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## **Bon named Divine Flavor sales VP**

By

Tad Thompson

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Carlos Bon Jr. became the vice president of sales for Divine Favor LLC on Oct. 1. His appointment follows the Oct. 1 retirement of Pedro Batiz Sr.

Batiz is a popular and highly respected veteran of the Mexican vegetable production and export

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business. For decades he has been a leader in the North American produce business.

Carlos Bon's late father, Carlos Bon Sr., tragically died years ago. But his son credits his father and other family owner members of Divine Flavor and Grupo Alta for teaching him the right way to produce a successful produce business. "I learned from the best. I had very good teachers. First, it was my dad, at an early age." He credits Alan Aguirre Sr., the director general of Grupo Alta, which created and operates Divine Flavor, as being a perfectionist and great teacher in the business world. "I had wonderful opportunities working with Pedro Batiz." He credits Batiz for his extensive knowledge of the produce industry; and with being a very warm, nice, likeable person. "Someone I spoke to this morning called Pedro a 'big old teddy bear.'"

Bon indicated that his promotion from sales manager is another step of a new generation coming into leadership roles at Divine Flavor. Clarisa Batiz, who is Pedro's daughter, "is now managing all of our organic veg, which is one of the largest parts of our company," Bon noted. Her position is "a big, big role" in the family business.

Bon said, "Luis Batiz, who heads the conventional vegetable category, provides continuity and experience to that department and is a key member of our company to make this transition smooth."

In 2019, Bon took over the organic vegetable program. He now leads the firm's conventional hot house and conventional dry vegetable production, in addition to overseeing all Divine Flavor sales.

He said that table grape sales account for two-thirds of Divine Flavor's business volume.

"The young team has matured quite a bit and we all share the values that the board has had." Thus, he expects "no big changes" from a path that has led to great success and growth.

"We're at a place we like where everyone is at. But we still have a lot of room to grow."

Grupo Alta is headquartered in Hermosillo, Sonora. Divine Flavor's head office is within a sprawling modern warehouse on a hilltop in Nogales, AZ.

### **Divine Flavor's fall deal**

Bon and Michael DuPuis, quality assurance and public relations coordinator, recently returned from traveling to review Divine Flavor's Jalisco farms. The company this spring enjoyed its first commercial-volume shipments from a new Jalisco vineyard. But Divine Flavor is also expanding its Jalisco vegetable production, where the firm first had production five years ago.

This year, Divine Flavor deepened its relationship with independent vegetable growers. The Jalisco growers "are 100 percent aligned with the pillars of our company," Bon said. These involve "visions of what needs to be done with quality, food safety and being responsible with our people and the environment." All the production meets the highest standards for traceability and good agricultural practices. There is new packaging machinery in the growing area to enable the firm to provide customers with high flexibility in packaging options.

Bon credits DuPuis with "doing a fantastic job" in working with those growers. "Michael has everyone's ear. He is on top of things."

This season marks Divine Flavor's first conventional Bell pepper shipments from Jalisco. Conventionally produced Romas and grape tomatoes are also being shipped by Divine Flavor from

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four Jalisco hothouses.

This production begins in October, to establish “good value and quality” in the fall market before the company’s production picks up to the north from Sinaloa in November. Most of Sinaloa’s production runs from December into May.

Jalisco vegetable production lasts through the winter, complementing that of Sinaloa. Jalisco’s production volume declines through the spring, ending in April. Divine Flavor also has large volumes of spring and summer vegetable production in Sonora and northern Baja.

Jalisco has had little rain this fall and so, with plenty of irrigation, there has been unimpaired production. “So far, everything is good. There have been no issues,” Bon said Oct. 19.

As to the Jalisco grape business, DuPuis noted the staff there “couldn’t be more excited with the first year” of production. “A lot of exciting things are heading our way,” DuPuis said.

*Photo: Carlos Bon Jr. and Pedro Batiz Sr. of Divine Flavor LLC at the firm’s Vivaorganica packinghouse. Photo by Tad Thompson*

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