

# Coastal Grower

SUMMER | 2022





# AUSONIO

I N C O R P O R A T E D

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES



**Recently Completed : CSUMB Cardinale Football Stadium**

### PROJECT DETAILS

\$13 M Renovation

5,700 New Stadium Seats

New Stadium Lights

New Scoreboard

Press Box

Concession Stands



Ausonio Incorporated has just wrapped up the construction management of the CSUMB Cardinale Football Stadium. CSUMB owns the stadium and the Monterey Bay Football Club Union financed the majority of construction and leases the space. This is our first Professional Team and College Stadium we have overseen the work on, and the very first local Professional Soccer team on the Peninsula.

A little history on the project: The property used to be the Army's Fort Ord Warriors football stadium. After sitting with very little use for many years, it has been repurposed as a soccer stadium. Out with Football and in with Futbol!

Alvarado Street Brewery, another past client of Ausonio, has partnered with CSUMB as the main vendor at the Stadium, solidifying this as the place to be for a great game, cold beer, and good eats.

Another successful project overseen by Ausonio Incorporated's Construction Management division, we hope you can come check out this wonderful new space.

## WHAT CAN AUSONIO BUILD FOR YOU?



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be accessible

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# be well



Our Mobile Health Clinic is dedicated to increasing access to care for families in Monterey County's most medically underserved areas. From primary care to vaccines and preventive care services, Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System believes sometimes, we have to go beyond our walls to do what is best for community health.

**Learn more about our Mobile Health Clinic at [SVMH.com/MobileClinic](https://www.svmh.com/MobileClinic)**

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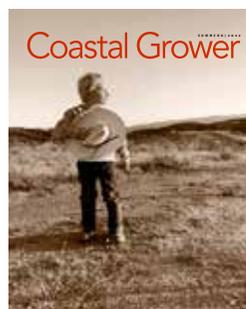
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*"The next generation ready to carry on the legacy."*

Photo by Kara Fanning

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# Cheers!

The 2021 Monterey County Crop Report was released in July and the cover artwork and theme reflected what the Salinas Valley is commonly referred to: “The Salad Bowl of the World.”

However, for the second year in a row, strawberries, not leafy greens, have taken the number one rank with an increase of 4.9 percent and a value of \$968,086,000. Simply driving through the valley and seeing the “strawberry fields forever” has me wondering...is our salad bowl becoming the berry basket?

One wonderful thing about a salad it usually has a multitude of ingredients in it and if you are looking for a variety of fruits and vegetables to toss in your salad, you need look no further beyond Monterey County.

This year the crop (and livestock) report focused on the diversification of growing many different crops in one place and the beneficial impact this diversity provides the agricultural industry in the form of economic strength and resistance. Think about it as you peruse the perimeter aisles of your grocery store...from the dairy selection, to the meat counter, the wine aisle and the produce department...each one has a product that is produced here in Monterey County.

Compare that to, say, the state of Iowa. The state produces vast amounts of corn, soybeans, eggs, pork and cattle but doesn't come close to the number of different commodities that are grown here in Monterey County. If one crop were to take a hit due to disease, recalls or weather events, is there enough robustness in the others to make up for it?

One example of the economic importance of this diversification was what happened to the wine grape crop in 2020. Because of wildfires and the pandemic production was down 43 percent. However, overall industry decline in Monterey County was just 11.3 percent because other crops

were not impacted at such a level. Compare that to Napa County in 2020 where over 90 percent of the agriculture value was in wine grapes. They, too, were impacted by wildfires and the county's overall value saw a 51 percent decrease.

The crop report ranks the top 10 commodities, but a deeper dive shows floral production, cannabis, seed and field crops (over 30 commodities in total). Here's a fun fact: If Monterey County were to be considered a state, total production surpasses over 20 of the other states. Production of 26 commodities exceeds the \$12 million value mark, with 10 commodities exceeding \$100 million.

Noted every year when the crop report is released, these values represent the gross value of the commodities and does not consider costs associated with labor, field preparation, planting, irrigating, harvesting and distribution. These costs continue to increase but the industry is making strides to offset them using innovative technologies and seed varieties to help increase yields and ward off pest infestation and disease.

Monterey County really is “The Salad Bowl of the World” both figuratively and statistically. That salad contains many different ingredients (even strawberries!). The next time you visit the grocery store take a moment to reflect on how many assorted products from Monterey County can be found in so many different sections. Not many states or regions can make that claim to fame.

Think about this the next time you order a meal at a restaurant...the salad course, your main entrée with a protein, the fresh berries for dessert and the glass of wine to accompany it all. Thank you and cheers to you, Monterey County!



# Contributors



## BILL HASTIE

Bill is the managing partner of Hastie Financial Group (HFG), a registered investment advisory firm. He earned a B.S in Economics from Cal Poly, an M.B.A in Financial Planning from Golden Gate University, and holds the Certified Investment Management Analyst® (CIMA®) and Accredited Investment Fiduciary Analyst® (AIFA®) designations



## JESS BROWN

Jess serves as executive director of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau and the educational organization Agri-Culture. His community activities include past president of the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County, Monterey Museum of Art, Cabrillo College Foundation and Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. Jess served as chairman of Goodwill Industries for Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. He served as commissioner of the Santa Cruz County Parks and Recreation Department. Currently, Jess serves on the board for Leadership Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce and chair of the Tannery Arts Center.



## MIKE HALE

Salinas native Mike Hale is a freelance writer who spent a long career in local journalism, working in various stints as both an editor and writer with the Salinas Californian, Santa Cruz Sentinel and the Monterey Herald. In 2014 he helped jumpstart KRML radio (94.7 FM) in Carmel, creating community-based programming for the “Locals Station for the Monterey Bay.” He is now semi-retired, enjoying traveling abroad and discovering new adventures along the way.



## JENNA HANSON ABRAMSON

Jenna grew up in Salinas and returned in 2007 after receiving her B.A. in Mass Communications and Journalism from CSU, Fresno. In 2013, she founded the lifestyle website, Mavelle Style, to inspire other food loving, fashionistas and in 2016 she expanded her brand and developed Mavelle Media, a marketing communications boutique consultancy. When Jenna is not working on creative campaigns or blogging about being a stylish business owner, she can be found hiking, cooking, dabbling in photography or enjoying the Monterey County food and wine scene with her husband.



## PATRICK TREGENZA

Patrick operates a thriving commercial photography studio in downtown Monterey. Celebrating his 25th year in business, Patrick is proud that his list of clients and interesting projects continue to grow. Targeting the agriculture industry as being one of the most dynamic areas of local commerce, Patrick carved out a niche and is recognized as a leader in photographing food and produce. Most recently, he has expanded his repertoire to apply his lighting and compositional skills to live action video so he can accommodate the ever increasing demand for compelling web content.



## MAC MCDONALD

Mac McDonald was a reporter, columnist and editor of the GO! weekly entertainment and dining section for the Monterey County Herald for 22 years. He was also Managing Editor of the Carmel Pine Cone for seven years. He is currently a freelance writer and editor writing about virtually every subject under the sun, from music, art, food and sports to marketing and public relations.



### STEPHANIE BOUQUET

Stephanie is a registered dietitian and owner of SB Nutrition Consulting. She holds a B.S. in nutritional science from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and an M.S. in dietetics with a dietetic internship from Cal State University, Northridge. Since 1993 Stephanie has practiced in the field of nutrition with specialized board certifications in weight management, diabetes and sports nutrition. She offers individualized nutrition consultations, group style classes, athletic team presentations and wellness coaching services. As a native of Salinas, Stephanie returned to the area to raise her own family. For more information visit [www.sbnutrition.net](http://www.sbnutrition.net).



### EMILY BASANESE

Emily is the Social Media Manager and Head of Community at Strock Real Estate in Aptos. At Strock, she loves writing the community newsletter, spotlighting local businesses on social media, and collaborating with community members. Emily has lived in San Benito County her entire life and currently lives within walking distance to downtown San Juan Bautista with her husband Josh. Outside of work, she enjoys thrifting furniture, wine tasting, and reading with her cat Archie on the window seat at home.



