

HILLTOPTM

Issue #12 Spring/Summer 2017

HOME of the
BIG
CHERRY



MEET
RAVETM

FACE TO FACE
DENNIS HOWELL

5 RIVER ISLANDS
CHERRIES



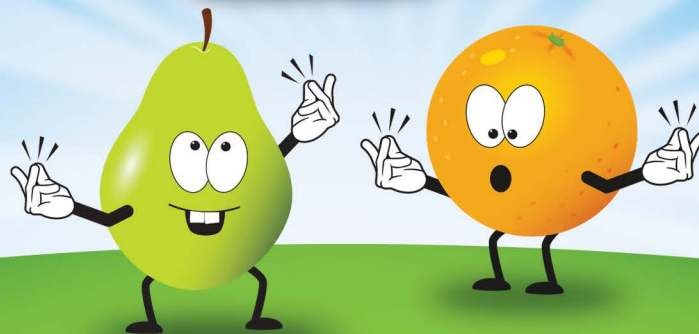
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kid size fruit



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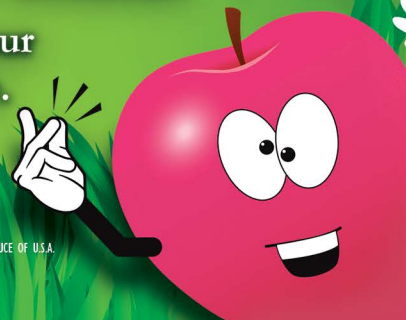
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— APPLES, PEARS & CITRUS —



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FROM THE EDITOR



Spring has been slow to arrive in Washington State this year, yet the change in seasons is always exciting at Stemilt as it signals that another cherry season is very near! As always, there is a lot happening at Stemilt especially as it relates

to our major capital project this year, a state-of-the-art automated distribution center at Olds Station in Wenatchee. It is starting to take shape and we expect it to be operational by the end of this year.

In this issue of Hilltop, you can learn why we are thinking big when it comes to cherries, and meet our newest apple brand, Rave™, which will harvest and hit the market in late July. Find out the story behind our new brand for premium California cherries, called 5 Rivers Island, and learn about the technology that is driving our engagement with consumers.

From all of us at Stemilt, we look forward to a great summer season. Thank you for supporting our World Famous Fruit!

Onward,

West Mathison
President
Stemilt Growers

HILLTOP

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COVER SHOT



Home of the big cherry.

KYLE'S PICK CHERRIES



HIGH QUALITY
Select Varieties
(I.E. No Lapins)
HIGH FLAVORS



CHERRIES
THAT BUILD
MEMORY & TRUST



Largest sizes, best varieties, and great dessert qualities – our best cherries are reserved for specially marked Kyle's Pick™ packs every July and early August. Every Kyle's Pick™ cherry has a seal of approval from our cherry guru, Kyle Mathison. Build memory & trust with your shoppers by carrying Kyle's Pick™ cherries.

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By Katie Harmon

FACE TO FACE with Dennis Howell

I had the opportunity to sit down with Dennis Howell, director of planning at Stemilt and chat with him about his accomplished career, his path into the fruit industry and what he does in his spare time when he isn't predicting the future.





Katie: Tell readers how you ended up in Wenatchee.

Dennis: After completing my horticulture degree at the University of Arkansas, I started working at Stark Brothers Nurseries as a Research & Development (R&D) technician where I was collecting data and testing new varieties. Unfortunately, they downsized a year and a half later and I was laid off. I had been out to the Pacific Northwest a couple of times due my job at Stark Brothers, and decided to come to Washington to look for jobs, even though I didn't really know anyone here. I got in touch with one of my friends who was part of the field staff here at Stemilt. I interviewed with Nate Reed, director of R&D at the time and was offered a job as a R&D technician.

Katie: Now you have been with Stemilt for 20 years; that is a huge accomplishment! What other roles have you had at Stemilt?

Dennis: I guess you could say I've been involved with all facets of Stemilt. My start was in R&D, and after two years I took a position as quality control supervisor on the raw product side. That role grew to quality control manager, and eventually director of product quality from the field to the customer. In 2006, I moved to the sales office so that we could start improving our ability to predict the product we would get from the field, and align with selling that product. My job responsibilities were to analyze and use my knowledge of our grower base and customers to determine how much fruit we were going to get out of the field, how much fruit we have sold, and what we still needed to sell. Many of those parts of the organization have evolved, but that ultimately led me to where I am today.

Katie: How did you know you wanted to be involved in the agriculture field?

Dennis: Well, it's a funny story. My family had a Christmas tree farm growing up, about 40 to 50 acres, which is about 25,000 trees or so. It was meant to be small, but my dad kept planting five acres here or another five acres there, so it added up. Both sets of my grandparents

were also into farming, one of them owning a 2,000-acre cattle farm, so it has always been in the family. At the time, I didn't think I wanted to pursue a horticulture degree, but when I was in junior high I worked part time maintaining flowers for a lady who had a large yard. After working with flowers, I became really interested in them. When it was time to go to college, I originally went into horticulture school to become a flower breeder. I thought I would earn my bachelors, then move on to obtain a masters and PhD in flower breeding. But at the University of Arkansas, there wasn't a lot of emphasis on flower breeding. The university was and is known for peach, berry crops, and vegetable breeding. While I was in college, I worked for a friend of mine whose family had peach and apple orchards, as well as working for the university's orchards. My advisor, Dr. Curt Rom, also encouraged me to pursue study of tree fruit. I got a lot of exposure to the fruit world, so when I was nearing the end my bachelor's degree, I decided to take a break after I graduated and find a job in the tree fruit industry. That break led me to getting my R&D job with Stark Brothers and ultimately into the fruit industry to work at Stemilt.

Katie: What is your favorite part about working for Stemilt?

Dennis: The family company and its family values. Culturally, it is a great place to work and it has a great family atmosphere. The people care about each other. They care more about each other than they do anything else, and that is the bottom line. The company also has an outward focus in terms of how we try to service our customers, our growers, and the community. Stemilt isn't about making the highest profit. Stemilt is about delighting growers, customers, consumers and the community. The values we have as a team, as a company, are the most important part and we try to share those values with everyone we work with.

Katie: What does a typical day look like for you?

“

Stemilt isn't about making the highest profit. Stemilt is about delighting growers, customers, consumers and the community.

Dennis: My day is usually tied to computers or meetings. When I am sitting at the computer, I am analyzing information. I am usually creating or looking at forecasts and plans. When I attend meetings, we review those plans and analyze what tool we can use to get better results or how we can get better internally as a company. It is all about looking at the data, analyzing it, and then knowing what data we should bring to the meeting to shed light or add value to the process. After we do that, we begin to discuss what decisions need to be made, what data we should leverage to help us make a better decision, and as a team, how can we collaborate and come to a consensus so everyone feels like they have a voice in the process.

