HILLTOP

Issue #7 Fall/Winter 2014/15

ready, set, GRADE

two wheel transportation

rushing river pears

the fresh center

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fromtheeditor

Dear Readers,

As I write this letter, we're in the midst of another great apple and pear harvest here in Washington State. Conditions have been very favorable for us throughout the growing season, and the state expects to harvest a record apple crop filled with fruit in the right size profile, color range, and with great eating qualities. Though the pear crop won't break any records, we are excited about the quality of pears coming off the tree and the promotional opportunities available through our newly introduced Rushing Rivers pear program.

I'm also very excited about the introduction of the Greefa apple packing line at our Olds Station facility. The commit-to-pack line features one of the world's longest sizers and the newest generation of internal and external electronic defect sorting, which enables us to reduce manual sorting, and deliver great consistency in every box.

Right above that packing line sits our new office building, The Fresh Center. We brought our headquarters back to Olds Station in late April and have really enjoyed making it home over the past few months. You can read more about the unique features of the office building in this issue.

As we near the end of our 50th year anniversary, I can't help but look towards the next 50 years at Stemilt. We've come a long way in a short time and with this ever-changing industry, have much to be excited about in the years to come. As always, we appreciate your business and support in helping make our fruits world famous!

Onward,

West Mathison
President
Stemilt Growers

HILLTOP

Editor West Mathison
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Hilltop is a bi-annual publication dedicated to fresh fruit growing, packing, marketing, and merchandising.

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onthecover

Rushing Rivers Pears

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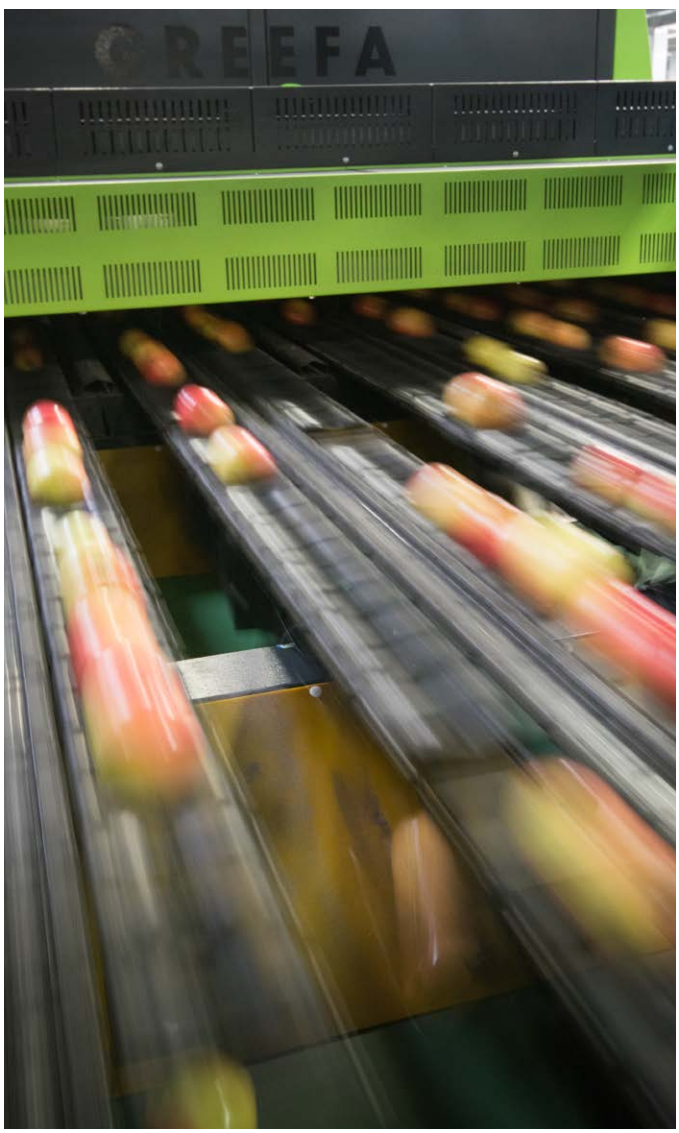
ready, set, GRADE

The next generation of apple packing technology has arrived at Stemilt, and with it, one of the longest apple sizers in the world.

The company unveiled a new, high-tech apple line at its Olds Station facility in early September following four months of construction. The new line features the latest generation of external defect sorting (iQs IV) and internal quality sorting (iFA GeoSort) from Greefa and a long, gentle sizer with 79 drop points to pack apples gently and with great consistency.

"We're excited about the addition of our new Greefa commit-to-pack line at Olds Station," said Jay Fulbright, VP of operations and special projects at Stemilt. "The line relies on electronic, or optic, sizing and defect sorting technology to reduce manual sorting of fruit and human error. The technology is able to efficiently and gently size and sort apples and will help us deliver great consistency in every box."

> "Consumers buy fruit with their eyes and the rise and popularity in bi-colored apples has created the need for us to do a better color sorting job. Greefa's grading technology gives us a 3D look at the apple."



Stemilt's operations team led the construction of the capital project, which began with completely clearing out the room the existing commit-to-pack line was housed in. Starting with a blank slate allowed for the installation of the long Greefa sizer – which is nearly the length of a football field.

"It just keeps going and going," said Fulbright. "The benefit of having one of the longest apple sizers in the world is having so many drop points for the fruit. We have the flexibility to pack multiple sizes and grades and also reduce the number of touches to the fruit, which is important in maintaining a high quality pack."

The new apple packing line uses similar technology as the electronic cherry packing lines Stemilt has recently invested heavily in. Apples move along the Greefa sizer through the "brains" of the line, where HD cameras rapidly take up to 60 images of each piece of fruit while it rotates. The images are analyzed by computer software and the apple is accurately sorted according to its size, color, and internal and external quality or defects. Apples that don't meet standards are rerouted to a downgrade sizer and additional sorting, while apples that continue down the line are packed into trays or bags.