### ELIZABETH JIMENEZ

Elizabeth Jimenez serves as Grants and Communications Manager of Rancho Cielo. Previously she was the Education Programs Director at the National Steinbeck Center. She has dedicated herself to promoting academic programs for the past 20 years. Elizabeth has a bachelor's degree in Communication from the University of Aguascalientes, MX (UAA), and a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Guanajuato, MX (UG). Elizabeth grew up in South Monterey County and returned in 2019 after living in Mexico. She advocates for our local youth and believes strongly in transforming individuals and communities through education.



### BETSY WALLACE

Ms. Wallace is a writer and communications consultant specializing in education, health-care, and Central Coast businesses and non-profits. She has worked with organizations up and down the Central Coast and in the San Francisco Bay Area. She currently works as a writer and communications consultant with Armanasco Public Relations in Monterey. Ms. Wallace is a graduate of Stanford University and San Francisco State University, and currently coaches writing at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey. She resides in Carmel Valley with her two sons.



### TYLER WILLIS

Tyler is a licensed CPA with a master's degree in Taxation. He has worked at Hayashi Wayland for 5 years after beginning his accounting career in San Francisco. Tyler prides himself on taking the time to learn about his clients' businesses and how they operate. "I enjoy easing the burden of small businesses related to taxes from the emotional and financial aspects." He works with family-owned businesses of all sizes, particularly wineries and vineyards.



### MATT PRIDEY

Matt Pridey is a Real Estate Agent with Agency One Real Estate. He resides in Corral De Tierra with his wife Whitney and is well connected in the Highway 68 corridor, as well as the Monterey Peninsula. Matt is passionate about this area and the people that make these communities so special. After playing professional golf for seven years, he decided to pursue a career in real estate. Matt is also an avid hunter and fisherman. You can expect Matt to exhibit the same level of professionalism, preparation, and thoroughness utilized in his golf career to cater to his clients.

# Contributors



## ALLI PURA ELLIOTT

Alli has been in the photography business for over 15 years and has focused her talent on providing food and editorial photography to the agriculture industry and related businesses. Her background in shooting AG comes from three generations of family farming, which continues deep in her roots today. After previously spending 10 years in the San Francisco photo community, she now runs her business here in Salinas. You can find her either in her studio shooting product or out on location in the serene lettuce fields. In addition to her agriculture work, she captures portraits and lifestyle photos for personal or business needs. With a master's in photography, Alli combines her creative talent with a personal approach to capture life's moments as they happen. When she isn't photographing, she enjoys spending time with her two daughters and husband.

*Coastal Grower values the contributions of all our writers. Contributors wishing to be recognized are listed here. In some cases contributors prefer to remain unrecognized with a bio and photo, or prefer complete anonymity. In those instances articles are published with no recognition or attribution.*



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# Tour de Tours

By Emily Basanese



Finally. We are enjoying some of the longest days of the year, something I look forward to as soon as we turn our clocks back in October. It almost feels like time expands—there's a little more margin in your day. And if you ask me, more daylight means more time to explore. All of those places you pass by during your day to day, the ones that you don't have time for, those are the places you should finally visit. And maybe you're due for something beyond a visit—maybe you're due for a tour.

First stop on our Tour De Tours: San Benito County. If you haven't been to San Juan Bautista since your second grade field trip, it's time for another visit. For those of you who have been to San Juan Bautista since graduation, get ready to level up: go on the self-guided walking tour. This historic mission town is not only home to the 15th California Mission, there are also 49 historic buildings strewn throughout downtown. Visit each site and scan the QR code to learn more about the origins of the building. From the Mission itself to a smattering of residential homes, this town is teeming with

centuries of history.

On that historical note, you probably didn't know that the little town of Hollister is home to the oldest sake brewery in the country. Ozeki Sake was founded in Downtown Hollister in 1979, the first

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***Be intentional with the extra daylight you have this time of year.***

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U.S. brewery in a long lineage of Japanese breweries that date back to 1711. While tours of the facility aren't given to the public, you can actually visit the brewery itself to pick up your favorite sake products (they have flavors like strawberry, pineapple, and sparkling!). You can also get a sip at local restaurants like Inaka in San Juan Bautista. Even better, an Ozeki Sake tasting room is in the works, so stay tuned for future sake tastings!

Let's dial it up a notch. This was mentioned in last quarter's article, but now I really want to park here a bit. Or, not

park. Off Cienega Road, in the foothills of the Gabilan Mountain Range, Eden Rift Vineyards takes thrill-seeking patrons on a tour of the vineyards. Which doesn't sound that exciting, until you learn that it's on an all terrain vehicle (ATV). Yep, you get to ride on an ATV during a guided tour of the property. Of course, wine is involved too, so it's your classic best of both worlds scenario.

In Monterey County, the fun continues—and it only gets sweeter. This year, the Earthbound Farm Stand Bee Tours in Carmel Valley are BACK! Suit up, then walk around the organic farmland to several hives thoughtfully positioned throughout the property. Learn more about bees, their vital role in the ecosystem, and enjoy a honey tasting. Carmel Valley Ranch also offers a tour of their apiary, if you're looking for another option for even more sweetness.

Down every street and tucked into each courtyard, you'll find delicious restaurants in Carmel By The Sea. That's when analysis paralysis sets in, and it's difficult to decide where to eat. So why not try them all? Okay, maybe not every restaurant—but a handful of carefully picked establishments. Carmel Food Tours has curated a shortlist of eateries that are must-tries, and you can trust their judgment. I was surprised to discover so many new favorites during this tour!

Yes, you visit Monterey for Fisherman's Wharf, The Aquarium, and a steaming bowl of clam chowder that, for some reason, tastes better on the Wharf than anywhere else. No arguments here. But, if you tear yourself away from the usual suspects for an afternoon, you'll discover a secret garden—or, secret gardens. There are nearly a dozen historical gardens hidden in plain sight, strewn throughout the Monterey State Historic Park right in downtown. Get the map online, then tour through a cactus garden, a sensory garden, an herb garden, and beyond—each holds a historical significance and is lovingly tended by the local Historic Garden League.

Let's continue in Santa Cruz County, where places you might pass everyday during your commute deserve a more thorough investigation. Annieglass, a glass making studio in Watsonville, offers free studio

***All of those places you've been passing up, it's time to not only give them a visit — it's time for a proper tour.***

tours every Thursday-Saturday at 1:30pm. In their storefront you'll find whimsical glass creations, gorgeously colored and impossibly delicate. On the tour you will get to see the artisans' process to create these handmade pieces—and fair warning: you'll probably end up with a few trinkets you just had to take home with you.

We are fortunate to live in an area with no shortage of farms. Open Farm Tours is an organization that assists with arranging tours and keeping locals informed about events at farms in Santa Cruz County and beyond. From making lemon preserves at Jean's

Farm Art, to tours of Monkeyflower Ranch's cheesemaking facility, to Wild Plant Walks in Quail Hollow Ranch, you'll want to give Open Farm Tours and Santa Cruz Cultural Tours a follow to stay in tune with the farm scene!

The first Saturday of every month, you can join the Elkhorn Slough Early Bird Tour. Reaching seven miles inland from the Monterey Bay, the Elkhorn Slough is the second largest saltwater marsh in California

and home to hundreds of native species. It is estimated that over 340 different types of birds have been identified in this protected estuary. That means there's a lot to see—so pack your binoculars and a snack, then meet up with fellow bird nerds.