Katie: What is the most challenging part of your job?

Dennis: The most challenging part of my job is how to get out from behind the computer and begin the collaboration process with people. The computer can be very consuming at times, so I believe it's important we find ways to step away and focus on what really matters; the people. I like to quote West [Mathison] and say, "The data is the start of the conversation." How do we make the data the start of the conversation? How do we get the people together around the data? We need people to visualize and know what decisions

need to be made, then decide the best ways to make those decisions and consider the potential outcomes. Getting people to have a conversation is the critical part.

Katie: On the flipside, what do you find most rewarding?

Dennis: The most rewarding part of my day is whenever people work together. When I get to see people come to a clear vision of what needs to happen, how they are going to get there and then when they see it come to pass is a rewarding process to witness. We like to see our both our growers and customers succeed with their product. Then when consumers have a delightful experience with the product, we know we did our job and all of the work is worth it.

Katie: How does planning drive sales?

Dennis: It really starts on the supply side. JB Walter, our supply planning analyst, does all the supply forecasts for all the crops. He will take information provided by the field staff and forecast what we will get from the crop in terms of volume and fruit size, and will also determine the timing and the projection of the upcoming season. From those forecasts, we can give the sales team a timeline view of when they can expect to see promotable or shippable volumes of product that meet their customer specifications. Then the sales team can determine when their customers can have product, when we can create promotions and when promotable products will be available.

Then you move into stage two: demand forecasts. After the sales team talks with their customers, we begin to learn what the demand will look like for the year. Travis Chin, demand and customer insights manager, will work with the sales team to develop demand forecasts for the crop year. Travis will then compare the demand forecast to the supply forecast and help us determine whether we are under or over sold in a specific period of time. Between JB, Travis and Erik Ware, who is the Production Scheduling Supervisor, the three of them work closely together to determine if we have the

product that the customer needs, if we can offer more or less, or if we have pinch points, or times when the crop isn't up to par. If we do find pinch points, we work with the field staff, quality control team, production team, and sales team to identify a solution to the supply chain conflict.

Katie: So when you aren't predicting the future, what do you do in your spare time?

Dennis: My wife and I have a 15-year-old daughter, 11-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter, and I love spending time with all of them. My family and I like to go sledding in the winter and in the summer we like to play in the park, take walks, take our dog to the river to swim, and ride bikes. I play some guitar and my family and I partake in church activities as well. I also like to do some computer programming on the side. I haven't really built anything that great, but it is a work in progress.

Katie: Who comes to mind when I ask if someone has influenced you in anyway, professionally or personally?

Dennis: There are many people that have influenced me over the years. My church Pastor and several colleagues at Stemilt, including West [Mathison], Diane Parker, Todd George, Mike Taylor, Tate [Mathison], Eva Lauve, our leadership coach, Shandel, and Tim Duffy (consultant for supply chain issues who I work with). Of course I can't go without mentioning Tom Mathison, as he was a great mentor and visionary leader, and I learned a lot about the fruit business from him.

Katie: And of course, what is your favorite Stemilt fruit?

Dennis: I would have to say that my favorite Stemilt fruit is Skeena Cherries! I have a favorite in each category, of course, and am excited about Cosmic Crisp™ which will hit the apple market in the next few years.



By Katie Harmon

DID YOU KNOW?

To you and me, robins and finches may be pretty to look at through the kitchen window, but for cherry farmers, all they see are winged-nuisances flying about. Every year, farmers plan and prepare for the unexpected, but one thing they can always count on are birds working hard to enjoy their share of their crop right before harvest.

Although growers always expect birds to make their debut during cherry season when the cherries are ripe and sweet, it doesn't mean the battle gets any easier. When pest birds visit the farm, they like to create a mess for growers and pickers. Instead of eating one cherry at a time, these troubled winged-foes will pick at a cherry two or three times, taking bites and leaving the fruit wounded. As they move to the next cherry - leaving the last one partially consumed - these troublemakers begin to repeat the process, resulting in a damaged cluster within minutes.

Kyle Mathison, fourth generation Stemilt cherry grower faces these beaked adversaries every year. Mathison and his team work on using natural, yet creative methods to prevent the birds from striking. "We use bird cannons, reflective tape, and distress calls," says Mathison. Other methods used to protect the crops is netting around the fruit, scarecrows, horns, and flares. However, nothing will protect those cherries like the natural way - fighting feathers with feathers.



Chase - master falconer

During harvest, Stemilt hires a master falconer and his falcons to protect the orchards from pesky invaders. Falcons are natural predators who employ an intimidation factor. Over time, this factor has naturally evolved between predator and prey, instilling a constant fear within the birds. When the pesky birds see these falcons patrolling the trees, the birds instinctually realize they are in danger and leave the premises. This relationship between predator and prey has benefitted the agriculture industry and helped many growers protect their crops.

The ideal time for flight for falcons is in the morning and at night as this is feeding time for their prey. According to master falconers, the ideal condition for falcons to fly is when the day is cool and the wind has picked up. Falconers work with their birds and the orchardists to ensure that the falcon is the right fit for the orchard to ensure that the falcon's safety comes first.

"I don't feel too bad for the birds," says Mathison. "I always feel like they get their fair share, even with falcons and these other methods. It would be nice if they ate some worms or some insects, but they like the cherries."

And really, who can blame them?



