

The Giumarra Companies Celebrates 100 Years in Produce

LOS ANGELES – Jan. 31, 2022 – The Giumarra Companies announces the centennial anniversary of its wholesale produce business, Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company. The company's wholesale operation was founded in Los Angeles, California in 1922 by Giuseppe "Joe" Giumarra and his brothers.

At the time of its inception, Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company (GBF) was based at the 7th Street Market in Los Angeles (formerly called L.A. Union Terminal Market), under a canopied area of the market known as "the yard." The operation sold produce, namely oranges, from a small stall.

Joe Giumarra focused on acquiring produce from growers and would make regular trips to Highland, California to source special navel oranges with excellent eating quality. At the time, his trips from Los Angeles to San Bernardino County took upwards of three days via hard-wheeled truck. His brother, George Giumarra Sr., and brother-in-law, Dominick Corsaro, managed the wholesale operation on site in Los Angeles and sold the produce Joe procured.

Joe, originally from Sicily, dreamed of growing his own produce and eventually purchased acreage in Bakersfield, California in 1939. That acreage became Giumarra Vineyards, one of the largest table grape growers in the world. In addition to growing, Giumarra Vineyards now also breeds and licenses its own extensive line of proprietary grape varieties, ARRA, in partnership with the Karniel family of Grapa Varieties.

Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company continued to operate as the family simultaneously ran Giumarra Vineyards. Don Corsaro, nephew of Dominick Corsaro and George Giumarra Sr., was brought on to run the wholesale operation in 1960.

The GBF business remained steady through the mid-1960s. Taro "Tommy" Uchizono joined the company in the late 1960s and became Don's business partner. Together, the two men ran the GBF operation and, using their collective industry experience, worked to grow the company's product and service capabilities to adapt to a changing grocery landscape as retailers began sourcing directly.

The 1970s-90s marked a period of rapid expansion for the company; leadership focused on opening new sales divisions and establishing partnerships with growers both inside and outside of the U.S., many of whom still work with Giumarra today. Notable developments included:

- **1968:** Don and Tommy, in collaboration with Don Jost, established the LTD stone fruit label and Giumarra Reedley sales division, one of the first in the industry to market truly tree-ripened fruit grown in the San Joaquin Valley of California.
- **1971:** Don met Elva "Vita" Carlota Podesta, who ran her family's business, Agrícola Santa Teresa S.A. de C.V. of Culiacán, Sinaloa, Mexico. The two entered into a business partnership to market Santa Teresa's tomatoes, and the Giumarra Nogales division was established.

- **1982:** Giumarra acquired the William E. Hooker Company, a Los Angeles produce broker, to expand the company's product line into domestic and imported apples and pears. Present day, Giumarra's apples and pears are sold under the Giumarra Wenatchee division.
- **1982:** the Escondido, California-based avocado operation was opened to give the company an on-the-ground center for packing, quality control, and marketing. Currently, the company's avocados are marketed under the Giumarra Avocado division.
- **1985:** to complement its domestic grape and tree fruit brands, the company began to market winter fruits from Chile and became one of the largest Chilean importers in North America.
- **1993:** Giumarra established a partnership with the Salazar family of Videxport S.A. de C.V., based in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, to market Videxport's grapes and watermelon. Videxport became Fair Trade Certified™ by Fair Trade USA in 2012.
- **1995:** the company imported shipments of airfreight blueberries from Chile. In the early 2000s, Giumarra began working with new berry growers from North America, including California, Georgia, Florida, and British Columbia, to round out its expanding Southern Hemisphere berry offering. Present day, Giumarra's year-round berry program is marketed under the Giumarra International Berry division.

"I often joke that I hardly recognize our company because we have changed so much in 100 years," said Don Corsaro, former President and current Chairman of the Giumarra Companies. "Our strength lies in our ability to evolve while staying true to our founding values, and we will continue to grow under our current team led by John Corsaro and Tim Riley."

In 1986, the newly-constructed Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market opened; Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company moved its operations there in 1987, from its original 7th Street Market location. The wholesale business continues to operate and is run by division manager Chuck Anunciacion, a 47-year veteran in the produce industry.

"I'm humbled as I reflect on the late nights, early mornings, and grit of our past leaders and employees who all contributed to the Giumarra Companies in its modern form. We look forward to sharing the next evolution of our business with the world as we focus on services, technology, and of course, great-tasting produce," said John Corsaro, Chief Executive Officer of the Giumarra Companies.

About the Giumarra Companies

The Giumarra Companies is a leading international network of fresh produce growers, distributors, and marketers that encompasses a world of flavor and freshness. Since its inception in 1922, the company has taken pride in a longstanding commitment to quality, service, and industry leadership. Products packed under Giumarra's trusted family of brands are supported by a suite of top-tier services and enjoyed by consumers daily. Together with our partners, we're feeding the world in a healthy way. Visit us at www.giumarra.com.