Be intentional with the extra daylight you have this time of year. All of those places you've been passing up, it's time to not only give them a visit—it's time for a proper tour. ☺



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# Rancho Cielo Youth Campus Building Skills, Transforming Lives

*A collaborative approach that ensures our graduates a chance to succeed*

By Elizabeth Jimenez



Each year Rancho Cielo holds its Annual Culinary Round Up at the Portola Hotel & Spa, with more than 500 guests in attendance. The western-themed event features Monterey County's Top Local Chefs and Wineries as well as the Drummond Culinary Students, who are always excited to gain hands-on experience in Rancho Cielo's main fundraiser. Money raised supports young people facing challenges for success through diploma education, vocational training, counseling, and life skills development.

## Our History

Rancho Cielo (RC) was established as a non-profit in 2000 to create a safe environment that serves as a viable pathway away from gangs and crime and ultimately leads its graduates to become self-sustaining, contributing members of society. The vision included a plan to prepare participants for living wage jobs by training RC youth in Monterey County's top three industries: Culinary/Hospitality, Construction, and Agriculture.

Through the combined efforts of the community, a 100-acre property with run-down buildings and no reliable water source was transformed into a vibrant campus in Salinas. In 2004, RC opened the

"gates of opportunity" and began providing programming to Monterey County students. RC's mission is to invest in all young people facing challenges for success through diploma education, vocational training, counseling, and life skills development in a safe and affirming environment. We have served over 1,000 out-of-school 16-24 year-old youth during our history.

Program graduates leave with a Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited high school diploma offered through our academic partner, John Muir Charter School, and the opportunity to enter the workforce and/or enroll in postsecondary education. We work with youth who learn differently and offer a chance to earn diplomas and gain job skills. We work with students to achieve health and happiness. Students learn in a safe and supportive environment that affirms them, builds self-esteem, connectedness, and belonging. Our goal is to create an atmosphere where students can develop pro-social desires, a future orientation, enhanced health and self-esteem, and a connection to our community.

## Our Community

Our community influences the programs at RC. We work with local business/industry leaders to determine the greatest

local employment needs and shape our programs around those recommendations. Projected growth in construction, agricultural technology, sustainable construction, and machine operation opens a wide net of opportunities for our local youth. By including industry and business leaders as part of our program advisory committees, we can ensure that our graduates have the best chance at success. Their involvement impacts our programming by creating opportunities for mentorship, internships, and industry exposure which enhances the work force in our community.

## Vocational Education Programs

- The Drummond Culinary Academy opened in 2010 and is a ten-month program resulting in a high school diploma and a culinary certificate by studying in the commercial kitchen with an industry professional. Students can earn stipends through a 200-hour externship program. Our articulation agreement with Monterey Peninsula College encourages pursuing higher education.
- Rancho Cielo Construction Academy opened in 2011. Students earn a diploma and stackable certificates in construction via a nationally-recognized curriculum while building Tiny Homes, emphasizing sustainable construction practices.
- Rancho Cielo worked closely with Salinas Valley agricultural leaders to identify the most important skills for developing the region's agricultural workforce. Additionally, Rancho Cielo's work-based learning programs map into Hartnell College's Agricultural Business and Technology Institute curriculum, and the students take Hartnell courses as part of their Rancho Cielo education. In August 2019, RC opened the 30,000-square-foot Ted Taylor Ag Vocational Center, which provides valuable training for highly-

skilled, living-wage agricultural jobs. The training programs to be offered within the Ag Academy include:

- Ag Technology and Engineering introduces students to the basic principles of machine operation, electrical fundamentals, applications, and technologies. They participate in project-based lessons to utilize technology to enhance crop production and conserve soil moisture and soil fertility.
- Auto/Diesel Repair opened in 2021 and offers students automotive knowledge with a basic level of training in servicing and maintenance of gas and diesel engine vehicles. Topics include safety, tool identification and usage, inspection process, engine basics, power train/transmission, suspensions/brakes, exhaust and emissions, and electrical.
- Welding and Fabrication: Coming August of 2022. Will provide participants with introductory level work around welding and fabrication.
- Rancho Cielo Youth Corps is a crew-based employment and job readiness program designed to prepare young people for full-time employment while maintaining the RC campus which includes a variety of projects pertaining to construction, plumbing and landscaping.

In addition to workforce development, our youth work closely with case managers addressing workforce readiness, life skills and leadership development, and mentorship. We offer wrap-around support through the following services:

- Referrals to outside resources, such as behavioral health, healthcare, and basic needs.



- Uniforms where required.
- Transportation within the Salinas area or pick-up at a local transit station. Bus passes are available for those that need public transportation.
- Personalized Individual Development Plan with a Case Manager focused on the following seven pillars:
  - Relationship-Building skills;
  - Life Skills/Executive Functioning Skills;
  - Health and Wellness;
  - Postsecondary Exploration;
  - Career Exploration;
  - Self-Awareness and Empowerment, and
  - Community Connectedness.
- High School Diploma education in a small classroom setting with individualized instruction.

Our overall goal is for RC graduates to become thriving community members and productive contributors to our workforce with the power to advance economically. Specifically, upon graduation, we expect that:

- Students are prepared to seek employment and upon hire, demonstrate good work habits on the job.
- Students re-engage in our community, as evidenced by working full-time and volunteering.
- Students are on the path to physical, mental, and emotional healing.
- Students have improved self-esteem and positive character and identity development.
- Students are self-sufficient and contributing members of our local economy.

### **The Best Path to Success**

Rancho Cielo creates a successful pathway to job readiness and self-sufficiency for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Jose Jimenez, a Construction Academy student from Gonzales stated: “They are actually there to help you. The teachers and case managers go beyond to make sure I succeed. They also care and ask about me.” Jose was excited to say, “Now I have a plan to graduate, work in construction and buy my own car.” And, when asked what he would say to others about Rancho Cielo, he said “At Rancho Cielo you’re not alone, there is always someone here to help you.”

### **You Can Transform a Life by Supporting Rancho Cielo**

Culinary Round Up successfully raised thousands of dollars that directly support Rancho Cielo Programs. Rancho Cielo students, by definition, have made some extremely difficult, yet positive, life changing decisions.

We appreciate the support from our community. As you support the youth at Rancho Cielo, you are investing in the success and strength of our future community. Thank you!

We have upcoming opportunities to help our students and community families with our Veggie Box & BBQ Event August 8-12, 2022. Please visit our website [www.ranchocieloyc.org](http://www.ranchocieloyc.org) or call 831-444-3530 for more information. ☺



# Fire Safe Council For Monterey County

By Mac MacDonald



**D**estructive giant wildfires, which have become increasingly frequent, have a direct effect on the burnt land and property consumed. These wildfires also have enormous impact on California's economy and on the health of its residents, during the fire event, and for a long time after the fire has been extinguished.

Economic impacts outside of direct fire damage specific to Monterey County include loss of visitor revenue on the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel and Big Sur areas, smoke damage to crops — such as wine grapes, grown in the Salinas Valley, Carmel Valley and Santa Lucia Highlands — and later, flooding and road destruction when burnt areas are hit with winter rains. Air pollution from the smoke from these massive wildfires impact the health and well-being of people far from Monterey County.

The Fire Safe Council For Monterey County (FSCMC) was initially established as a committee of the Monterey County Cattlemen's Association in the 1970s, then was reorganized multiple times. In the 1990s,

it was the Monterey Fire Safe Council. Then, in 2001, it was incorporated and received non-profit status from the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. In 2009, to clarify its role as a county-wide organization, it started doing business as the Fire Safe Council For Monterey County.

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***The Council works to reduce the risk to loss of life and of property due to wildfires by building relationships, leveraging resources, and mobilizing communities, businesses, organizations, and agencies...***

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The Council works to reduce the risk to loss of life and of property due to wildfires by building relationships, leveraging resources, and mobilizing communities, businesses, organizations, and agencies, all to reduce wildfire fuel accumulation and other wildfire control measures, thereby helping protect

lives, property, and resources, reducing the damage caused by wildfires.

The Council serves all of Monterey County and has helped advise and manage a multitude of fire safety projects, such as wildfire fuel reduction, public education, and residential chipper programs. The Council was instrumental in organizing the collaborative committee that drafted the Monterey County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and it supported the creation of a position for a County Forest Health Coordinator.