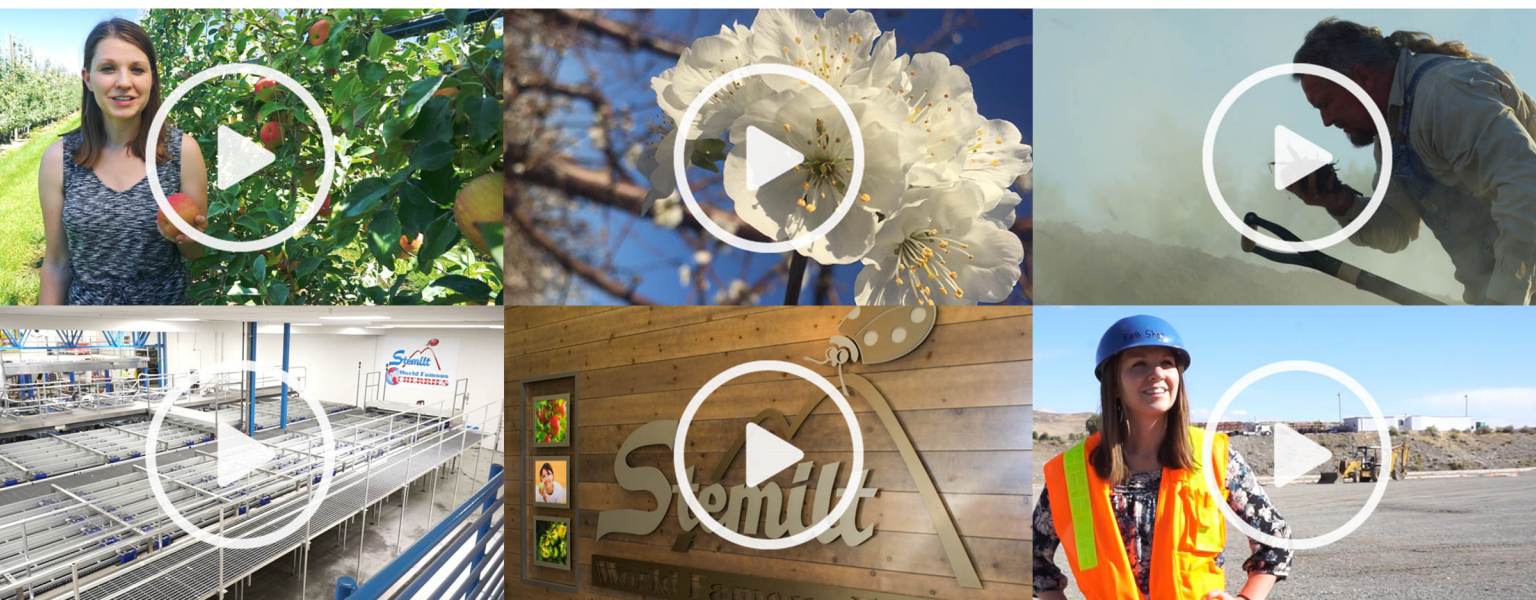


Subscribe Today!

Stay up-to-date on the latest happenings at Stemilt by subscribing to our 36 Seconds series. One to two times per month, we will email you a short video news update, giving you the first look of harvest, packing fruit, new projects, new products, and much more.

All in just :36 seconds.

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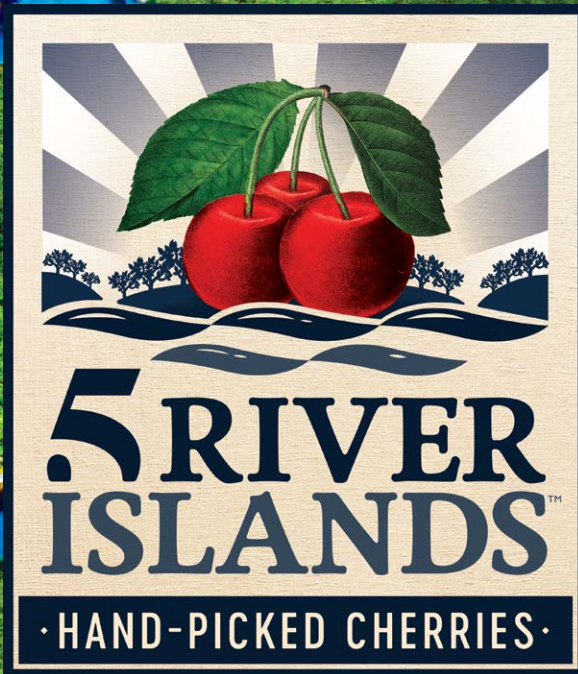


That's World Famous!

By Katie Harmon

New Cherry Brand Floating Its Way to Produce Shelves Soon

When a cherry tree is combined with clean water, plush soil, and warm California sunshine, what do you get? 5 River Islands cherries, of course.



Stemilt's newest cherry brand, 5 River Islands cherries are grown and produced in the Delta region of northern California. The Delta, a 1,100 square mile region of sloughs and islands is located west of Stockton, California. It is the junction point of the state's two main rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, and three smaller rivers, Mokelumne, Cosumnes, and Calaveras rivers. It is the end point for the Sierra Nevada's snowmelt and also the state's main water source.

The Delta Region is an agricultural phenomenon and has been for quite some time. "The Delta has something special about it," says Erick Stonebarger, general manager at Chinchilo Stemilt California (CSC). "With the warm days and cool nights, it's just a great place to grow cherries."

The Delta's flat terrain and abundance of clean water perfectly complements the medium climate and has become the largest agricultural area in California, which grows everything from almonds to artichokes and much more in between.

Cherry bloom occurs quite a bit earlier in California than it does in Washington. In fact, Stemilt's 5 River Islands cherries bloom in early March and will be harvested and available from late May to mid June. Lapin is the primary variety that will be packed under the 5 River Islands brand, and Stonebarger expects average sizing for the brand to be 9 Row, which is a size larger than the state's norm of 10 Row. Stemilt matches the Delta region's great ability to produce dessert flavored cherries by picking at optimal maturity and packing the fruit quickly after harvest.

"Larger sized cherries equate to higher Brix (sugar) levels, while picking the fruit at just the right time ensures high color and great firmness. The eating experience with 5 River Islands cherries will be second-to-none," said Stonebarger.

With an earlier harvest than Washington cherries, 5 River Islands cherries are a great way to give consumers a delicious taste of summer. The niche program is available for a short time and offers a unique storytelling experience to consumers, especially for those familiar with the Delta region.

"We know that consumers want to know where their food comes from, and 5 River Islands cherries are centered on that consumer request," said Stonebarger. "Romancing the locale, especially one as pristine as the Delta, is a great way to differentiate these high-quality California-grown cherries in your stores every June."

The availability window for 5 River Islands cherries will be short in 2017, but Stemilt has plans to extend the brand in future years. "5 Rivers Island cherries come from established orchards and will only be packed if they meet our high quality standards. We expect more and more cherries to fall under this special brand as trees come into production," said Stonebarger.



CHERRY BERRY MERINGUES

PREP TIME: 45 minutes

COOK TIME: 90 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 4 to 5 hours (with sit time)

LEVEL: Moderate

Makes 6 large, or 12 regular desserts

NOTHING CAPS A FESTIVE FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION BETTER
THAN A HOLIDAY WORTHY DESSERT

Ingredients

FOR MERINGUE

4 egg whites, room temperature
pinch kosher salt
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
¾ cup ultra fine granulated sugar ("baker's sugar")
¼ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/3 cup powdered sugar

FOR FRUIT TOPPING

1 pound fresh Stemilt cherries, stemmed, pitted and halved
½ pound fresh blueberries
1 pound fresh strawberries, stems removed and halved
2 teaspoons ultra fine granulated sugar ("baker's sugar")
1 tablespoon fresh orange juice

FOR WHIPPED CREAM TOPPING

1 pint heavy whipping cream
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 tablespoons powdered sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 200 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper (optional: you can pencil circles on reverse side of parchment to serve as guides for the size of your meringues).

