
*In Memory of
Marcos Mada*



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Longtime produce veteran Marcos Mada remembered

By

February 15, 2024

Marcos Mada, a longtime produce veteran, died peacefully at his home in Rio Rico, AZ, on Sunday, Jan. 14, with his loving wife at his side after battling heart disease and other complications for the last two years.

Mr. Mada was one of those rare characters that you hope to meet and get to know during your lifetime. He was an old-style produce guy — tough, honest, hard-working and hard-partying, but with that essential human touch that is often missing in today's world. Mr. Mada was the rare individual who could and did interact with everyone from the lowest levels of an organization to the highest, including CEOs and owners. He was comfortable with and positively impacted nearly everyone with whom he interacted.

Mr. Mada was born in 1956, grew up in Nogales, AZ, and got a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas. He worked in the produce and transportation departments for a few years before joining the Andrade group through Global Transcontinental in 1993. When Del Monte Fresh Produce entered the Mexican vegetable deal in 1993 through its Mexican ownership at the time (Rolando Andrade was part of the Mexican ownership), Mr. Mada became part of Del Monte and started his eventual 17-year run with the company. It was clear early on that he could get things accomplished due to his knowledge of the industry and his work ethic, but it was the relationships he developed with everyone along the way that really helped him make things happen.

Mr. Mada was soon moved to Del Monte's headquarters in Miami after a short stint running Del Monte's warehouse in McAllen, TX. Mr. Mada is still remembered today in McAllen produce circles as that hard-partying Del Monte guy who helped develop and grow their operation there. In Miami, he served in many key roles, including product coordination manager-bananas and pineapples, GM Chicago DC, vice president HQ sales (Walmart / Sam's Division), vice president DC operations North America, and vice president avocado - tomato and vegetable program.

Mr. Mada developed strong and lasting relationships throughout both North America and Central and South America during those years. He was especially proud of the one-and-a-half years he spent turning around Chicago and DC, and of his last position at Del Monte, starting and growing its avocado business.

Mr. Mada did not want to move to Chicago from Miami. He agreed to do so only because of his loyalty to the company. The Chicago operation was failing badly at the time and needed a tough leader who could make the needed changes and establish the key relationships that would make the business successful. Chicago was especially difficult because of the heavy union environment that Del Monte was not accustomed to at that time. Mr. Mada proved to be very successful at this job, making it one of Del Monte's top performing DCs, and later was able to return to Miami.

In 2003, Del Monte had the opportunity to enter the avocado business, and there was only one man for the job — Marcos Mada. Over the next seven years, Mr. Mada developed and grew this business from scratch. He could staff and develop operations in Mexico, California and South America. When

he left Del Monte in late 2010, the business was highly profitable, with revenues approaching \$200 million. Mr. Mada demonstrated he was a visionary leader in developing the avocado business and was instrumental in developing the Mexican avocado industry as we know it today. He mentored and had a significant impact on many people over those years.

Mr. Mada loved people and had a large extended family at Del Monte. It was well known, and by his own admission, that he was not athletically inclined. His idea of exercise was doing anything long enough to accommodate an adult beverage in hand. However, he was very sociable and had a keen sense of opportunity for anything involving more than two people. If it sounded fun, even if it required running shoes, bicycles and a bit of huffing and puffing. A cold beer at the finish line scored bonus points.

In late 2010, Mr. Mada took a job as senior director of global food sourcing for Walmart in California. He wanted to return to the West Coast to be closer to his mom, who was getting older. He worked there for three years, setting up buying programs for avocados, melons, grapes and citrus. As was usual for Mr. Mada, he developed many strong ties and relationships and mentored many people over those years. In 2014, he left Walmart and joined Coast Produce. During this time, he alternated between Los Angeles and Nogales. Eventually, he started spending more time in Nogales to be closer to and care for his mom. In 2016, he started a consulting business with his lifelong friend Jerry Wagner and continued with that until he retired.

Mr. Mada left an indelible mark on everyone he worked with. Anyone could tell that he was in the room because his joyful laugh was contagious. Mr. Mada was not always easy, but once you were his friend, you were a friend for life. Mr. Mada is part of a fading era of produce people who worked hard, partied hard, and developed deep and lasting relationships. He may have been a little too rough around the edges for today's standards, but to all of Mr. Mada's peers, friends and colleagues, he will always be fondly remembered.

Mr. Mada is survived by his loving wife, Ana Mada, his mother, Jaimina Barraza, and daughter Czary Mireles-Rodriguez. He was preceded in death by his brother, Nacho Barraza.

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