Working with their partners: local fire agencies, CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, local government and others, it is poised to act as a central resource and coordinator for wildfire preparedness, building collaboration between communities, local stakeholders and existing agencies while helping to bring outside resources into the County.

As 2022 began with the Colorado fire in January, the Council was preparing for another year of challenges, realizing that fire season is no longer a season but an ongoing threat. The work of fire safe councils is, by its nature, ongoing and permanent. Government alone cannot address wildfire fuel reduction and fire-safe education at the scale needed without the partnership of local stakeholders and volunteers.

Vigilance and maintenance by all stakeholders and landowners are needed to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors selected the Council as the organization they recommended to apply for a California Fire Safe Council grant to hire a County Coordinator position.

The coordinator will organize, coordinate and assess county-wide activities related to wildfire mitigation. The coordinator will complete a comprehensive review of existing wildfire mitigation groups and their projects and identify opportunities to improve partnerships, communications

and cooperation. The coordinator will also facilitate building relationships between community partners and county emergency management personnel.

The neighbor-helping-neighbor model of Firewise USA®, a recognition program of the National Fire Protection Association, provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and community and to reduce wildfire risks at the local level. It presents a way to achieve goals of fire education and risk reduction in the wildland urban interface that is inclusive and likely more cost-effective than a penalty-laden approach of code enforcement.

In 2020, the Council introduced an online workshop to assist homeowners. There are now more than 17 county communities that have been recognized and more in progress. These volunteer and non-profit groups, however, need stable minimum

funding to cover administrative costs, which frequently are not covered by gift and grant funding.

Future challenges include identifying resources for volunteers who participate in wildfire fuel reduction and creating defensible space. Often, volunteers are deterred for fear of liability. The Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program (DSWVP), under the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), was created to aid in response and recovery phases in a disaster or emergency. This program serves as a model for what we hope can be used to create similar coverage for the work of Fire Safe Councils and Firewise USA® communities. That work is ongoing and permanent. Vegetation will grow back, vigilance and maintenance of our lands to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires is essential. Volunteers need support to tackle the overwhelming amount of work that needs to be done.

Many home, business and farm/ranch owners state that their insurance companies have no premium reductions for participating in Firewise USA® communities that are mentioned under California's "Safer from Wildfires" framework. Under this framework, however, the California Department of Insurance states that 13 insurance companies representing 40 percent of the marketplace offer discounts (<https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/105-type/95-guides/03-res/Insurers-Currently-Offering-Discounts.cfm>). Many of the listed insurer websites do not mention this discount.

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***Vigilance and maintenance by all stakeholders and landowners are needed to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires.***

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One of the largest insurers, State Farm Insurance, has many agents who know Firewise USA®. There are insurers, including California's Fair Plan, that recognize communities' preparation for wildfire as part of their assessment plan. They recommend that the California Department of Insurance reach out to insurance companies and encourage them to increase their support of policy holders to organize and partner in safer communities, such as Firewise USA®. This encouragement should extend to insurance agent education on safer communities and agent encouragement of policy holders to form, join and participate in safer communities, such as Firewise USA®.

Support for removal of dead and/or burnt trees and maintaining fire breaks is another major challenge. Some of the largest landowners in Monterey County are the federal government and state of California. For decades, the federal and state governments have neglected fuel management on the lands and have worked to suppress small fires that under normal circumstances would have reduced fuel in a natural way. After large fires, burnt and dead trees are providing additional fuel to burn what little is left of the forest and rangelands. The Council is concerned about the impediment to fuel reduction, dead tree removal and firebreak



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**"irreplaceable impact"**  
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maintenance on these lands.

The large amount of fuel, coupled recently with the multiple large fires in the Santa Lucia Mountain range, has set us up for future disasters. Very hot mega fires can ultimately turn renewable forests into deserts. Hot mega fires result in soils becoming sterile and hydrophobic. These soils lack means to regenerate forest growth. When winter rains come, the soils are washed away, causing giant mud and rock slides, often with gigantic debris fields that cause destruction downstream.

These debris flow effects have resulted in large impacts to state and county road improvement budgets, taking away funding from planned improvements and maintenance to address emergency rebuild and repairs the Council advocates for expedited fuel reductions on government-owned lands.

One possibility is for the governor's office to declare areas of government-owned lands wildfire disaster areas and to suspend some laws and regulations that significantly impede fuel reductions and maintenance of fire breaks.

The California Forest Foundation has an interesting website discussing this effect and the possibilities of combating this effect through forest thinning, small, prescribed burns and doing forest management work after a large fire to prevent long-term desertification. here is the website: [calforestfoundation.org/wildfire](http://calforestfoundation.org/wildfire).

New technology such as ALERTWildfire camera installation in remote settings and the Ag Pass program, which enables trained agricultural workers to access their lands during a wildfire emergency to protect crops, livestock and structures, are a few of the major initiatives the Council continues to work on. Please consider supporting and joining our efforts to prepare Monterey County for wildfires.

For more information on the Council and its work, go to: [firesafemonterey.org](http://firesafemonterey.org).



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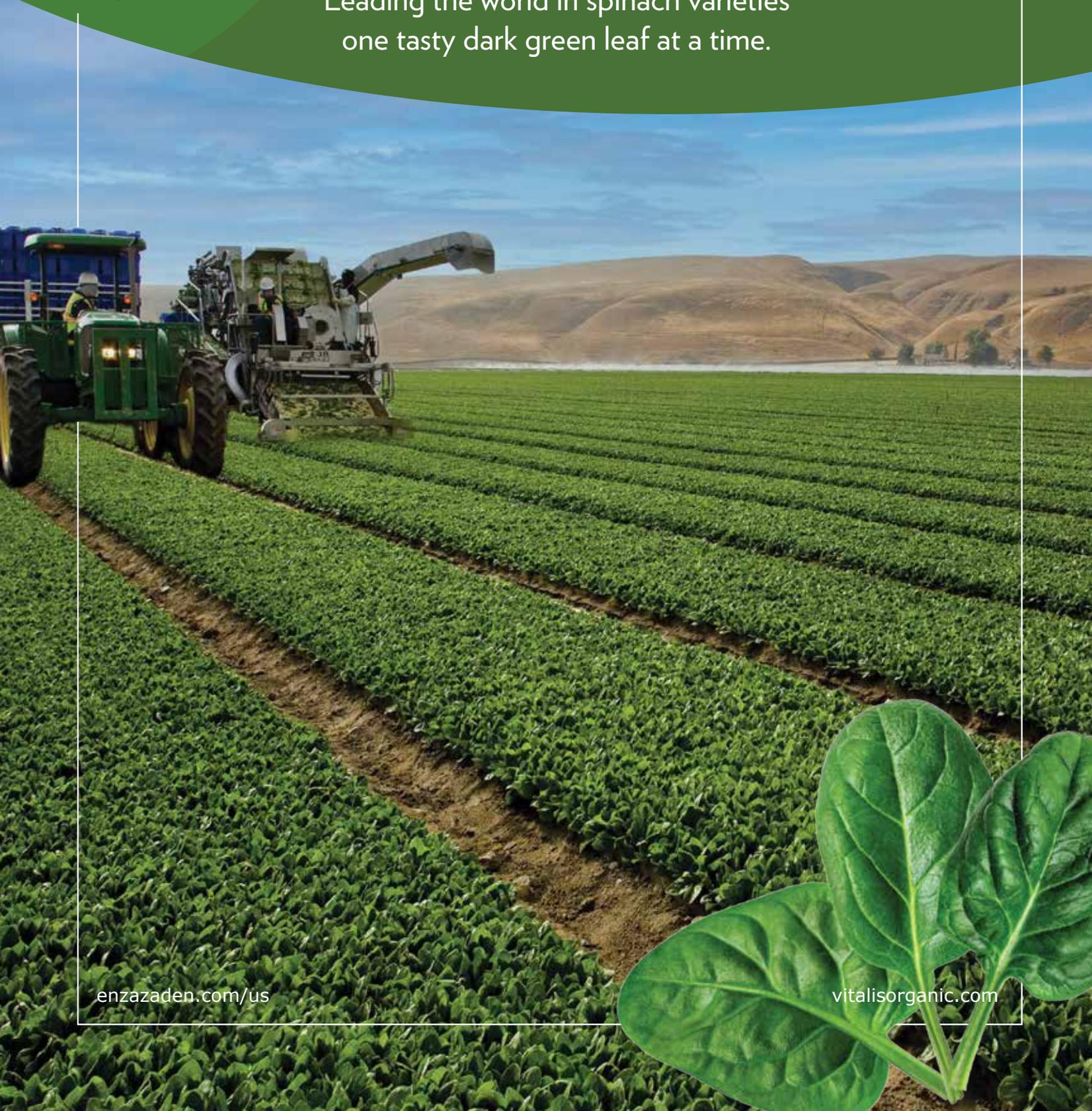
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# The MPIJet Partner Program Takes Off