Whip egg whites, salt and cream of tartar in metal bowl of electric mixer fitted with whisk attachment, at medium speed until whites appear frothy. Increase speed to medium high and continue whipping until whites just begin to hold together.

Reduce speed to medium and begin adding ultra fine sugar, a tablespoon at a time, until all is added. Add vanilla and continue to whip on high speed to incorporate, until glossy, stiff peaks are achieved. Remove bowl from mixer and sift powdered sugar over top. Gently fold powdered sugar into whipped cream being careful not to deflate.

Drop spoonfuls of meringue onto parchment lined baking sheet. Using the back of a spoon dipped in water and shaken off, carefully flatten meringue from center outward to create a slightly raised outer rim. (Rinse spoon and shake off excess water between each meringue prep.) Bake for 90 minutes in center rack of oven. Then turn oven off and let meringues continue to sit in oven for approximately 2 to 3 hours (to harden up).

Meanwhile, place prepped cherries and blueberries in a large bowl. Set aside.

Transfer prepped strawberries to electric blender. Add ultra fine sugar and let sit for approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Then add orange juice and puree until syrupy. Add mixture to cherries and blueberries; fold gently to combine. Set aside.

Meanwhile, whip heavy cream in metal bowl* of electric mixer fitted with whisk attachment, at high speed. As cream begins to thicken, lower speed and add vanilla and powdered sugar, until incorporated. Return to high speed and continue whipping until stiff peaks form.

To serve, place one crisp meringue on plate. Top with a generous dollop of whipped cream. Spoon Cherry Berry mixture over top of dessert and serve immediately. If not serving immediately, place meringues in an airtight container to store. Transfer berry mixture and whipped cream to glass containers, cover with plastic wrap and store in refrigerator. All components will stay fresh for 2 to 3 days, stored properly.

**glass or metal bowls are preferred; copper or plastic can impair the flavor and consistency.*

Nutritional Information (based on 12 servings):

Per Serving: Calories 210.3 (64.2% from fat); Fat 15.0g (sat 9.2g, poly 0.6g, mono 4.3g); Protein 2.6g; Carbohydrates 17.8g; Fiber 2.1g; Sugar 14.2g; Cholesterol 54.8mg; Potassium 122.9mg; Sodium 37.0mg.



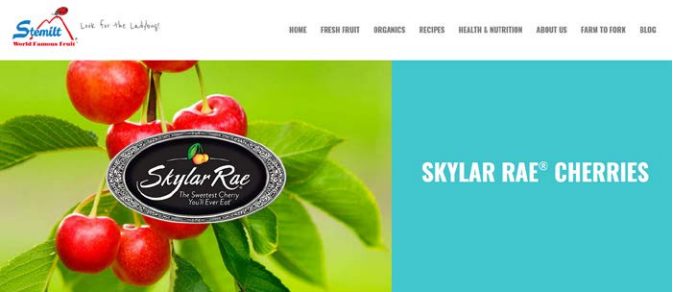
The Power of Technology in Consumer Engagement

The opportunity for brands to easily engage with consumers is more prominent than ever, thanks in large part to the rise and popularity of social media. Consumers are easier to reach, and it's less expensive to gain their attention than it was in the days where traditional advertising, including print and TV, dominated. Yet, consumers don't want to feel like they are being marketed too. They want to connect with the brands they love easily, and brands that can get personal with consumers are the ones that are building a loyal and high-quality fan base.



How does a brand get personal with its fans? Technology is one way, and specifically technology that's centered on customer relationship management, or CRM.

Stemilt has been learning more about its consumers through HubSpot's CRM, or inbound marketing platform, since 2013. The basis of inbound is to provide consumers with information that they find meaningful, so a company can then ignite a relationship with the consumer, learn more about them, and then use that intel to personalize future communication with them, whether it's around a new blog post to read or product they must try.



Home » Cherries » Skylar Rae®

The Sweetest Cherry You'll Ever Eat

Meet **Skylar Rae®** brand Tip Top cherries, the sweetest cherry you'll ever eat! This Stemilt exclusive looks similar to the well-known Rainier cherry, but is genetically different, and both firmer and sweeter than other cherries you'll find at stores.

This cultivar was discovered growing by chance in 2004 by the Toftness family at their Tip Top Orchards in Wenatchee, WA. Usually these chance discoveries can't be replicated and grown commercially, but this is no ordinary cherry. The brand name of this special cherry was chosen to honor Skylar Rae Toftness, the late daughter of Troy and Kim Toftness.

Skylar Rae® cherries have a glowing orangeread complexion, incredible firmness, and high sugars for a candy-like flavor. It's rare for any cherry to be both sweet and firm, making Skylar Rae® a unique cherry eating experience for all.



CHARACTERISTICS

Exterior: Golden yellow background with a partial to full orange-red blush.

Interior: Very firm and smooth flesh that is nearly colorless.

Experience: Very sweet and exceptionally firm and crisp. With high sugars ranging from 22-25 Brix, Skylar Rae® is the sweetest cherry you'll ever eat.

NUTRITIONAL FACTS

Learn more here!

Look for specially marked packs of Skylar Rae® cherries on bags and clamshells in your grocery store from mid-June to late July. Skylar Rae® brand Tip Top cherries have a PLU (price look-up) number of 3448.

HOW TO USE SKYLAR RAE® CHERRIES



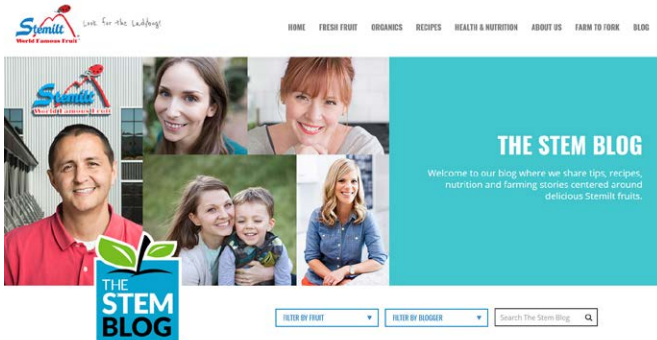
[Snacking, Salad, Drink, Smoothie](#)
[Get Recipes Here](#)

WHEN CAN I FIND SKYLAR RAE® CHERRIES?

This special cherry is in season for a very limited time. Look for our Washington state grown Skylar Rae® cherries in stores from mid-June to late July each year.

