
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Produce Pulse

By Lilian Diep

What makes for a relatable, memorable brand?

That's one of the most important questions companies encounter in our society as we are constantly faced with innovation. A downside of our industry's consistent ingenuity is that consumers can get over-saturated and be overwhelmed with choice as they try to pick out a product, bringing me back to my original question: How can you make your brand stand out?

One concept I've noticed is mascots. We all are familiar with major media collaborations in the form of Strawberry Shortcake, Marvel superheroes, or *Sesame Street* characters. If we go one step further, what stands out most to me are anthropomorphized figures of produce, or produce hybrids, if you will.

Take Japan's Ehime prefecture's mascot Mikyan, a combination of a Mandarin (*mikan*) and a dog (*kyan* is the sound a Japanese dog makes). Cute, right? With a charming dog advertising mandarins, it's easy to develop an interest in the brand and product. At least, it's a character I've remembered for over four years now.

A study released in 2014 by Sagyan Sagarika Mohanty noted that brand mascots can "help to create and express [a] brand's personality. They also help the target market to identify, remember, and understand the brand."

Having a relatable character allows the brand to stand stronger in the consumer's consciousness—creating emotions and feelings and giving the company's name one face to remember—long after the consumer was first introduced to the concept. It's something that consumers will think about when they pick up a product.

Shoppers relate to mascots that are more on the friendlier side, so companies should avoid having their spokesperson sporting a scary persona. If we bring it closer to home, we see this concept already at play.

Ocean Mist® Farms has Arti the Artichoke—a Fan Favorite winner—and Continental Fresh is now in the game with Juicy the Mango. Why are these characters essential? Because they represent the company's strongest category, giving a face to the brand through the actions the mascot executes during promotions.

I am not saying that every company should have a produce mascot as the face of its brand. Having an industry that is full of sameness won't make you stand out, no matter how entertaining it would be to see a show floor full of moving produce. However, it is one avenue that I feel is underrepresented—currently. 🍌

Source



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