By Betsy Wallace



An expanding service from MPIJet, called the Partner Program, allows individuals or companies to buy a private jet together as a group. MPIJet manages the aircraft, lowering operating costs and freeing partners to focus on travel needs. The program helps agricultural companies visit multiple farming locations, and offers flexibility to business and leisure flyers.

## MPIJet Partner Program

As the largest certified air charter travel organization in Monterey County, MPIJet has offered private air charter, concierge and cargo services, and management and acquisition of private aircraft since 2014. The company's scalable Partner Program unlocks an array of options in aircraft ownership. Potential partners come to MPIJet as individuals seeking partners in aircraft ownership, while others already have a group formed. Some partners have an aircraft in mind, while others need guidance in acquiring one. MPIJet can work with any scenario.

Noah Bronner, MPIJet's deputy director of operations, explains why partnered

ownership makes sense for many: "When individuals don't fly frequently enough to justify the acquisition and operating costs of sole ownership, having partners can help lower entrance costs, and they can split the operating costs."

Partnered participants pay only for the hours of flying time they need, with shares adjusted in 50 annual flight-hour increments that can be spent any time over a 12-month contract period. Aircraft availability is determined by the weight of a partner's investment, and should an aircraft be unavailable at

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***"In terms of an owner's day-to-day responsibilities, it's really on autopilot, because we're the managing party."***

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a requested time, MPIJet offers a comparable aircraft in its fleet at an adjusted rate.

Compared to sole ownership, in the Partner Program MPIJet takes greater responsibility and increases its involvement. "We manage the aircraft for you," says Bronner.

"In terms of an owner's day-to-day responsibilities, it's really on autopilot, because we're the managing party." MPIJet disseminates information and consults with the partners on a less frequent basis compared to a sole ownership. For those who want to be more involved in daily operations and decisions, MPIJet advises sole ownership.

## An Essential Tool for Ag

The Partner Program is especially advantageous to the agricultural industry, whose owners and employees depend on flexible travel options year-round. Commercial airlines hubs are often too far away from ag fields to be viable for daily operations, whereas smaller aircraft can land close to fields. "Having an aircraft on their own schedule really gives ag owners the ability to get where they want, when they want," says Bronner.

One of the Partner Program's agricultural clients is John Wilkinson, co-founder of Blazer Wilkinson, a leading berry grower in North America. Wilkinson has two partners in aircraft ownership with MPIJet that fly mostly for pleasure, while his company flies mainly to farming locations. Their group owns a Pilatus PC-12: a single-engine turbo-prop, eight-passenger aircraft.

Wilkinson explains that farming areas cannot be reached directly via commercial airlines, but in their own aircraft, they can travel quickly. "We're simultaneously farming in Oxnard, Santa Maria and Salinas," said Wilkinson. "You can imagine the time that would be consumed driving regularly. Instead, we park the car, jump out, get the plane and we're gone."

Wilkinson's company uses about two-thirds share of the PC-12's flight time annually. MPIJet manages the service and travel schedule, provides the crew and pilots, and occasionally charters the aircraft when it's not in use by any of the partners. When MPIJet charters an aircraft in the Partner

Program, owners receive a negotiated percentage based on the type of aircraft and utilization.

Wilkinson puts the value of aircraft ownership in perspective: “All major ag companies in the Western United States have planes. It’s a tool, just like a tractor. And the convenience factor is immense—the ability to do more business in the same amount of time. We can visit a buyer in San Diego then go on to our blueberry farm in British Columbia.”

### Acquiring Aircraft

For partners looking to start the program as soon as possible, MPIJet recommends management ready aircraft, with infrastructure and trained pilots in place. Examples include the Cessna CJ line of aircraft and the PC-12. To bring on non-management ready aircraft, some additional time is needed to induct the aircraft into MPIJet’s maintenance and crew training programs.

MPIJet has an established relationship with a broker who helps clients go through the acquisition process for new aircraft or, for used aircraft, consults a network to find the best viable aircraft to meet a client’s needs—whether that be an aircraft capable of domestic or interstate travel, coast-to-coast, or trans-Atlantic/Pacific travel.

MPIJet also helps educate newer owners on what different aircraft are capable of. “If someone wants a Gulfstream G300 or G600, and wants to get into an airstrip that’s less than 5,000 feet, that doesn’t quite work,” says Bronner, who maintains his commercial, multi-engine pilot currency. “But we have aircraft that we can suggest based on our

deep experience in the industry.”

### Smart Asset Management

MPIJet shelters members of the Partner Program from responsibility by assuming full managerial duty, which includes recruiting, hiring, and training the best in the industry to serve as crew. Every MPIJet jet captain holds an Airline Transport Pilot certification, requiring at least 1,500 hours of flight experience, and captains and co-pilots have an average of

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***“All major ag companies in the Western United States have planes. It’s a tool, just like a tractor.”***

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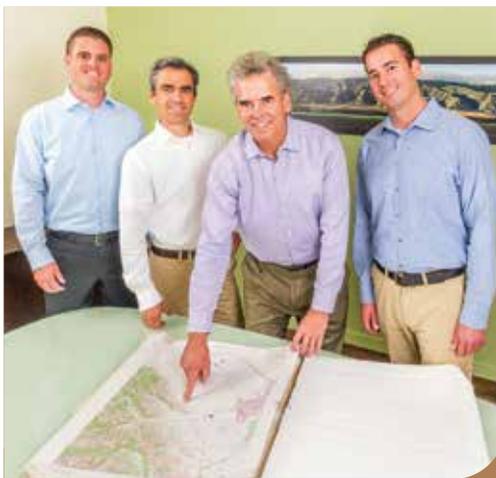
three times above this minimum. Co-pilots are type rated in their aircraft and trained to act as pilot in command. In addition, crewmembers annually complete at least 16 hours of FAA-certified, full-motion simulator or in-aircraft training.

To maintain all aircraft to the highest safety and performance standards, MPIJet’s

director of maintenance partners with Advancetech Aircraft Maintenance, Inc., located at the Salinas Municipal Airport. In addition, each year MPIJet’s team and operations are audited by ARGUS, an international aviation safety assessment group. The team recently received the ARGUS GOLD safety standard award, which requires comprehensive pilot background checks; operational safety assessment; and continuous monitoring of management personnel, pilot flight experience, flight training, and incident history.

On top of its emphasis on training and safety, MPIJet exercises a management philosophy of making the most cost-effective and conservative decisions on clients’ behalf. Both sole and partnered ownership clients benefit from MPIJet’s competitive contractual pricing with vendors, including negotiated contract fuel prices at airports.