FUN FACTS

- The parentage of Skylar Rae® is unknown. Both Rainier and Sweetheart cherries were growing nearby.
- Tip Top is the patented name for the tree that produces Skylar Rae® cherries. Tip Top comes from the name of the orchard where it was discovered.
- Stemilt has the rights to grow and market Skylar Rae® cherries in North America.



Home » Stem Blog » Kale and Cherry Salad

Subscribe to our blog for fresh recipes and ideas about food.

LATEST BLOG POSTS

- How to Make Homemade Apple Cider Vinegar
- Importance of Honey Bees in the Orchards
- Spicy Kale and Apple Salad
- Irish Apple Cider with Whiskey Hard Sausage
- 6 Apple Cooking Tips Worth Trying

KALE AND CHERRY SALAD

By Catherine Williams | May 17, 2016



May is National Salad Month and *Cheerios* from our Kitchen Council is helping us celebrate the season of salads with a delicious kale, quinoa, coconut, and cherry salad. **Cherries** are in-season now from Stemilt, and will be through the month of July.

Admittedly, I am late to the kale bandwagon. I had even thought that I might have missed it, but alas, kale is still a trending topic and finally I have a recipe that allows me to enjoy it with gusto and join the party. I've found that a drizzle of coconut oil in a hot cast iron skillet offers a beautifully charred taste to kale that pairs so beautifully with fresh cherries. The combination leaves you craving it even after the first bite. Blended with savory grains, hard cheese, potatoes and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar, it is quite possibly the best salad I have had in years.

To save time in the kitchen, I will make a batch of rinsed grains and store them in the fridge, allowing me to whip this salad up in less than 5 minutes, but if you start from scratch, you could be cooking for up to 40 minutes, so take care not to eat all the cherries before you are done cooking.

"The CRM technology has allowed us to increase our knowledge about the consumers that visit our website, or interact with us on social media," said Roger Pepperl, Stemilt marketing director. "It goes deeper than basic demographics and helps us know why they came to Stemilt in the first place. If we know they needed us for a certain product, or because they were looking for baking recipes, then we can use that information to communicate with them again in the future. We can personalize our communication to fit their actual needs."



In addition to garnering more intelligence around who interacts with their brand, Stemilt is able to use the Hubspot software to see how certain communications pieces perform against others. Testing emails with various subject lines can have significant impacts on the number of opens and clicks, while swapping out an image on a website call-to-action could make all the difference in a consumer choosing to sign-up to receive more information from Stemilt.



“At Stemilt, we are proud to be fruit experts, and it’s our wish to share that expertise with consumers who want it so that they are inspired to eat more of our apples, pears, cherries, and summer fruits,” said Pepperl. “Using this technology has helped us segment the various audiences that we are attracting, and hone in on the best way to communicate with them. This knowledge is powerful in making sure our biggest fruit fans feel connected to our brand.”

Many of Stemilt’s communication work, including its blog, The Stem, and social media channels are being shaped by the intelligence that its loyal fans are giving the company via Hubspot, as well as research around trends. Video has started to become more of an emphasis in Stemilt communications because it has the ability to show instead of tell.

“Whether it’s a video breaking down the steps for consumers to make apple chips at home, or a report to our retail partners on category performance, we’ve found video to be a great vehicle to engage with our audiences,” said Pepperl.

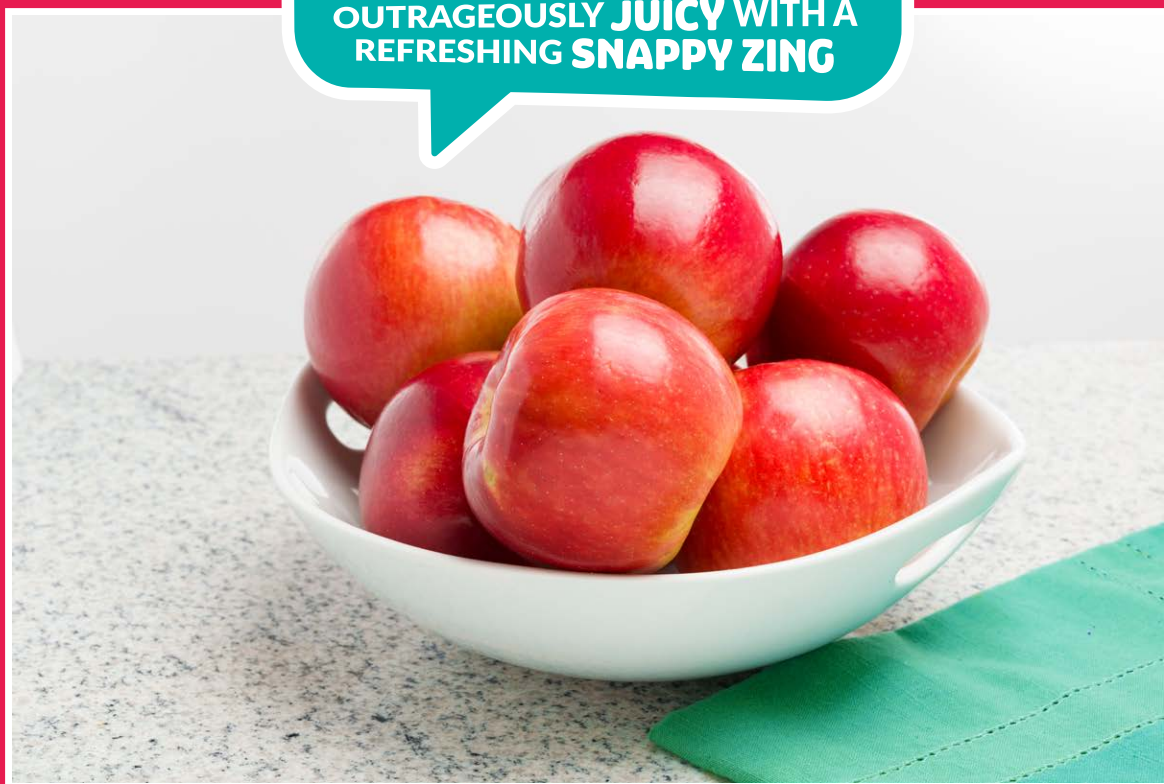
Stemilt expects consumer engagement with its brand to continue to grow as new varieties, like Rave™ apples, and branded products come to market. With smart technology that’s helping the company better understand and communicate with its growing audience of fruit enthusiasts, the changing landscape of the fruit world is ripe with opportunities for Stemilt.



By Brianna Shales

Get Ready to Rave™

Outrageous juice, an incredible crunch, and ready to bite into before Gala or any other apple variety comes off the tree in Washington State. Meet the apple that you'll rave about.