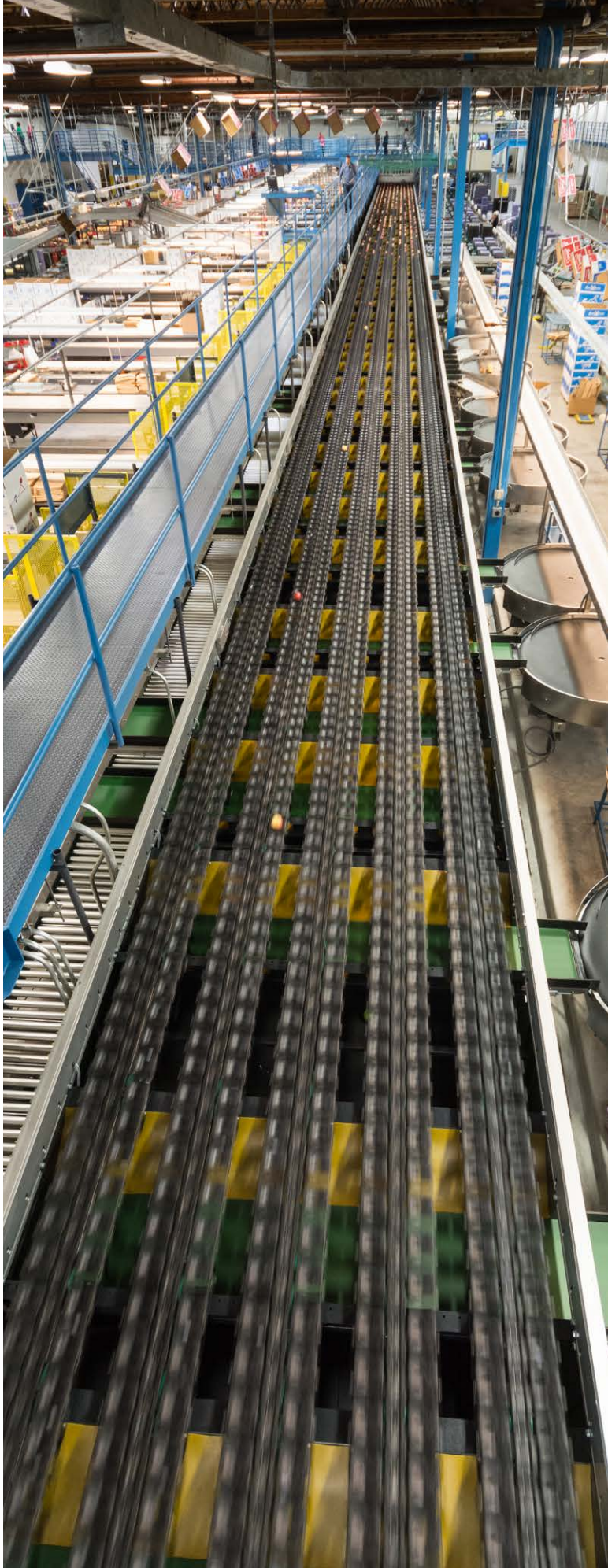
Using Greefa's iFA GeoSort grader, Stemilt can get an accurate reading on the internal characteristics and Brix value of each apple. "Sometimes an apple can look great from the outside but have internal issues," said Fulbright. "The technology on this line easily identifies and sorts out fruit with heavy watercore and internal browning."

The line uses iQs IV external defect sorting technology to look at the outside of the apple. It recognizes and removes the stem and calyx ends of the fruit from the results, and allows high resolution cameras to pinpoint even the smallest external defects, including russet, hail, and bruising.

Using optics to sort apples is not new technology, but the ability to sort for external color and do it well is relatively new, said Fulbright. "Consumers buy fruit with their eyes and the rise and popularity in bi-colored apples has created the need for us to do a better color sorting job. Greefa's grading technology gives us a 3D look at the apple. The multitude of images the software analyzes results in accurate sorting," he added.

Stemilt will use the new Greefa apple line primarily for conventional apples, while the company's neighboring Euclid Street facility has a dedicated organic apple line. In addition to prepping for the construction of the Greefa line and overseeing the installation of two electronic cherry lines, Stemilt's operations team spent time last spring upgrading the Euclid Street A line with a Compac defect sorter.

"The addition at Euclid and the new line at Olds makes it possible for us to sort all of our apples electronically. We can reduce labor costs and simultaneously deliver a consistent, high-quality pack. This helps in our overall goal of improving the consumer experience, building demand for our fruits, and delivering greater returns to our growers," Fulbright said.



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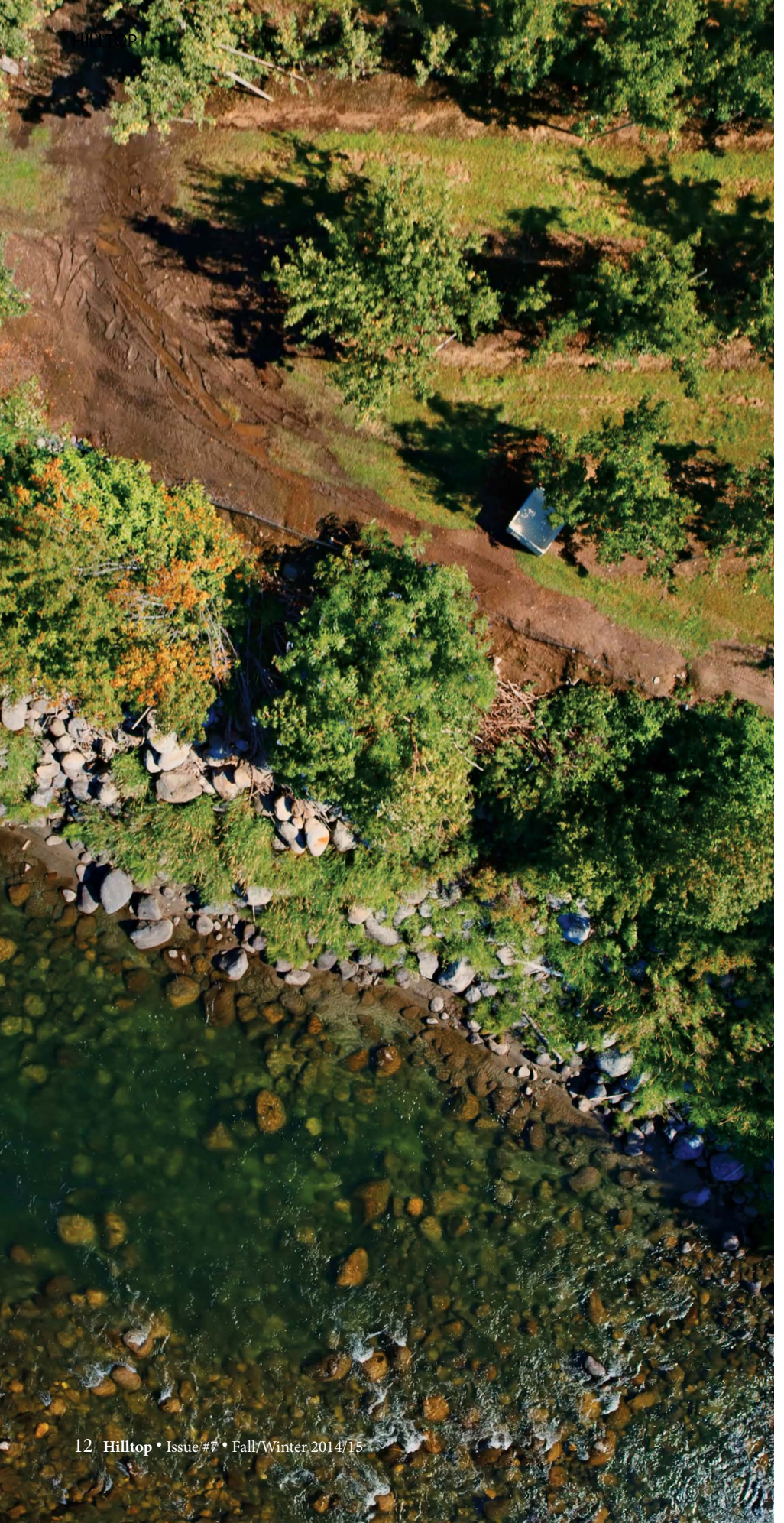
introducing:

According to a recent research study by Sullivan, Higdon & Sink called FoodThink, two out of three consumers want to know more about where their food comes from. Stemilt is fulfilling that wish with the introduction of a new label for its pears, called Rushing Rivers. The new label highlights the company's industry leading position growing and packing pears in the world's two renowned pear locales, the Wenatchee River Valley and Entiat River Valley in Washington State.