Bronner explains, “These agreements give clients lower retail Jet A fuel prices 100 percent of the time.” He adds, “We’re here to help make and consult on the decisions for the aircraft that are the best and most economical.” ☞



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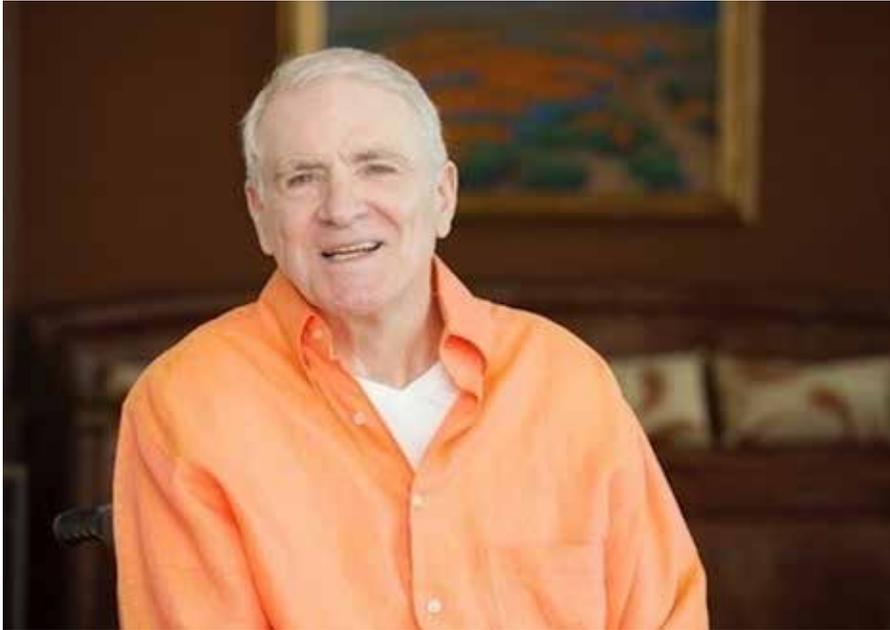


# Growing



# From Loading Lettuce to Philanthropist

By Jennifer Williams, with Samantha Cabaluna



## Salinas Roots

Edward M. Dowd moved to the Salinas Valley in 1952 with his mother, father and two brothers. As the family became established in Salinas, Ed and his brothers attended Sacred Heart Elementary and Palma High School.

Ed's mother, Nora, attended the nursing program at Hartnell College and graduated as a registered nurse in 1966 and she began a 30-year career as a nurse at Natividad Hospital. During her service at Natividad, she shared her kind heart and healing touch with thousands of patients as she did with her family at home. Her examples and stories about the challenges faced by some of the people she cared for left a deep impression on young Edward.

Growing up in the "Salad Bowl of the World," Ed spent his high school summers working in the local produce industry. Ed was tall, which was a benefit while stacking lettuce boxes on flat-bed trucks in the fields around Salinas. The job bolstered his work ethic and commitment to the community,

in addition to keeping him in peak condition for the football field.

After high school, Ed served in the United States Air Force from 1965-1969 in Texas, Florida, the Philippines, and Korea. Following his military service, he graduated from Santa Clara University with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce.

## Business, Public Service, and an Unexpected Challenge

In 1976, Ed began a successful career in investment real estate, establishing his own company, EMD Properties Inc., just five years later. He was a founder of San Jose National Bank and Commerce Savings and Loan in Sacramento and was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown as Vice Chairman of the California State Athletic Commission. He represented California at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Ed also served on Santa Clara University's Board of Fellows.

Then life threw a challenge squarely at Ed: at 47 he was diagnosed with multiple

sclerosis (MS). As a deeply compassionate person, he recognized that many who suffer from MS didn't have the same resources he did to fight MS and live the best life possible. He set out to change that by making a donation to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) to establish the Edward M. Dowd Personal Advocate Program. At the time, this was the largest gift from an individual the NMSS had ever received. The program aims to increase independent living capabilities and quality of life for people affected by MS whose health and safety are compromised by limited access programs and benefits.

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***"I am privileged to be able to make philanthropic investments in organizations where an infusion of capital can create change that otherwise would not be possible," Dowd said.***

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## A New Chapter

For Ed, MS ushered in a new chapter in his life with a new perspective. Up until that time, achieving success in his business took precedence. MS forced him to slow down and his love of art and philanthropy blossomed. He sought out opportunities to bring his two passions together, beginning with the organizations that gave so much to him. He donated \$12 million to the construction of a new Art and Art History building at Santa Clara University then funded facilities for MS medical providers at Palo Alto Medical Foundation's Mountain View campus where he received care. Both gifts included sculptures by renowned art glass artist Dale Chihuly.

### **Transforming lives at Natividad, Past and Present**

Ed's most recent philanthropic endeavor was a large donation to Natividad Foundation in Salinas, in honor of his mother, Nora. "I am privileged to be able to make philanthropic investments in organizations where an infusion of capital can create change that otherwise would not be possible," Dowd said. "This gift in memory of my mother allows me to make sure that her legacy of love and caring continues at Natividad."

Members of The Agricultural Leadership Council (TALC), founded in 2010 by John D'Arrigo, president, CEO and Chairman of the Board of D'Arrigo California, and other leading farm families, helped position Natividad Foundation as a place to give where every penny would be accounted for while changing and saving lives. TALC has raised more than \$4 million for Natividad. "This gift and the naming of the Mental Health Unit after Mrs. Dowd demonstrates that there is a new standard for giving to Natividad and new ways to memorialize people through major gifts,"

D'Arrigo said. "TALC set out to achieve a new model for giving more than a decade ago, and our work was followed with a \$500,000 gift from the Matsui family and now a \$1,000,000 gift from Mr. Dowd."

Jennifer Williams, the Foundation's President and CEO, already knew about Ed Dowd's work with the NMSS when Dowd's family first contacted her. She was plugged into the world of MS because she was diagnosed with it at 23...and incredibly, they also share a birthday. With all this and Natividad in common, it was fitting that her path would cross with Ed's because of his determination to honor his mother's legacy of caring.

Founded in 1988, Natividad Foundation is a nonprofit that provides philanthropic support for Natividad through its partnerships with foundations, individuals, businesses and government agencies. Natividad is a hospital and trauma center that provides health care services to residents and visitors throughout Monterey County, regardless of ability to pay.

Williams, who has been with Natividad Foundation for over twenty years, said, "My role is to connect people like Ed to the hospital and help nurture the projects they care about. I felt a special connection to Ed because of our shared journeys with MS and even our shared birthdays, but his vision for Natividad has been so much bigger than I dreamed it would be. He set out to transform spaces into sanctuaries of hope and healing, and he did it in memory of his mother. That breathes life into stories from the past and creates new stories for the future."

The \$1 million gift – the largest ever to Natividad from an individual – is funding a complete overhaul of the existing main lobby courtyard at the hospital and improving two outdoor spaces for patients at Natividad's Mental Health Unit. The hospital's Mental Health Unit will be renamed the Nora Dowd Mental Health Unit / Nora Dowd Unidad de Salud Mental.

The projects are currently underway and will be complete later in 2022.

Edward M. Dowd passed away peace-



fully on February 27, 2022. His story and that of his mother live on through his philanthropy.

To give in honor or memory of someone you love and enhance the health care provided at Natividad go to [natividadfoundation.org/donate](https://natividadfoundation.org/donate).



# Where Architecture Meets Agriculture

By Jenna Hanson Abramson



When one thinks about the vast agriculture industry we have here in the Salinas Valley, many thoughts pop into mind, starting with farming, the rich soil, berries, artichokes, vines and wine, the catchphrase “Salad Bowl of the World,” and much more. For most, what does not immediately come to mind is architecture. But for Lino Belli, David Peartree and their architecture firm, they study and have evolved with the design of the coolers, processing plants, loading docks and the corporate offices of some of Salinas Valley’s most well-known produce labels.