Rave™ is the brand name for Stemilt's newest exclusive apple variety and will hit produce departments for the first time in early August 2017. Born at the University of Minnesota back in 1997, the apple cultivar, called MN55 in the field, is the third variety that apple breeder David Bedford has released in his career and will follow in the footsteps of his other success stories, Honeycrisp and Sweetango®.

Stemilt was awarded the license to grow, pack, and market the MN55 cultivar back in 2014. The company was drawn to the apple because of its dessert qualities and unique characteristic of ripening and achieving full color in order to harvest in late July.

"It was exciting to find an apple that not only had unique and incredible flavor attributes, but also one that would come off the tree so early. Rave™ fits everything we look for in a new variety with its sweet and juicy flavor, high color, and great fracture. It's also going to let us help retailers jumpstart apple season and reinvent the apple category in August," said Roger Pepperl, Stemilt marketing director.

The early harvest date for this new apple comes from an interesting cross of apples that Bedford completed through cross-pollination back in 1997. The parents of Rave™ are Honeycrisp and an unreleased variety called MonArk, which originated in Arkansas. Though few apples are grown in Arkansas, the ones that do must be able to withstand heat, and the combination of Honeycrisp and MonArk led Bedford to the discovery of what consumers will come to know soon as Rave™.



"It's rare for early ripening apples to color well and have a phenomenal flavor and crunch, but that's what Rave™ does. Consumers are going to love it," said Pepperl.

The journey to develop a new apple variety is not a fast process, as it took the University of Minnesota 17 years to get to the final release and licensing of MN55. Coming up the brand name for the apple was also a lengthy process, said Pepperl, but an important one in order to find a fit that would excite consumers.



“Rave™ was chosen as the brand name of the apple because it could play off the apple’s many exciting attributes. It’s memorable, and our hope is that the name becomes ubiquitous with sharing. Once you try Rave™, you’ll have to tell someone about this apple because it’s that good,” said Pepperl.

Stemilt’s in-house marketing team came up with the logo and packaging design for Rave™. The chat icon in the logo joins the messaging “the apple you will rave about” in order to promote the viral, or word-of-mouth marketing among consumers.

“There are many new apple varieties coming out each year, and in order to make the cut with consumers, the fruit has to have incredible flavors and a compelling story. Rave™ has both, and the branding around this apple is going to make it easy for retailers to highlight the fruit in their stores every August. An apple this good and this early is uncharted territory, and we’re excited to be the ones to help it succeed,” said Pepperl.

In late July, Stemilt will harvest, pack, and ship its first commercial crop of Rave™ apples. The company expects volume of Rave™ to grow considerably for several years following, as planted trees come into bearing age.

“We can’t wait to bring the first crop to consumers, but beyond that we are excited about the future of Rave™. This apple is juicy and refreshing with the same Honeycrisp crunch that we all love. It’s going to raise the bar for all apples,” said Pepperl.



Go ahead, **Rave** about it: **#RaveApples**



“

There are many new apple varieties coming out each year, and in order to make the cut with consumers, the fruit has to have incredible flavors and a compelling story.

By Katie Harmon

How Stemilt Came to Be **HOME** *of the* **BIG** **CHERRY**



About 55 years ago, when man had yet to step on the moon, Elvis was sitting pretty at the top of the Billboards, and the term “boogie” was cool, Tom Mathison was hunkered down in Wenatchee, Washington perfecting the art of growing big cherries.

Large-sized cherries didn't break ground until Tom Mathison, founder of Stemilt put some extra time into learning how to grow and produce them back in the early 1960s. In 1958, Tom and his family faced the "Cherry Crop Disaster," when Tom's 100-ton cherry crop only returned \$88. This upset was a turning point for the Mathison family and Tom dedicated the next two years researching and developing healthier cherry harvesting habits to produce good, reliable fruit.

Tom began altering his pruning and tree training practices, in hopes that he would begin to see large cherries bursting from his trees. Tom pruned with a couple of thoughts in mind; first, all parts of the tree need sunshine. The more sunlight the cherries can get, the better the fruit will be. Orchardists pruned the entire tree, ensuring the inner layers received just as much sunlight as the outer layers. Tom also thought that the less fruit the tree could yield, the better that fruit would be. When trees have less to provide food to, it will result in better quality fruit.

Other tree training factors Tom practiced was picking early in the morning, when cherries were still cool and firm from the night air as well as ensuring that each cherry was hand-picked and handled gently during packing. Cherries need a little extra attention compared to apples and pears due to their biological breakdown. Cherries lack stored carbohydrates, so they don't store well and are more susceptible to bruising. To maintain freshness, Tom learned that he needed to keep cherries cool from start to finish, hence the emphasis on early morning harvest and hydrocooling.

Due to these changes, along with dedication and a lot of patience, Tom began producing larger cherries that not only looked appealing, but tasted even better. Tom became the first in the industry to commercially size these large cherries with the advent of his Accurow technology, and putting Stemilt on the map as the home for big cherries.





“Tom’s story helped shape Stemilt into who we are today. Our president West [Mathison] does a great job maintaining the practices and values that his grandfather instilled within the company,” says Roger Pepperl, marketing director at Stemilt. “Tom’s practices are what set us apart from others.”

As Stemilt became the home for big cherries and the crop grew larger every year, Tom learned that he needed a bigger facility to store cherries. In 1975, Tom built a state-of-the-art apple, pear and cherry packing facility to upgrade from the Stemilt Hill facility to one at Olds Station in Wenatchee, Washington. This facility housed Tom’s innovative Accurow technology, a diverging rolls sizer that mechanically sized cherries.

“Tom’s sizing innovation changed the way everyone packed cherries, and though it has recently been replaced by impressive optic sizing and sorting technology, it was the first step towards ensuring that great tasting, large-sized cherries get into the box to wow the consumer,” said Pepperl.



Stemilt has invested heavily in optic sizing and sorting technology, with four packing lines installed between its facilities in California and Washington. The use of high-speed cameras allows cherries to be sized very accurately and efficiently, allowing Stemilt to deliver the premium box of cherries to help set its retail partners apart from the competition.

So why is bigger better when it comes to cherries? It's simple: the bigger the cherry, the more sugar it contains. In fact, Washington State University researched and discovered that fruit size directly correlates to the Brix (sugar) levels within the cherry. So the bigger and firmer the fruit, the tastier it will be.

"Cherries are an impulse buy for the consumer," says Pepperl. "The bigger they look, the better they taste, which only means one thing: your consumers will come back for more."

Tom was insistent on ensuring his cherries were delicious from start to finish, and his knowledge that size matters continues to inspire the Stemilt team to go big in order to deliver consumers with a memorable, world famous eating experience.





Make sure your **SOCIAL TEAM** is using cherries to tout this **RED, WHITE, & BLUE HOLIDAY** in order to keep cherries on consumers' minds.