Stemilt started packing pears in a new Rushing Rivers carton at the start of the season in August. The white box features the Rushing Rivers logo and tagline "the best pear locales in the world" along with a short story that tells consumers where the pears inside the box came from and how they were grown.



"Consumers are looking for transparency when it comes to food and fruit, and our pears have a special story to tell," said Stemilt marketing director Roger Pepperl. "Rushing Rivers pears are born and raised in the premier growing grounds for pears, where the combination of alpine mountains, clean rivers, and fertile soils creates the perfect environment for growing clean, high-quality, and dessert flavored pears."

The Wenatchee River Valley and Entiat River Valley run parallel of each other, separated by the peaks of the Cascade Mountain range. Stemilt and its long-time pear partners, Peshastin Hi-Up Growers, a leading growers cooperative, have been farming pears in these river valleys for decades.

"Pears are right at home in these two valleys," said Pepperl. "The hillsides protect our trees from the heat of the summer, keeping delicate pears cool and comfortable. Clean air draws down from the mountains through the orchards to keep air flowing through each tree, which results in cleaner fruit. And the rivers in these locales are both recharged each spring by fresh mountain snowpack, delivering plentiful and pure water sources for our pears."

Stemilt and Hi-Up's presence in these two pear regions extends beyond their orchards. Each company has its own state-of-the-art pear facility located in the region for packing all of Stemilt's Rushing Rivers pears. Hi-Up has two modern packing lines located in Peshastin, WA and Stemilt's Miller Street facility in Wenatchee, WA features two updated packing lines and ThermalTech Tarpless® ripening rooms for delivering ready-to-eat pears.

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Wenatchee River Valley

> “Our pear locales – the Wenatchee and Entiat River Valleys – are to pears what California’s Napa Valley is to wine.”

“We grow, pack, and ship pears right in these famous pear districts. Stemilt and Hi-Up’s strong alignment on pears gives us great packing flexibility and allows us to deliver fresh, flavorful pears to your stores most months of the year,” said Pepperl.

Stemilt has already started to tell consumers the story behind Rushing Rivers pears, and is encouraging retailers to do the same at the store level. The company has a Rushing Rivers page on its website with a video that tells the story of the famous pear locales and Stemilt’s rich heritage of farming pears there.

“Our pear locales – the Wenatchee and Entiat River Valleys – are to pears what California’s Napa Valley is to wine. Telling consumers this story, building displays around Rushing Rivers, and delivering a premium eating experience through the quality of our pears is a great way to build sales and repeat purchases around pears this season and beyond,” said Pepperl.

Entiat River Valley

Pear, Bavarian Blue Cheese, Radicchio & Fennel Pizzettes

Full of savory-sweet flavor you will love to bite into.

Ingredients

16 ounces fresh pizza dough
All-purpose flour, to prep work surface
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 small head radicchio, damaged outer leaves removed, halved, small core removed, thinly sliced (about 2 cups, loosely packed)
½ large onion, thinly sliced (about 2 cups, loosely packed)
1 large fennel bulb, fronds and stems removed, quartered and woody center removed, thinly sliced (about 2 cups, loosely packed)
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon granulated sugar
Canola oil spray, to prep grill
2 tablespoons canola oil, to brush dough
4 ounces blue cheese, roughly chopped
3 Stemilt pears, quartered, cored, stem removed, thinly sliced
fresh ground black pepper
2 cups fresh arugula, loosely packed (or more, as preferred)

Procedure

30 to 45 minutes prior to beginning: Remove pizza dough from fridge. Place on lightly floured work surface, cut into quarters; shape each quarter into a rough ball and let come to room temp.

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and fennel to skillet; cook, stirring intermittently, until onion is translucent and slightly golden; about 10 to 12 minutes. Add radicchio, salt and sugar to onion mixture; stir well to combine, cooking for another 3 to 4 minutes. Set aside.

Shaping pizzettes: Working one quarter of dough at a time, pinch dough into a flat circle/round shape using tips of fingers, rotating dough as you work and allowing opposite end of where you are holding dough to hang down (letting gravity assist you in creating shape). Continue pinching and rotating dough until it stretches to an approximate 7-inch round. (Place round over a closed fist, using other hand to pull edges and shape to help thin center of dough, if needed.) Once each quarter of dough is shaped to size, spray large rectangular cast iron grill generously with canola oil spray and heat grill on stovetop over medium high heat. Working with two pizzettes at a time, brush tops lightly with canola oil and place each on grill, oil-side down; then brush up-facing sides with canola oil. Cook until bottoms begin to brown, about 4 to 6 minutes; then turn over. Then dot each pizzette with ¼ portion of the blue cheese; top with approximately 1 ½ cups of onion mixture; then arrange 6 to 8 slices of pear on top of onion mixture. Continue cooking pizzettes, until cheese softens (it will continue to melt once pulled off heat) for approximately another 3 to 5 minutes; then transfer to serving platter. Prep and cook 2 remaining pizzettes in same fashion. When done, transfer final 2 pizzettes to serving platter; season each pizzette with freshly ground pepper and top each with approximately ½ cup fresh arugula. Serve immediately.

Nutritional Information (per serving)
Per Serving: Calories 588.8 (46% from fat); Fat 30.1g (sat 8.1g, poly 3.6g, mono 11.6g); Protein 15.4g; Carbohydrates 66.5g; Fiber 11.1g; Sugar 4.9g; Cholesterol 25.2mg; Potassium 280.7mg; Sodium 975.5mg.

Makes 4 individual pizzettes (approx. 7-inch diameter)

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two wheel transportation

It began as a way for one employee to exercise regularly but quickly turned into a sustainable transportation solution that saves Stemilt's Quality Control department time and money while simultaneously promoting employee health.

A few years ago, Stemilt's QC and inventory supervisor Sal Ponce began biking to work along Wenatchee's popular Apple Capital Loop Trail for exercise. What started as a trial quickly turned into a habit and Sal found himself biking to work most days of the week and taking the long way home in order to pedal just a few more miles. Little did he know, this newfound hobby would soon turn into a reliable, resourceful, and efficient means of transportation for the department he worked in.