This is a story of a Salinas architecture firm, with a long history in the Salinas Valley and within the agriculture industry itself—Where architecture meets agriculture and how the two are continuously evolving. It all started with Lino Belli’s father, Raymond Belli, a Soledad native, Gonzales High School Graduate, Cal Poly Alumnus and Salinas Architect. Raymond’s career as an architect began in the 1950’s but it wasn’t until the 1970’s that his work on projects within the agriculture industry, picked up. It was around this time that produce compa-

nies began to realize the advantages of modernization, by updating their work environments, from working out of old packing sheds and improvised icehouses to building the comprehensive facilities we see today.

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***This is a story of a Salinas architecture firm, with a long history in the Salinas Valley and within the agriculture industry itself—Where architecture meets agriculture and how the two are***

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In the late 1970’s, Raymond Belli designed one of the first ground-up cooler facilities in Monterey County (in Marina) for Bud of California— today, this facility is operated by Dole. Lino recalls memorable career moments from that job site, a summer job where he literally worked on one of his father’s designs by digging the footings for the facility with a shovel and jackhammer.

One of Lino Belli’s early projects while working with his father, was the Shippers Development facility. This project encompassed the area between the freeway (101) and the train tracks on Sanborn Road. At the time, the land retained a large icehouse and several old packing sheds. Lino’s job was to decommission the icehouse and sheds and design roads through the property, sub-dividing it into multiple lots. It involved hazards due to the toxic materials and heavy metals used in icehouses at the time, and the task became a huge environmental clean-up, an invaluable lesson. Today, Organic Girl, Piolet Travel Center and Salinas Valley Cooling sit on this land.

The Shippers Development Land project was Lino’s first icehouse to decommission but eventually Lino played a part in neutralizing all three of the remaining icehouses in the area.

At the end of 1994, after working beside his father for 10 years and following Raymond’s retirement, Lino decided it was time go out on his own, forming Belli Architectural Group. Continuing his work within the agriculture industry, BelliAG’s first project was for Mark and Kirk Kennedy building the Kennedy Ag store on Harkins Street. Next was modernizing the Grower Shipper Building on Pajaro Street and then came designing and building the Uni-Kool facility on West Market Street.

When BelliAG got its start, a lot of cooler operations were still working out of packing sheds. This presented opportuni-





ties for modernization, and with Lino's background, the transformation of produce facilities became a pillar for BelliAG through the years. BelliAG has built coolers from the ground up as well as designed and built complete processing plants with insulation, ammonia refrigeration and raised docks to load shipping trucks, all while meeting current food safety regulations and needs—"As the industry needs expanded, we did too, and we educated ourselves on the current needs through each stage," explains Lino. Although aesthetics is what most would assume to be the top priority when thinking about architecture, functionality takes center stage and is the top priority when designing produce facilities.

The biggest change since the 1990's has been food safety. First came the need for enclosing the shipping docks to preserve the "cold chain" when companies observed product temperatures rising during the pas-

*Clockwise top left: 1.) D'Arrigo Processing Facility, Spreckels, CA. 2.) Scheid Vineyards, Greenfield, CA. 3.) (l to r) Lino Belli, Founder of Belli Architectural Group and David Peartree, current President of Peartree+Belli Architects.*

sage between the coolers and the trucks, ultimately resulting in product quality issues. By enclosing the shipping docks, control of the temperature is maintained, ensuring that the product temperature remains stable to its destination. This is just

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***Although aesthetics is what most would assume to be the top priority when thinking about architecture, functionality takes center stage and is the top priority when designing produce facilities.***

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one of the fascinating ways the agriculture community has taken something as simple as tending a crop and scaled it to feed the nation.

Processing facilities are integral to the agriculture business and the technical requirements keep changing, creating an intriguing challenge for an architect.

From small projects to large, architecture has grown with the agriculture indus-

try, and as these two industries continue to evolve, so does Belli Architectural Group—Peartree+Belli Architects is the new name you will find on the firm's door. This name change reflects where the firm is today without losing the foundation it was built on. After 35 years, Lino Belli is shifting into a Technical Advisor Role as David Peartree steps into the President's position, a progression that has been in the works since David's hiring at the firm back in 2010. "I believe in the business Lino built and I enjoy the foundation that the business is built on. We will continue to serve the community as we always have," says David.

David, who has been a partner at the firm since 2014, is looking forward to continuing to develop the firm's work within the Salinas Valley and specifically within the agriculture community under the Peartree+Belli Architects name. And Lino, although still in the office four days a week, is looking forward to making wine, traveling more with his wife Teri, and restoring his "new" 1974 Alfa Romeo. ☞

# Warnings Signs Ahead: Cryptos in 401k Plans?

By Bill Hastie



Since its beginnings in 2008 with Bitcoin, cryptocurrency has changed the investing landscape forever. Since that time, the industry has grown to more than 10,000 “cryptos” by March 2022. This explosive growth is most noteworthy from March 2020 with a total market capitalization of \$179 billion to November 2021 when it reached its high of over \$3 trillion. But if anything characterizes cryptocurrency, is its price volatility — and by mid-May 2022, the total market had plunged to just over \$1.3 trillion.

Despite its volatility, its popularity continues to grow with several exchange-traded products coming on the market making it much easier for the small investor to join the craze. It was only a matter of time before 401k plan participants would seek cryptos as an available investment in their retirement plans. Earlier this year, Fidelity, the largest provider of 401k plans in the nation, announced it would soon be offer-

ing a product line that would make cryptos an available investment in their 401k plans.

Fidelity’s announcement came as great news to some 401k plan participants, while it was a cause for concern to retirement

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***Since its beginnings in 2008 with Bitcoin, cryptocurrency has changed the investing landscape forever.***

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plan advisors. This buzz in the industry did not take long to catch the attention of the Department of Labor (DOL) with equal concern. On March 10, 2022, the DOL issued a Compliance Assistance Release, “401(k) Plan Investments in Cryptocurrencies.” The first paragraph of this release reads, “In recent months, the Department of Labor has become aware of firms marketing investments in cryptocurrencies to 401k plans

as potential investment options for plan participants. The Department cautions plan fiduciaries to exercise extreme care before they consider adding a cryptocurrency option to a 401(k) plan’s investment menu for plan participants.”

The DOL went on to list the following risk factors with this introductory statement, “These investments present significant risks and challenges to participants’ retirement accounts, including significant risks of fraud, theft, and loss for all the following reasons:

- Speculative and volatile investments
- The challenge for plan participants to make informed investment decisions
- Custodial and recordkeeping concerns
- Valuation concerns
- Evolving regulatory environment

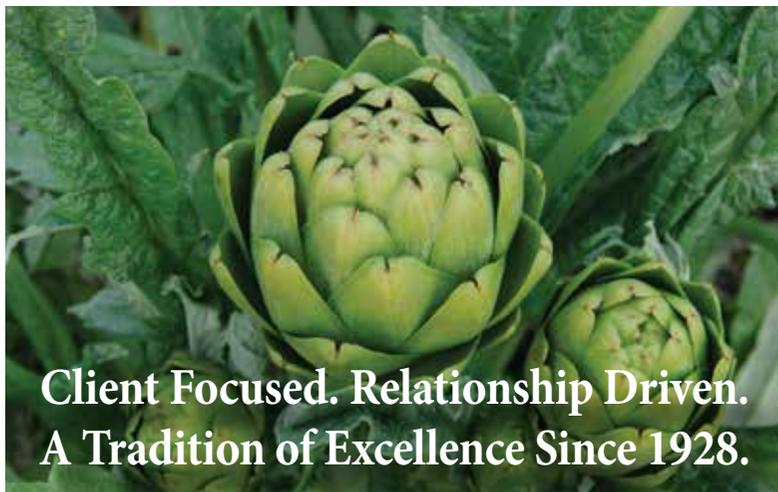
In the development of a 401k plan’s investment options, crypto investments would most likely be purchased through a “brokerage window” which makes investments available that otherwise are not part of traditional 401k plan options. For years, the DOL has required plan sponsors to develop and implement a prudent process for selecting, monitoring and replacing (as needed) plan investment options. Now the DOL is saying that plan sponsors have some responsibility to vet investment options offered through a brokerage window.