JULY 4TH
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!



SHARE THIS SEASON'S FAVORITE ORGANIC CHERRIES WITH SHOPPERS BY RUNNING ORGANIC ADS IN EARLY JULY

ORGANIC sales are growing by **DOUBLE DIGITS** annually

RAINIER CHERRIES

RUN BACK-TO-BACK RAINIER ADS THE 1ST 2 WEEKS OF JULY TO WIN WITH THIS HIGH-RING SKU



Rainier Cherries account for 15% of the cherry category volume at Best-in-Class Retailers



SHARE THE SWEETEST CHERRY ON EARTH WITH SHOPPERS!

Remember, demos & signage are key when promoting **NEW VARIETIES.**

JULY 4TH START LOADING FOR DARK-SWEET ADS OR RISK GOING BACK TO START!

KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING WITH EARLY **WA CHERRIES!**



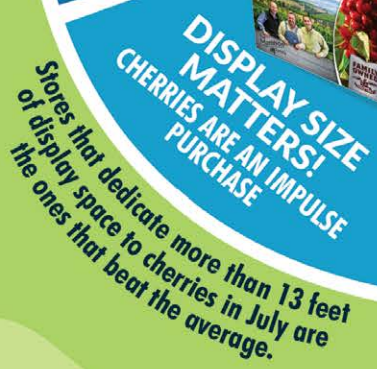
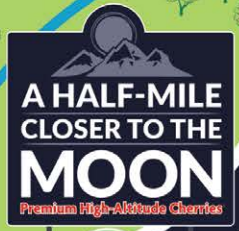
MEMORIAL DAY
THE TIME FOR YOUR FIRST PROMO!



START

START THE CHERRY EXCITEMENT WITH CA CHERRIES!





PROGRESS UPDATE

Distribution Center at Olds



Stemilt's major capital project this year is a state-of-the-art distribution center at the Olds Station facility in Wenatchee, WA. The 479,000 square foot center includes a controlled atmosphere building and will be the new home for packed inventory quality control, palletizing, pear ripening, product cool down and conditioning, and shipping. The center reaches 66 feet at its highest point, and allows for 12,613 pallet positions of Swisslog's automated storage and retrieval system to easily load pallets of fruit into awaiting trucks. Look for the DC to open at the end of the year!



A HALF-MILE CLOSER TO THE MOON



WHAT ARE MOON CHERRIES?

A Half Mile Closer to the Moon™ cherries come from unique locales like Kyle Mathison's Amigos Orchards in Wenatchee, WA, located between 2,500 feet above sea level and higher (literally a half mile closer to the moon). Share the mystique of the moon with these special cherries, which are harvested fresh daily from mid to late August.

PEACH CRUMBLE

PREP TIME: 15 minutes
COOK TIME: 35-40 minutes
TOTAL TIME: 55 minutes
LEVEL: Easy

8 servings

A CRUMBLE, OR BROWN BETTY, IS A BRITISH DISH THAT COMBINES FRUIT WITH A CRUMBLY MIXTURE OF BUTTER, FLOUR AND SUGAR. THIS PEACH CRUMBLE ALSO USES CHOPPED PECANS FOR AN EXTRA CRUNCHY TOPPING!

Ingredients

FOR TOPPING

8 tbsp butter, cut into cubes
1 cup all purpose flour
1 cup dark brown sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 cup chopped pecans

FOR FILLING

6 to 8 medium to large Artisan Organics peaches, sliced
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp pure maple syrup
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
3 tbsp all purpose flour

Directions

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. In a medium bowl, combine the topping ingredients. Using a pastry blender or your hands, work the butter into the flour mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. Set aside.

Grease the bottom of an oven-safe 10 to 12 inch skillet or baking dish. Add the peach slices, lemon juice, maple, cinnamon and flour and stir until the peaches are coated. Cover the peach slices with the topping mixture completely.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the top is golden and the filling is bubbly.

Remove and cool on a wire rack for at least 15 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream.

Nutritional Information (per serving):

Per Serving: Calories 386; Fat 18g; Protein 4g; Carbohydrates 59g; Sugar 43g; Sodium 90g



By Brianna Shales

Millennials Drive Organic Sales Forward Including Organic Peaches and Nectarines

Organics are booming. Once a niche in the grocery store, organic foods are now in more than 80% of U.S. homes, according to recent research from Nielsen. The study looked at 100,000 households in 2015 and 2016, and saw a 3.4 percent increase in organic food sales in just a one-year time period. Sales of organic fruits and vegetables are also on the rise, totaling \$5.5 billion in 2016, and up a whopping 16.4 percent from 2015.



A good economy and increased availability of organic products is certainly driving sales forward, but the shoppers, and “organic enthusiasts” aren’t visiting special stores to find organic produce. These people that spend more than half of their produce budget on organic are buying at traditional grocery stores, and often with their kids in mind.

Millennials are expected to spend more than \$200 billion collectively this year, and are the top age group driving organic sales forward. A 2017 market research study by Acosta found Millennials purchase organic most frequently, with approximately 60 percent of the demographic filling half of their grocery cart with organic/natural products. Thirty-four percent of GenX purchases include half or more than half of their cart dedicated to organic/natural products.

Produce is among the “must have” organic items for families, followed by dairy, juice, meat, and snacks. Health and food quality are among the main motivators for consumers when buying organic.

“Collectively, these studies show great interest and desire among key shopper groups to purchase organic,” said Roger Pepperl, Stemilt marketing director. “Organics continue to become a bigger part of the produce department each year, and most shopper demographics are responding to the larger displays and frequently making a choice to pay the premium for organic.”

Because it takes three years to successfully transition and certify an orchard as organic, Stemilt has worked to stay ahead of this consumer demand for organics. The company is in the midst of major growth in organics, particularly among key apple varieties, but also has a diversified organic product mix that includes an entire crop of organic peaches and nectarines.

“

Produce is among the “must have” organic items for families, followed by dairy, juice, meat, and snacks.





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It's an ideal summertime offering for the organic shopper, and certainly delivers on their desire for a healthy, flavorful and high-quality organic product.



“We are fortunate that our founder Tom Mathison took a bold step in 1989 to start farming a large number of acres organically. This was long before it was trendy to do so, and has paved the way for our growth in organics,” said Pepperl.

The 2017 season marks the ninth year that the Douglas family, who own Douglas Fruit Company in Pasco, WA and are key Stemilt growing and packing partners, have harvested and packed their entire crop of peaches and nectarines, and the majority of their apricots, organically. The switch to organics was made to differentiate Stemilt's summer fruits and deliver an incredible flavor experience to shoppers. The outcome has been all that and much more.