The employees of Stemilt's QC department started using bikes as their primary means of transportation last year during harvest. They pedal ½ mile out to the receiving area at the company's Olds Station facility to collect apple samples from bins that were just brought in from orchards. Then, back on the bike they go, pedaling another ½ mile to the QC lab where they run a variety of tests to determine the quality and storage potential of the fruit in question. Fifteen employees share three bikes, and together the department travels 40-plus miles a day collecting samples. The bikes are used daily from June through early November, and though not formally calculated, annual mileage is in the ballpark of 4,400-plus miles.

> "In QC, we're always looking to improve what we do, and the use of bikes as a mode of transportation has elevated our ability to collect and process samples during harvest."

Sal was the mastermind behind the idea of using bikes instead of vehicles to collect fruit samples. Before bikes, the group shared a truck, which many times would be on another trip when it was needed for a sample collection run. Using a truck for short trips also led to increased vehicle wear and tear and, of course, added fuel costs.

"In QC, we're always looking to improve what we do, and the use of bikes as a mode of transportation has elevated our ability to collect and process samples during harvest," said Sal. "It's efficient, very low cost, and once all of the employees bought into it, became a great benefit of the job."

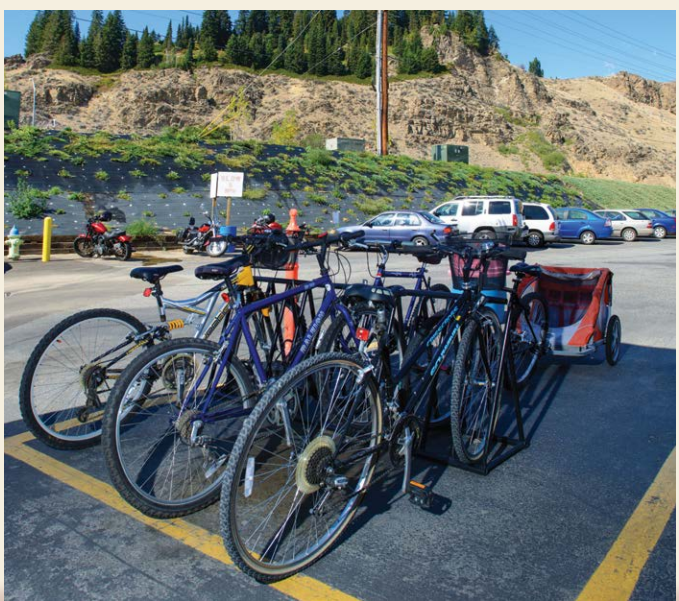
To implement the bike program, Sal worked with the safety department to get vests, helmets, and bells that serve to alert forklift drivers and prevent accidents. He purchased used bikes from a local bike shop, each one costing less than a tank of gas did in the QC department's truck. Most flats and tune jobs are done by Sal and another employee who understand the mechanics of bikes, further driving the overall cost of the bikes down.

"Once we started using the bikes, we realized a trailer would come in handy for large sample runs and so we added one of those," Sal noted. "I also found a used bike rack and negotiated a trade with the bike shop owner for a little cash, and a box of our Sweetheart cherries."

Costs aside, the use of bikes has made the department more efficient, and according to Sal, QC collects far more samples today than they did a few seasons ago. And, let's not forget about the most important benefit using bikes has had: increased employee health and well-being.

As inventory supervisor Laura Cannasso hops onto a bike to collect samples, she mentions how the addition of biking at work has helped build strength in her knee after surgery. Other employees use the bikes to aid in their weight loss journey. And a few have even started biking to and from work to log additional miles.

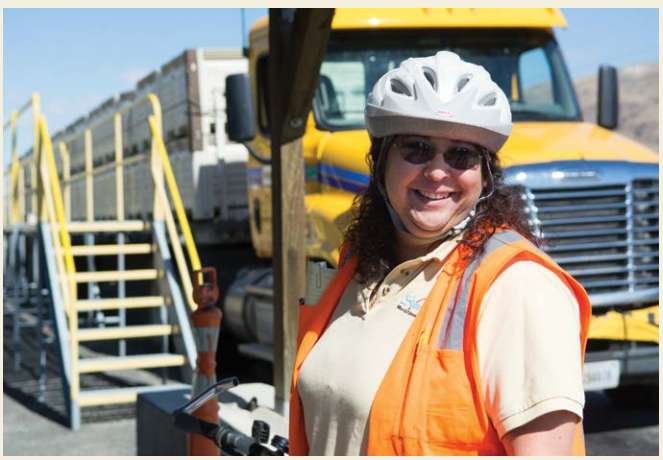
"This program has lots of positives and it's neat to see it take off like it has," said Sal. "It's caught on among our R&D and QA team, and bikes are also being used at our Miller Street and Ward Street receiving locations. Hopefully, it continues to work and we can add more bikes in the future."



Sal estimates that the transition to bikes for sampling has reduced the QC department's truck mileage by 100 miles a week, reducing fuel usage and vehicle wear and tear. Most importantly, it leaves vehicles available for more important uses, including longer trips between facilities.

With environmental, economic, and social benefits, the use of bikes by Stemilt's QC department is a great example of the company's Responsible Choice program in action. Reusing paper and relying on outdated packaging to collect samples are other ways the resourceful QC department is setting a great example for the entire company to follow.

"Little things like this add up in the long term and that is what sustainability is all about," said Sal. "But most importantly, it's been something that the entire QC department has gotten behind, become known for, and had some fun with."



THE *Fresh* CENTER

For some it's brand new and for others it's coming home to the place their career, and Stemilt Growers, really took off. In late April, Stemilt moved its headquarters back to its Olds Station facility in Wenatchee, and unveiled a new, open concept office building and cafe that encourages teamwork and camaraderie between employees and departments.

Stemilt's headquarters opened at Olds Station in 1975, but moved one mile away to Ohme Garden Rd. in 1996 after the administrative team had outgrown its original office spaces. According to Stemilt president, West Mathison, it wasn't planned, but seems fitting that the return to the spot that put the company on the map came during the year it's celebrating its 50th anniversary.

"When my grandfather and Stemilt founder, Tom Mathison, moved Stemilt's headquarters from Stemilt Hill to Olds Station in 1975, it was a really big deal. His foresight to position our headquarters along the highway laid the groundwork for Stemilt to become a leading supplier of tree fruits from Washington State. It's great being back home at Olds Station. We are enjoying the benefits of having most of our administrative team under one roof, just steps away from all the action that comes with packing and shipping fruit," said Mathison.

