

Volumes are up for Sundale Vineyards this year in all key varieties

BY RAND GREEN

Sundale Sales Inc. in Tulare, CA, has an increase in acreage for the early grape deal in the San Joaquin Valley and for the rest of the season as well, according to President Sean Stockton.

"All of our volumes are up this year in each and every variety," he said. "We have increased plantings in all of our key varieties."

For the early season, "we will have our own Sugraones and Flames, starting somewhere around July 15th, and we will have Summer Royals probably a week or so later. By the third week of July, we should have all three," he said May 30.

This is the second year that Sundale has had Sugraones, "and we have increased acreage," Mr. Stockton said. "We have increased acreage in Flames as well." The vineyards are located in the Tulare area.

For the latter part of the season, the company has increased acreage this year in such varieties as Scarlet Royal, Autumn King and its proprietary Sundale Red variety.

With the start of the season



Pete Giotta, Brady Johnston, Christy Salazar, Sean Stockton and Michael Astorga of Sundale Sales Inc. (Photo courtesy of Sundale Sales Inc.)

fast approaching, "our focus has been primarily on getting our [grapes] started in July," Mr. Stockton said. "We spend a lot of time out in the fields. The fruit looks fantastic."

Growing conditions "have been ideal," and "all our pre-season planning is coming into focus and is right on schedule with what we had predicted."

There is "a lot of pre-harvest

activity going on out there [in the vineyards] right now," he said.

Last fall, Sundale completed a major expansion to its cold storage facility. That expansion

added cold storage capacity for about 150,000 additional boxes to the existing facility, as well as additional pre-cooling capacity and the addition of a house pack facility.

Earlier in 2011, the company completed construction of a new 5,500-square-foot office addition.

"This will be the first season that our facility is fully ready to be used" from the start of the harvest through the entire season, Mr. Stockton said. "From start to finish, we will have everything burning on all cylinders. We are excited about our house pack facility that we completed the end of October last year and being able to utilize that for the full season this year."

Sundale will continue to pack grapes in an assortment of pack styles, including "our conventional slider bag and two, three and four-pound clamshells," he said.

In addition, the company will be packing some fruit in gusseted stand-up bags.

"We played around with the gusseted bag last year," he said. "This will be our first full season doing it from start to finish."