“Artisan Organics® peaches and nectarines offer shoppers a memorable eating experience. They are large and juicy with vibrant colors and a complex flavor profile, with high sugars and acids. It's an ideal summertime offering for the organic shopper, and certainly delivers on their desire for a healthy, flavorful and high-quality organic product,” said Pepperl.

The Douglas family has been farming since the early 1900's and have grown peaches since 1980. They made the transition to organic farming back in 2007 and three seasons later, certified their entire crop of peaches and nectarines as organic. According to Jill Douglas, general manager of Douglas Fruit, the move to organic worked because of the family's commitment and the ideal locale where these fruits are farmed.

"You have to believe in organics to farm organically," said Douglas. "We are also lucky to farm peaches and nectarines in the Columbia Basin, where the arid climate provides our trees with the right growing environment to overcome any challenges you face when growing organically."

With more shoppers flocking towards the organic produce display each year, it's niche, flavor-driven programs like Artisan Organics® peaches and nectarines that are going to deliver the dessert eating experience that will keep them coming back for more.





Subscribe Today!

Recipes, tips, farming, nutrition and more.
Read all about fruit on Stemilt's blog.

stemilt.com/subscribe



LOOK WHO'S WRITING



BRIANNA
SHALES



CORYANNE
ETTIENE



JENNIFER
FARLEY



LORIE
HOPCUS



SALLY
KUZEMCHAK



TATE
MATHISON

Subscribe to our blog for fresh
recipes and ideas about fruit.

SCENIC STOP

In the Amigos orchard looking North





Stemilt Creek Winery

We love our Wine Club Members!

Wine Club

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.



Pioneer Spirit

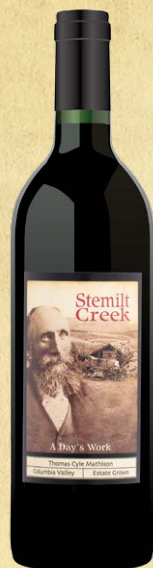
It is with great pride that we honor the pioneers who came before us through our wines at Stemilt Creek Winery. Our site-specific wines are harvested near the land planted in the late 1800's by homestead pioneer, Thomas Cyle Mathison. Jan Mathison, our winemaker, lovingly crafts the wines using grapes that Kyle Mathison grows on the same land that his family has cultivated for over a century. The wine-making 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.



www.stemiltcreekwinery.com

PAIR^{OL}OGY™

the art of pairing



Pink Lady



Kasseri



Pink Lady apples are zippy with a dense skin, tart flavor, and effervescent finish.

Kasseri is slightly tart with subtle sweetness and olive-like flavor.

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!



d'Anjou



Brie



D'Anjou pears are juicy with a sweet brisk flavor and hint of citrus.

Brie is rich and creamy cheese with a slight sweetness that contrasts the earthy flavor of the edible rind.

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.



Honeycrisp



Provolone



Honeycrisp is juicy with a refreshing sweetness similar to fresh apple cider. Just like the name implies, Honeycrisp apples are crisp with a unique skin that fractures cleanly with each bite.

Provolone is a tangy cheese that grows sharper as it ages; occasional smoky taste.

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.


WHAT'S NEW IN PRODUCE

FACEBOOK LIVE



Did you know that Facebook has 1.23 billion daily active users? The onset of new social channels hasn't slowed down Facebook, and now there are new features that can help your business extend its reach and connect to loyal customers in order to promote products and services. One feature that your business would benefit from is Facebook Live. Facebook Live is a live video that can help you connect to your consumers in an innovative way and show them what is going on in the produce world. Check out some of our tips to make the best of your Facebook Live experience:

- 1. Be strategic and have a plan.** Facebook Live is meant to be organic and raw, offering an unscripted side to your viewers. But don't be so impromptu that it comes across as unprepared and disorganized. Have a general outline and know your content, but don't be afraid to go with the flow and make the live viewing fun.
- 2. Give your fans a heads up.** Let your Facebook fans know you are going live at least a day in advance and what the video is going to be about. Giving your viewers time to prepare can increase viewership and get them excited for the upcoming discussion. Plus a little anticipation doesn't hurt!
- 3. Be descriptive.** When you begin your session, you have the chance to provide a title and give a brief description about your video. Be sure to take advantage of this component, as it can hook viewers after you have already started. Live videos are silent until a viewer clicks in, so if you have a catchy title and description, it will help draw in more of an audience. Also, be sure to remind viewers to subscribe to your live videos, so they can get a notification about you going live in the future. Just have them click the "Follow" button that is underneath the video screen during your live sessions.
- 4. Get your audience engaged during FB Live.** Encourage your viewers to ask questions and answer those questions live. When do you answer, acknowledge the viewer by name. Not only does the viewer feel appreciated, they will have a fond experience of your Facebook Live video and more than likely, tune in next time.
- 5. Promote a new product.** Use Facebook Live to promote a new product. This is a fantastic opportunity to show your viewers a fresh batch of Piñata® apples that just arrived and how delicious they look as you begin to stock the shelves.
- 6. Stream a live event.** Schedule a live event, like a demonstration or a guest speaker for your department and stream it! Make sure to promote and advertise these live video opportunities ahead of time, as it will help bring in more viewers.
- 7. Behind the scenes look.** Give your viewers a look at what goes on behind closed doors in the produce department. This could be a great way to get your customers talking.
- 8. Use Facebook Live as an educational opportunity.** Use Facebook Live as a Q&A session for consumers. Allow them to ask questions and make comments. Not only will this session get your consumer's questions answered, it will also give you an opportunity to learn what your consumers want to see in the produce department.
- 9. Remember, it's about the overall experience.** Make sure each video is entertaining, yet informative so consumers come back wanting more! The experience is just as important as the content that goes into it, so make sure it's a fun, positive atmosphere that your viewers will remember and the rest will take care of itself!

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a large quantity of small, light-brown, oval-shaped seeds. The hand is positioned over a mound of dark, rich, crumbly soil. Several seeds have already fallen onto the soil surface. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor garden setting.

PBH Donors . . . Sowing the seeds
for a healthier America, while reaping the
benefits of being a PBH supporter!

**Produce for Better Health Foundation is a recognized leader in
consumer marketing and research related to fruits and vegetables.**

PBHFoundation.org
Development@PBHFoundation.org



PARTING SHOT

Peaches ripe for picking



Naturally Farmed *for* **ULTIMATE FLAVOR**

**ALL-ORGANIC & BURSTING
WITH FLAVOR**



THE DOUGLAS FAMILY

This fourth generation farming family proudly grows Stemilt's Artisan Organics™ peaches, nectarines, and apricots. Differentiate your summer fruit category with their organic fruits!



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