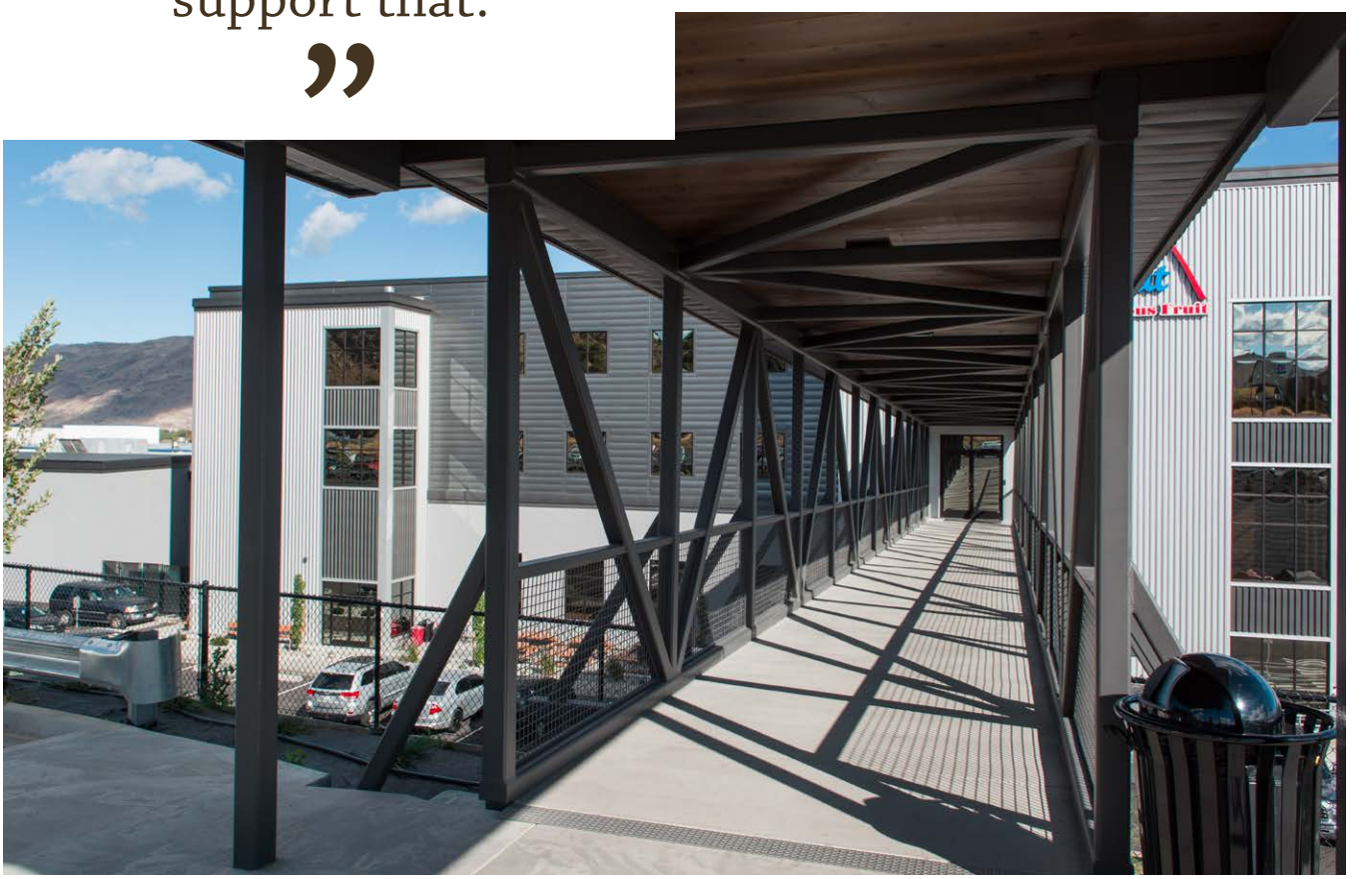
After the sale of its Ohme Garden office building, Stemilt drew up plans for what would become The Fresh Center. The goal was simple - create an open environment to encourage more face-to-face communication and team collaboration.

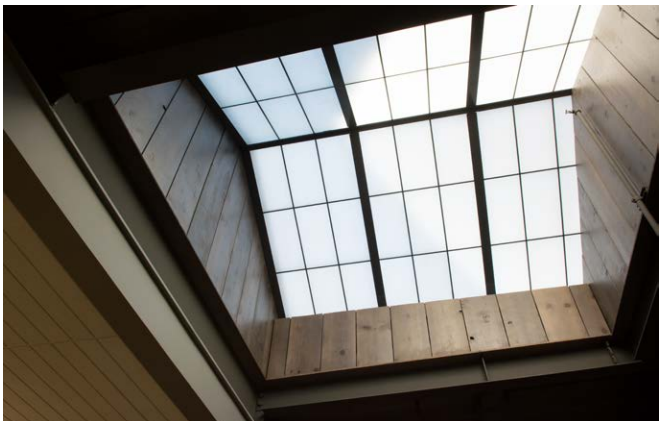
"In an industry like ours, you are only as strong as your weakest link. We are focused on creating a culture that encourages communication across our teams and the new office was designed to create an environment to support that," said Mathison.

The Fresh Center is a three-story building filled with desks and offices, creatively named meeting rooms, and plenty of coffee stations to fuel the 125-plus employees that work in the building each day. The building also has some unique "green" features that fall in line with the company's commitment to sustainability through the Responsible Choice program.

A covered walkway takes you into the main entrance of the building, where you can then go one of three directions. Walk straight onto the Pear Floor to find West and other family offices, the fieldstaff, Stemilt Ag Services, information technology, procurement, operations and human resources. Walk up two flights of stairs to the Cherry Floor to find sales, marketing, and accounting, or head all the way down to the Apple Floor where the Stemilt Café serves hot breakfast and lunch every day and a large conference room is available for group meetings and presentations.

> “We are focused on creating a culture that encourages communication across our teams and the new office was designed to create an environment to support that.”



