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JASMINE VINEYARDS

Firm has several new varieties in production or on the way



Brian Crettol of Jasmine Vineyards with some 'MV' brand grapes.

BY RAND GREEN

DELANO, CA — "We have a few new varieties that we have put in the ground," said Brian Crettol, a salesman at Jasmine Vineyards, here. Some of the new varieties are coming into production this year for the first time, some are increasing in production, and some have yet to come into production. There are also plans to plant some new varieties in the near future.

Two of the new varieties are Sweet Celebration and Sweet Sunshine, proprietary cultivars developed by International Fruit Genetics, "a privately owned breeding program that we are licensees of," said Mr. Crettol, who joined the company in March and was previ-

ously with Castle Rock Vineyards. "We planted Sweet Sunshine already," with the first harvest expected probably in 2011. "Sweet Celebration is going in the ground hopefully next year."

Celebration is similar to Holiday red seedless, he said. A mid-to-late-season grape, it has "great color, good eating quality and big berries." It has a timing similar to Crimson and is "a really good variety" for that time frame.

Crimsons are a good grape but "difficult to color, they are difficult to grow, and they are expensive to grow," he said. "Why grow Crimson when you can grow ... these other varieties with lower production costs and just as nice fruit or even

nicer?"

There are other new proprietary red varieties that have been introduced with similar timing, but none of them compare to Celebration "just because of the size and eating quality," he said.

Sweet Sunshine is a late green seedless variety. It will harvest after Thompson, about the same time as Autumn King, Mr. Crettol said. "The eating quality is good, and they are just massive. They are like this long," he said, holding his thumb and forefinger about an inch-and-a-half apart, "and they can get almost an inch in diameter."

Expected timing for the varieties is only approximate, since "we don't have a whole lot of experience growing them yet," he said. Industry experience with the Princess variety, for example, demonstrates the point that new varieties do not always prove to have the timing expected. Princess was supposed to be a late grape but comes on much earlier for most growers than initially anticipated.

Jasmine also has Scarlet Royal, a new mid-season red seedless variety that follows Flames. The company had some of those last year. "We also have Vintage Red," another late-season variety that is "very similar to a Crimson" but easier to grow and easier to color, he said.

The company has Autumn King, as well. That is a late-season green seedless. "We had some of that ... last year," Mr. Crettol said. "Quality was very good, and we planted more of it. It looks to be a really good variety. It is going to fit into that late deal. I think it will push those Brazilian Festivals out of the market."

Jasmine also has most of the standard varieties except Sugraones, he said.

The company, which has production in the Arvin and Delano areas in the San Joaquin Valley, started July 6 this year with Flames, followed by Summer Royals July 7. "I think I'm starting on Thompsons probably tomorrow," he said July 13. Varieties yet to come included Princess, Autumn Royal and Red Globe.

"A lot of Globes go to Asia," he said. "Our 'M&V' label is a very sought-after label in Asia."

Domestic labels are "Jasvine," "Vinmar" and, "for our higher-end stuff," the "M&V" label, he said.

Jasmine just recently installed a clamshell packingline and packs single-color, bicolor and tricolor clamshells in two-, three- and four-pound sizes. "The clamshell business is definitely a growing business," he said.

A large advertisement for Sundale Vineyards. The top part features the vineyard logo, which includes a stylized leaf and the text "SUNDALE VINEYARDS". Below the logo is a photograph of a vineyard with a path leading through the rows. The text "Bringing Quality to the Table" is written in a large, elegant script across the middle. At the bottom, there are three clusters of grapes: red, blue, and green. Below the grapes, the phone number "559-687-7770" is displayed, followed by the names "Sean Stockton • Brady Johnston" and "Peter Giotta • Christy Salazar". The bottom of the ad features three logos: "California Table Grapes", "Sundale Vineyards", and "MOTHER EARTH ORGANIC TABLE GRAPES".

California Table Grapes



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