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# Columbine leads with its proprietary Milano and Holiday varieties

By

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With its two proprietary varieties leading the way, Columbine Vineyards, based in Delano, CA, produces more than 15 table grape varieties and is anticipating many different promotional opportunities for retailers.

“Our California season is looking great. The weather has been really good during the growing season. Temperatures have been higher the past couple of weeks, however the grapes are looking and tasting terrific,” said Senior Vice President and General Manager David Watson. “Our Flames, Sugraones and Summer Royals kicked off the week of June 28 and we are expecting a great year for the rest of our varieties throughout the season.”



Watson singled out Columbine’s two most popular proprietary varieties: Holiday and Milano. He called Holiday a large, sweet, highly sought after seedless red grape, while Milano is a large, crunchy green grape with a sweet flavor profile. “For us, the Columbine proprietary varieties, Milano and Holiday, will have the best promo opportunity. However, all conventional varieties and organics have promotable volumes throughout the season. We kick off our exclusive varieties in July for Milano and August for Holiday,”

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he said.

Watson is anticipating continued support from the retail community as he noted “the import season proved to be challenging leaving retailers without promotable product; therefore, we believe there will be an opportunity to promote more heavily during the California domestic season.”

New for Columbine this season is the opportunity to offer organic Holiday grapes to its customers.

“We look forward to this launch as we continue to offer an organic portfolio across the board,” Watson said. “Currently, Columbine’s organic grape program includes red, green, and black varieties as well as Holiday and we plan to continue expanding our organic offerings each year.”

He added that Columbine is continually evolving the variety mix as well as the organization to better serve its customers.

“From expanding our organic offerings including bringing organic Holiday to the market, to growing the team with essential leaders including Louis Gonzales, director of farming, we are continually improving the business, keeping our customers’ needs top of mind.”

There are challenges this year for the California table grape industry, but Watson expressed confidence that the Columbine will handle those concerns. “Across the industry, everyone is experiencing transportation rate increases and scarcity of trucks,” he said. “We are hopeful that the entire supply chain will correct itself sooner than later.”

He also noted the labor shortage gripping the industry but said Columbine has not yet had trouble securing harvesting crews.

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