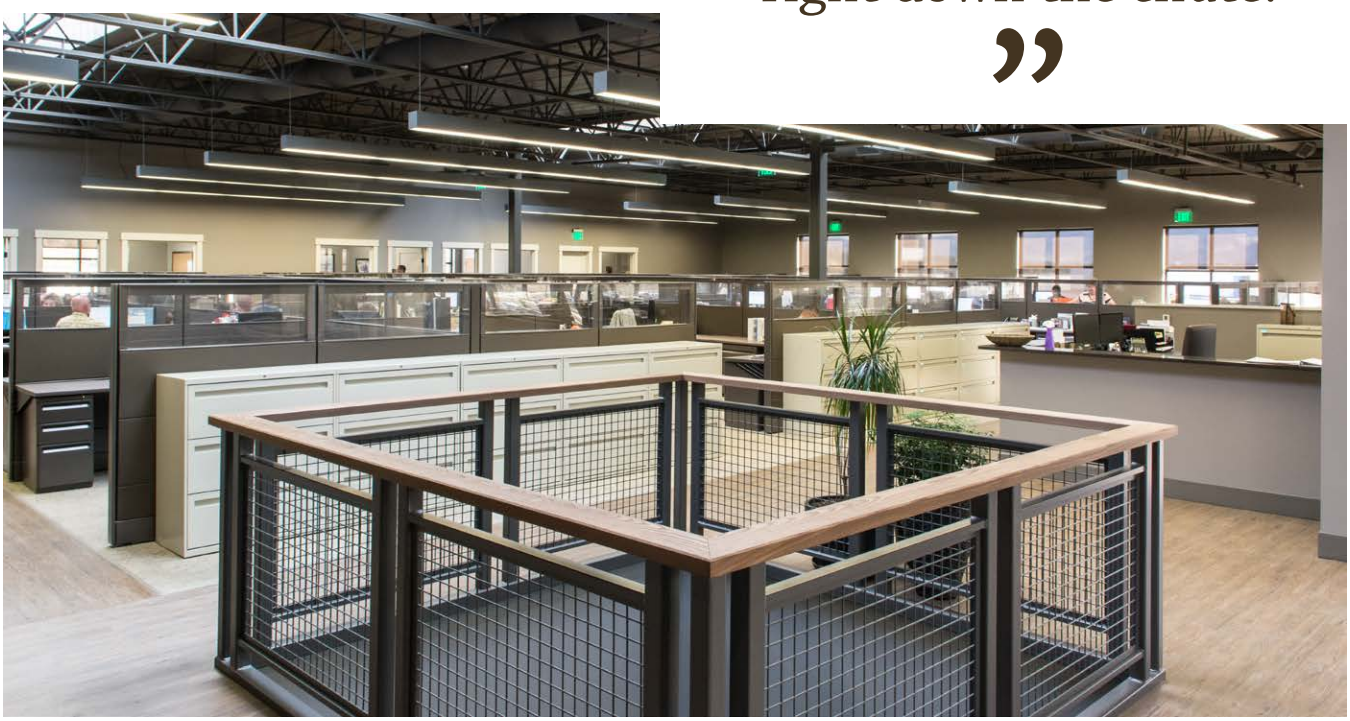


Throughout the Pear and Cherry Floors are meeting rooms of various sizes, each creatively named to represent the department that resides close by. The Bloom Room, for instance, is a likely spot for the fieldstaff to hold meetings, while the Tech Farm and Balance Room are perfect for huddles among I.T. or Accounting team members.

"We had a lot of fun naming the rooms, the floors, and the building itself," said Mathison. "Each place has a purpose, and it's another way to encourage open communication. It's hard not to think about the next big thing when you step into the Think Tank, or focus on sales when you are in the Barter Box."

The sustainable-minded company also brought green building attributes into the office. Reclaimed wood lines the ceiling on the Cherry Floor, lighting is motion centered throughout the building to maximize energy efficiency, and plastic water coolers have been replaced by permanent in-line water filtration systems at each coffee station.

> "We also installed recycling chutes to make paper recycling easy and keep our recycling program going strong. Just like you would with laundry in a home, the paper goes right down the chute."



"We also installed recycling chutes to make paper recycling easy and keep our recycling program going strong. Just like you would with laundry in a home, the paper goes right down the chute," said Mathison. "Then, we send the paper down the road to our local fiber tray manufacturer and they regenerate it into fiber trays that we use in apple and pear packing. It's a great example of our Responsible Choice program in action."

Perhaps the most exciting addition to new office space is the Stemilt Café located on the Apple Floor. Employees are able to purchase low-cost meals (breakfast and lunch) during the work week, or enjoy the lunch they brought from home. Large TV monitors surround the industrial kitchen and tables to inform everyone of what's on the menu, important company information, and to celebrate employee awards and accomplishments.

"Our goal with the Stemilt Café was to create a place where employees from the entire building could take a break from work, enjoy a meal, and interact with people from other areas in the company that they might otherwise miss out on chatting with," said Mathison. "It's just another way The Fresh Center is helping us on our journey to build a strong team culture."

By Brianna Shales

face-to-face with Tate Mathison

This is part of a new Hilltop series that will introduce you to the many great people that help make Stemilt "go" day in and day out. Tate Mathison was recently promoted to Director of Sales at Stemilt and so I sat down with him to chat about the path that led him to this new role and what he's most looking forward to when it comes to the future of Stemilt.

Stemilt
World Famous Fruit

> “Produce is the last business where you deal almost entirely in verbal contracts. Your word matters. Even today, I covet those words.”

Brianna: Tate, share with Hilltop readers how you got your start at Stemilt. What was your first job?

Tate: I guess you could say I was born to work at Stemilt. My grandfather, Tom Mathison, founded the company and our childhood was very much centered on fruit and farming. I was about 7 when my dad, Kyle Mathison, tasked me with my first job. I had to pick up rocks to prep for a new orchard road he was putting in. My older brother, West, and I would toss the rocks to the side of where the road was going and get paid $1.00 per hour for our efforts (although West always seemed to make more because he was older).

Brianna: How about the worst job you've ever had?

Tate: No question there, it had to be hand thinning Asian pears. It was tedious, hard work that I absolutely dreaded.

Brianna: What orchard jobs were most appealing to you?

Tate: After spending a lot of time on jobs like weeding and field sorting cherries, I couldn't wait to move beyond hard labor to operating machinery! Finally by 6th grade, I was deemed old enough to drive equipment. I did what they used to call “swamp” cherries, which isn't really in practice anymore. My job was to drive the tractor and move two 30 pound lugs of cherries into bins. It was great!

Brianna: How did your responsibilities change as you moved into high school and college?

Tate: Cherry harvest became intense all of a sudden when I moved into a crew boss role in high school. I was in charge of a tractor and entire crew of people. Over time, this led to helping my dad manage his harvest. My summer breaks in college were spent hiring pickers, delivering Stemilt Hill's harvest estimates to the Stemilt warehouse, and determining where we were going to pick next.

Brianna: Tell readers more about your college experience and how that prepared you for a career in fruit sales.

Tate: I went to Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA where I studied Business Administration with a heavy emphasis in football. I was lucky enough to play cornerback for PLU football all four years, including in 1999 when we won the National Title despite being 30 lbs. to the man lighter than any other team! It was an incredible experience. Our coach, Frosty, had an amazing ability to bring people from all skills sets and backgrounds together. He taught me the importance of self-motivation and goal setting, which I continue to use in both my personal and business life today. Studying didn't come as naturally to me as it did to others, but I learned to enjoy it and still spend time today reading to broaden my knowledge and skill sets.

Brianna: Have you ever held a job outside of produce?

Tate: Yes. I met my now wife, Lauren, my junior year in college and I really wanted to stay through the end of her summer class in order to spend as much time with her as possible. I explained to my dad that this girl was special and was able to convince him to let me stay at school and come home just in time for cherry harvest. To pay rent, I worked at a local car dealership. They tasked me with vacuuming the car lot (not the cars), which eventually led to some landscaping work and any odd job they could keep me busy with.

Brianna: What is your most memorable orchard experience?

Tate: The first year we picked Sweetheart cherries on Stemilt Hill. It was the mid '90s and I was pressure washing ladders, which is always a post-harvest task. I remember West driving up and saying, “Tate, did you know we were going to pick cherries tomorrow?” I thought he was crazy. It was July 20th and we were going to harvest cherries! Sure enough, my dad had the foresight to plant a new late ripening variety from British Columbia. The trees were loaded with cherries and that started the late cherry march at Stemilt. Looking back, it was really special to be part of.

