

A sweet story

The Mastronardi family ups the flavor in our favorite fruits and veggies

by ERIN SILVER



Paul Mastronardi

COURTESY OF MASTRONARDI

For more than 70 years, the Mastronardi family has been growing flavorful fruits and vegetables for the North American market. Headquartered in Kingsville, Ontario, with greenhouses in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, plus distribution centers in the U.S. and Canada, the family-run business began with incredible foresight.

“Our Grandpa Umberto Mastronardi’s vision in the 1940s was to provide people with incredible-tasting, fresh, greenhouse-grown vegetables all year long,” says Paul Mastronardi, president and CEO.

Rather than relying on traditional farming methods, in 1954, the company was among the first to bring commercial greenhouse growing to North America. The decision to grow produce in a controlled, indoor setting completely revolutionized the produce industry.

“Umberto correctly believed that people wanted to see fresh produce on the shelves 12 months a year, and this drove his business decisions,” says Mastronardi. His grandfather went on to introduce many new products to the North American market, including the English cucumber and the cherry tomato.

Today, thanks to its high-tech mega greenhouses, the company continues to innovate with new products like Sunset Campari tomatoes, Flavor Bombs on-the-vine tomatoes, Wow Dreamberry Strawberries and Queen of Greens Fierce Mix™ Lettuce.

“Our obsession with flavor informs everything we do,” says Mastronardi. “Every time someone brings home one of our products, we want them to have that moment of ‘Wow!’”

Known for its culture of creativity, Mastronardi Produce is driven by innovation—“whether it’s seeking out the best new variety, perfecting quality or developing new packaging solutions,” says Mastronardi.

Always on the lookout for new products to bring to its consumers, the company has a dedicated research and development facility where it’s testing a variety of new products. “We have over 500 varieties of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, berries and lettuce in trials,” says Mastronardi.

The company does it all with the planet in mind. Its high-tech greenhouse ensures that it uses the just right amount of water, light and fertilizer to grow the most consistent and flavorful produce all year round. ■

FAMILY MATTERS

As president and CEO of Mastronardi Produce and a Costco member, Paul Mastronardi is actively involved in varietal development, strategy, marketing and maintaining relationships with customers. His father, Don, is executive chairman and his brother-in-law, Kevin Safrance, oversees the company’s farms, new business development and strategic initiatives. Paul’s cousin, Jason Bucko, is the longtime SVP of sales. “One of the keys to our success,” says Mastronardi, “has been passing down knowledge from generations and challenging each other to continually improve.”—ES

COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of Mastronardi produce is available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Erin Silver is a Toronto-based freelance writer and author.