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**Divine Flavor begins South American grape program with emphasis on quality, flavor and sustainable partners**

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As the end of the year approaches, table grape supplies will start ramping up for grower-importer [Divine Flavor](#) as the Peruvian crop is already under way.

The Nogales, AZ-based company, which just visited with its grower partners in the Ica region of Peru, is eager for a stronger season in terms of quality and total volume of premium grapes such as Sweet Globe and Autumn Crisp, and for the first time ever, organic Autumn Crisp.

Through strategic partnership, Divine Flavor has been expanding its growing territories all throughout South America (mostly in Peru and Chile) and working with well-established growers who put an emphasis on sustainable agriculture, social programs and producing superb quality table grapes.



Casursa, Gerd Burmester and Antonio Escobar of Divine Flavor

Rafael Cilloniz of Agricola

“When it comes to our products, and in this case table grapes, we are always looking at different growing regions throughout the world, and for growers who have passion and experience for producing high-quality and flavorful products so we can keep delivering our customers premium grapes during the entire year,” said Antonio Escobar, category manager for grapes at Divine Flavor. “Peru seems to be one of the world’s best regions for producing quality grapes and our teams do a fantastic job down here, not only with producing these varieties, but complying with every facet of the industry requirements.”

Divine Flavor’s import deal also includes shipments from South Africa, which the company started last season and will continue for 2022, as well as shipments from Chile, as it connects to the firm’s recently added vineyards in Jalisco, Mexico, which starts in April just before the Sonora, Mexico

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deal.

“South Africa is starting to come along with new varieties too,” added Escobar. “Chile has years of experience and passion for grapes, and our Jalisco, Mexico, crop will continue its growth. As all of this comes together, consumers will have the best table grapes from around the world these next few months.”

In the past few years, Divine Flavor has been working more with licensed IFG growers overseas to stretch the availability of their top variety lineup, and this includes their popular Cotton Candy grapes, but also Gummyberries and Jellyberries -- premium varieties well established in their Mexico operations.

“Cotton Candy is really a challenge and sometimes risky for the import deal,” said Escobar. “It’s tough to reach peak flavor and then put it on a boat for 15-plus days. We always want to meet the demand for the high-flavored grapes, but it requires a lot of discipline because at the end of the day, we want to offer our customers the best quality fruit even if it’s in small quantities. Every year we have an opportunity to get better at it.”

In related news, the company announced Gerd Burmester has joined the Divine Flavor team and will work as grower relations coordinator in Peru. Burmester operated as Commercial Director of Ecosac Agricola (a current grape partner of Divine Flavor in Peru) for the past nine years, and he also serves as co-founder and Commercial Director of BBC Fresh Group, a company whose main functions are helping small to medium-size companies with direct export of fruit and representation of prestigious companies to establish procurement base in Peru.

“With Divine, I am accompanying them to define of a solid grape procurement base here in Peru,” said Burmester. “We are selecting the correct companies and assisting the commercial process from the very beginning so that in the future Divine Flavor has strategic suppliers who share the same values: high-quality fruit which is grown responsibly.”

This year’s Peruvian season is estimated to see around 64 million boxes of table grapes in total production. Other varieties include Sable, Allison, Timco, Jack Salutes, Crimsons and Thompsons.

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