Brianna: Back to college life, you graduate and then what happens?

Tate: I graduated and Lauren and I got married. She hailed from the Los Angeles area and couldn't think at the time to move to a small town in central Washington like Wenatchee. We moved to the LA area and I got a job with Dole as a technical service representative for banana ripening. I traveled a ton and by 2005, was promoted to Tropical Sales Manager, where I sold Hawaiian pineapples. They knew that eventually I wanted to return to Stemilt, but still spent a great deal of time training me, just as they do with others. My experience at Dole – the largest company in the world at the time – taught me that produce was far bigger than Stemilt Hill. My boss told me, "Produce is the last business where you deal almost entirely in verbal contracts. Your word matters." Even today, I covet those words.

Brianna: What led you back to Stemilt and how did you ever convince your wife?

Tate: In 2007, we moved back to Wenatchee. It wasn't too hard to convince Lauren as we now had a child and moving home meant I wouldn't be commuting so much. I had always worked at the orchard and now was going to be at Stemilt, the company. I wrote out an integration plan that would take me through the various departments at Stemilt for six months, and then I would go where I was needed. A month into this plan, Mike Taylor called me and said he needed me in sales. I began working in Foodservice sales, then transitioned to a chain store sales position, and eventually into a team leader role. I'd always known Stemilt's reputation for being special and now I was able to sell that!

Brianna: Very recently, you were promoted to Director of Sales. Explain how that came to be and what you'll be doing in the new role.

Tate: Our company and the sales department have been through a series of team training sessions over the past year or so. Through that, we learned that, with thousands of items to manage each day and the complex business of perishables, it was time for me to transition out of day-to-day sales and into a leadership and sales team support role. I'm really excited. I know that helping the team succeed will be just as fulfilling as succeeding on my own was in sales.

Brianna: What are you most excited about when it comes to the future at Stemilt?

Tate: The advent of new varieties is really exciting. Apple assortment is going to transform in the near future with new varieties that delight consumers coming onto the scene. I'm also looking forward to helping my dad expand his vision for late cherries at Stemilt.

Brianna: When you aren't in the office, what are you doing?

Tate: Being a dad! It's an all-consuming job that I absolutely love. My three boys (ages 7, 5, and 3) keep me busy. I coach them in ski racing and soccer, and just try to keep up with them!

Brianna: What is your favorite Stemilt fruit?

Tate: It's impossible for me to narrow it down. Right now, I love organic SweeTango® apples from my dad's orchard on the Hill!

Brianna: When you go into a produce department, what's the first thing you look at?

Tate: First, I take notice to the front of the store and what's in season. I love seeing how it is displayed and the space each item gets. Then, I have to look at apples and what's going on in the organic section. Finally, I seek out unique and special items. Regardless of price and much to my wife's dismay, those are the items that I just have to bring home!

Brianna: Who do you admire most and why?

Tate: My dad, Kyle Mathison. He has taken so much risk in his life in order to see his vision become a reality. He has an uncanny ability to see something that no one else does and to me, that is the heart and soul of what makes Stemilt so special.

ADVERTISEMENT

Stemilt's **Rushing Rivers Pears** proudly call Washington's famous river valleys home. Orchards blanket locales like the Wenatchee River Valley and Entiat River Valley, where **mountain slopes** meet **pristine rivers** and **fertile soils.**

TheSTEM

a quick guide to pear ripening

One of the most common pear consumer questions we receive at Stemilt is "how do you ripen pears?" Though it varies by variety and whether or not the fruit has been ripened by Stemilt as part of our RipeRite® program, the following steps are great for sharing with consumers when this question comes up in your stores.

How to Determine if a Pear is Ripe:

1) Hold the pear in the palm of your hand.

2) Gently apply pressure into the neck of the pear with your thumb.

3) Once the skin of the pear gives slightly to that pressure, it is ripe and ready to eat.

Pear Ripening Method #1: In a brown paper bag

It's best to ripen pears at room temperature, as cold temperatures slow down the ripening process.

Just like bananas and avocados, pears naturally release ethylene gas (a ripening hormone) in order to ripen. Placing pears in a brown paper bag keeps ethylene close to the fruit and speeds up the ripening process. Just be sure to check the neck for ripeness daily as the pears will ripen quickly with this method.

Pear Ripening Method #2: With other ethylene-producing fruits

Another way to ripen pears is to place them next to fruits like bananas or avocados in your fruit bowl at room temperature. These fruits also produce ethylene which induces ripening in pears. To really speed up the pear ripening process, combine two ethylene producing fruits (bananas and pears) in a paper bag and leave the bag at room temperature.

Find more fruit tips like this on The Stem blog – www.stemilt.com/blog.

Stemilt RipeRite®

ready to eat pear program

apple-coconut quinoa cereal

Healthy breakfast dish with crisp and juicy Stemilt apples.
Serves 2 to 4

Ingredients
1 ½ cups 100% natural coconut water (canned)
1 cup quinoa
1 large Stemilt apple, divided

To top (as preferred):
Ground cinnamon
Pure maple syrup
Milk, almond milk or soy milk
Toasted coconut flakes

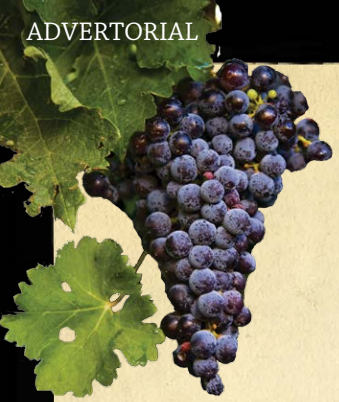
Procedure
Place quinoa in a fine mesh sieve and rinse/wash thoroughly; set sieve over bowl to fully drain.

Peel and finely dice ¼ of apple; set aside. Quarter remaining apple and cut into thin slices, lengthwise; set aside.

Add peeled and diced apple, coconut water and quinoa to a saucepan and bring to a boil, covered. Reduce heat and let simmer on low, covered, for approximately 15 to 20 minutes, until coconut water is absorbed and quinoa is tender. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for another 2 to 5 minutes. Fluff quinoa with a fork. Divide among serving bowls and top, as preferred, with warmed milk, a drizzle of maple syrup, a light dusting of cinnamon, and a bit of toasted coconut flakes. Arrange several slices of fresh apple alongside each bowl. Serve immediately.

Nutritional Information (based on 4 servings)*:
Per Serving: Calories 304.3 (20.1% from fat); Fat 6.8g (sat 3.0g, poly 0.5g, mono 0.4g); Protein 9.4g; Carbohydrates 53.4g; Fiber 3.8g; Sugar 19.8g; Cholesterol 0.0mg; Potassium 376.7mg; Sodium 83.2mg.

*assumes 1 tsp ground cinnamon, ¼ cup maple syrup, 2 cups soy milk, 1 ounce coconut flakes.



Stemilt Creek Winery

We love our Wine Club Members!

Jan and Kyle Mathison reserve the very best of their wines and hospitality for the members of Stemilt Creek Winery Wine Club. Join us as a wine club member and celebrate the joy of fine wine, good friends, and passion for life! As a member for our wine club you receive the following:

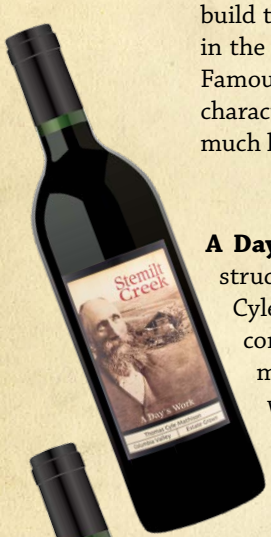
- A generous 30% Savings on each Wine Club Release
- 6 bottles of wine shipped 2 times per year (Spring and Fall Wine Club Release)
- 20% off case purchases throughout the year
- 10% off wine purchases throughout the year
- Only wine club members can order from our Library Selection Wines
- Wine Club Members get first rights on available new releases
- Monthly Newsletter
- Invitation to Wine Club Party for Fall Release
- To sign up for the Stemilt Creek Winery Wine club contact:

  winery@stemiltcreekwinery.com*

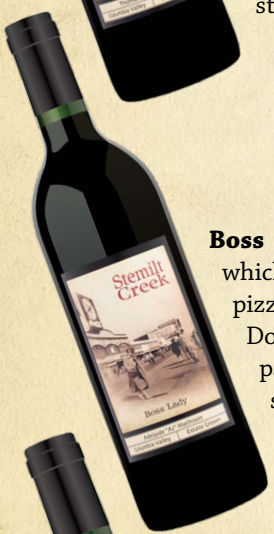
*Due to Shipping Laws, not all states are open for shipping wine.

Please contact us at **winery@stemiltcreekwinery.com** for availability in your state.

It is with great pride that we honor the pioneers who came before us through our wines at Stemilt Creek Winery. Our site-specific wines are harvested near the land planted in the late 1800's by homestead pioneer, Thomas Cyle Mathison. Jan Mathison, our winemaker, lovingly crafts the wines using grapes that Kyle Mathison grows on the same land that his family has cultivated for over a century. The winemaking style tends to build the wine with brawny tannins to shoulder earthy flavors evident in the unique terrain of Stemilt Hill, including the use of Kyle's World Famous Compost. Collectively, Stemilt Creek wines exude brawny characteristics consistently in a coherent full-bodied and lasting flavor much like the intriguing story of the Mathison family legacy.



A Day's Work - Honors Scottish Pioneer, Thomas Cyle Mathison – A Day's Work's flavor, structure, and finish can be summed up in the powerful story behind homestead pioneer, Thomas Cyle Mathison. Seizing opportunity to own land, he declared in a strong Scottish accent, "That I cometh to this land with nothing but a days work in me hans." These mighty hands dug ditches, mined for gold, and ultimately planted the seeds for the one of the largest fruit companies in the world. His robust spirit harmonizes with the boldness of this Bordeaux style blend with sturdy structure and a black cherry finish!



Boss Lady – AJ Mathison - Spectacular spice balances with a mouthful of black-strap molasses which is held up by a mineral note resembling flint – this wine is dazzling. Full of electricity and pizzazz, it dances across the tongue for a long, satisfying finish sure to leave a lasting impression. Don't let all the fun fool you. AJ Mathison, known as Boss Lady, had a fiery fortitude and passion for family and the land. There is a serious side to this 2nd vintage of "Boss Lady" with sturdy tannins, toasted oak, and full flavor finish. Enjoy a sip and let your taste buds tango.

Caring Passion – TK Mathison - Passionate. Caring. Focused. Anyone who ever met TK instantly recognized his genuine personality. He introduced himself with confident honesty and finesse – never hiding a thing - he never had to. He knew who he was. His crew and their families knew he cared about them as much as the work and the land. This 2nd vintage of "Caring Passion" resembles that trait, introducing itself with pure Merlot characteristics: soft tannins, ripe red cherry, coffee bean, and cassis with a hint of vanilla oak backing up the fruit. Just what a Merlot should be – comfortable – just like TK. Sit with it a while and enjoy.

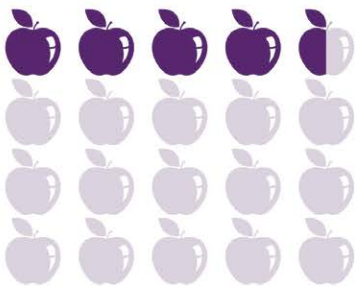
www.stemiltcreekwinery.com

APPLE POWER SHOPPER

A LOOK AT THE APPLE CATEGORY

FACT

10% OF HOUSEHOLDS DRIVE → 44% OF APPLE SALES



GET TO KNOW THE POWER APPLE SHOPPER

LARGER HOUSEHOLDS 3-5+

UNDER 35 OR 55-64 YEARS OLD

EARN HIGHER INCOMES ($70K+)

WANT PREMIUM, HEALTHY PRODUCTS

THEY AREN'T INFLUENCED BY PRICE AND WILLING TO TRY NEW VARIETIES IF THEY LOOK AND TASTE GOOD

5 WAYS TO DRIVE SALES WITH THE POWER APPLE SHOPPER:

1. Sample new varieties often and suggest new choices through multiple variety ads
2. Show them how to use apples in healthy and trendy recipes and cross-merchandise apples alongside recipe ingredients
3. Continue showcasing health by sharing the many nutritional qualities of apples via signage and tie-ins with your nutritionists/dieticians
4. Tell the story and passion behind unique products and premium varieties to drive purchases
5. Focus on freshness and flavor always

Source: Nielsen Homescan Total Shopper View, Nielsen Perishables Group FreshFacts®, 52 Weeks ending 3/29/14

Social Media

fruits & veggies more matters®
FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org

Expand Your Consumer Outreach with PBH's Social Media Channels!

Read our daily PBH Facebook posts for the latest news, tips, and information about fruit and veggies (232,000+ likes).

Join our Twitter parties on the first Wednesday of each month for seasonal fruit and vegetable information and ideas.

Follow us on Twitter for healthy recipes and menu planning.

Let PBH retweet your fruit and vegetable tips and recipes (35,200+ Twitter followers).

Post fruit and veggie tips, images, and videos on our Pinterest board (6,000+ users).

To find out more about how we can assist you in your own social media outreach, contact PBH at CorpComm@PBHFoundation.org.

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parting shot

A brief break during pear harvest in the Entiat River Valley.

Sunkist

a cooperative of family farms since 1893™

Lil Snappers™

kid size fruit

Stemilt World Famous Fruit

Tasty, snappy, and perfectly sized for the lil ones in your life

Two great companies, one great brand!

For additional information, please contact your local Stemilt or Sunkist sales representative.

APPLES, PEARS & CITRUS

fruits & veggies more matters

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www.lilsnappers.com

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