Without question, the DOL is placing the responsibility for prudently selecting all plan investments squarely on the shoulders of the plan sponsor. An additional requirement for plan investments is the broad range requirement which states that each option must be diversified, offer risk/return characteristics different from the others, and offer diversification for a participant’s overall portfolio when combined.

That brings back the DOL’s first concern about the speculative nature of cryp-

tocurrency and warrants the distinction of risk vs. speculation. In most cases, investment (non-market) risk can be reduced through diversification and the range of possible returns are fairly well understood. Portfolio risk can be increased/decreased by adding or removing the correlation (investments moving together or in opposite directions) among individual portfolio holdings. On the other hand, speculative risk cannot be calculated or diversified, and its range of possible returns is far greater. It's looking for a quick, substantial gain and is willing to take a huge loss in doing so. Take flipping a coin for example, you either double your money or lose everything in the matter of seconds. Risk is appropriate for 401k plans, speculation is not.

The issue of cryptos in 401k plans has even been taken up by the U.S. Senate, and two very different points of view have been expressed to the DOL. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass) and Tina Smith (D-Minn) have taken the position that plan sponsors and investment advisors have the responsibility to provide plan participants with prudent, long-term investment advice while controlling risk seeking to secure their retirement nest egg. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) introduced the Financial Freedom Act that, if enacted, would prohibit the DOL from issuing any regulation or guidance limiting what a plan participant could invest in through a brokerage window, and to give safe harbor fiduciary protection to plan sponsors for the investments that participants purchase through a brokerage window. This debate is far from over, but the DOL will have the final word. ☺



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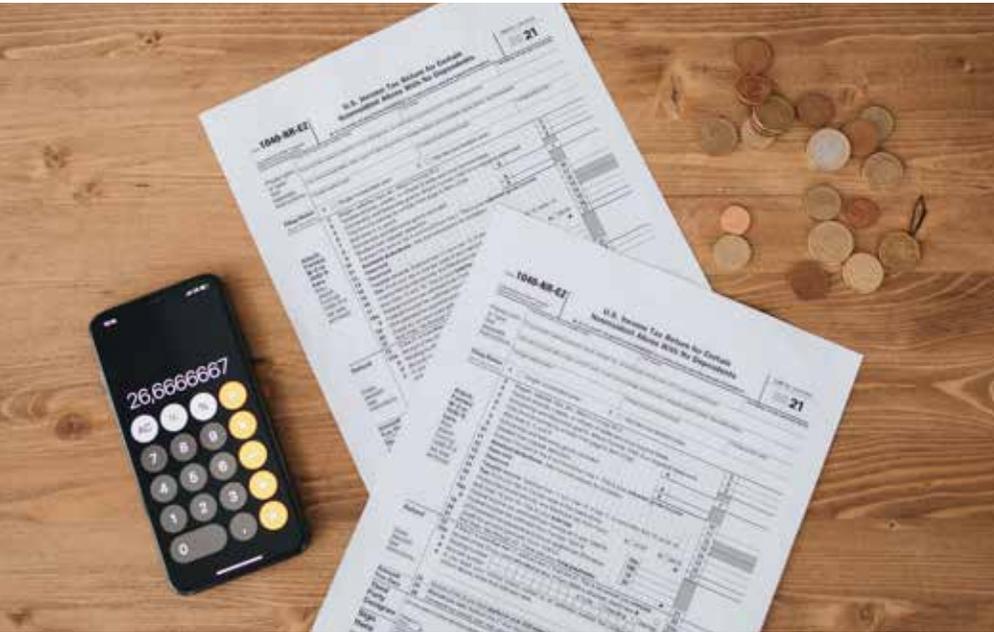
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# California Expands Pass-Through Entity Tax

By Tyler Willis, Partner at Hayashi Wayland



The Spring 2022 issue of Coastal Grower included a summary of the provisions of California Assembly Bill 150 and how it helps individuals bypass the Federal limitation on the deduction of state and local taxes. Since submitting that article, we have helped hundreds of businesses navigate this new legislation and capture the benefits it provides. In addition, the California Legislature has since passed additional legislation expanding the eligibility and enhancing the ability to utilize the credits.

## What is AB150?

The enactment of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in December of 2017 resulted in a limitation in the amount of state and local taxes (SALT) taxpayers were able to deduct on their individual returns. This limitation left many small business owners with a higher overall tax burden because they could no longer deduct their state taxes, in excess of the \$10,000 limitation, from their federal taxable income.

There is no limitation on a business's ability to deduct state and local taxes and AB150 was designed to allow business entities to deduct these taxes on behalf of the owners. This law follows the lead of other high-tax states in designing a work-around for the SALT limitation enacted in 2017.

***There is no limitation on a business's ability to deduct state and local taxes and AB150 was designed to allow business entities to deduct these taxes***

When a pass-through entity elects to participate in the AB150 pass-through entity tax (PTE tax) it will compute the income for each eligible owner. In most cases, only individual owners are eligible. The entity takes the income of eligible owners and pays a tax equal to 9.3 percent to California. This payment is deductible against federal income for the pass-through entity and the

individual owners receive a PTE credit for the 9.3 percent paid on their income. This credit is claimed similar to an estimated tax payment or tax withholding.

The result is that taxpayers may have a lower Federal income tax because of the deduction of the California taxes, and also receive a tax credit to offset their tax due to California.

## What has changed?

The California legislature passed Senate Bill 113 (SB 113) in February of 2022 which expanded the PTE tax eligibility and fixed some unintended consequences from AB150. **Qualified Entity** – A pass-through business must be a “qualified entity” to make the PTE tax election and pay tax at the business entity level. SB 113 expanded the definition of “qualified entity” to include partnerships that have partners that are they themselves partnerships. This was an important change to allow multi-tier entity structures to participate in the PTE tax regime.

**Qualified Taxpayer** – The definition of a “qualified taxpayer” was expanded to include individuals who own their interest in the Qualified Entity through a single-member LLC. This is a common way to hold ownership in a partnership and because the single member LLC is disregarded for tax purposes, it was logical to allow these owners the ability to take advantage of the PTE tax election.

**Guaranteed Payments** – The original definition of the income eligible for the PTE tax excluded guaranteed payments. Many partnerships use guaranteed payments to compensate their owners for the services they provide to the business. The distinction between a guaranteed payment and ordinary income shouldn't impact the ability to pay tax under the PTE

tax election and SB 113 now allows for it.

**Tentative Minimum Tax** – The original legislation had an unintentional consequence that limited the credit claim on the individual's based upon their tentative minimum tax. This greatly reduced the benefit for many taxpayers and was not the original intent of the legislation. SB 113 changed this to allow the credit to offset all California state income.

**What have we learned?**

We have worked with hundreds of businesses analyzing the potential benefit of making the PTE tax election. Millions of tax dollars have been saved by identifying this opportunity and enacting it with our clients.

This is still considered new legislation, however there are a few things we've learned so far:

**Tax savings for most** - We found that electing to participate in the PTE tax was beneficial for most taxpayers. There are some specific instances where we would not recommend the election, but they became rare with the expanded benefits of SB 113.

**Cash is required** – Because many pass-through owners were learning about this and deciding late in 2021, or just prior to filing in 2022, many had already made estimated tax payments to prepay their liability. In many cases, making the PTE election would require them to pay the tax again and then file for a refund on their individual return to recoup the estimated tax payments. In a few instances we saw taxpayers needing to be creative to secure the cash to make the required PTE tax payments and receive the benefit.

**Use it or lose it** - This is a benefit that can't be recovered if you don't make the election in a given year. For example, if the PTE election would have resulted in federal tax savings for the 2021 tax year, those savings are forever gone once that year has passed. There is no longer an opportunity in 2022 to recoup the benefit from 2021.

**Plan ahead** - To take advantage of this deduction and credit for the 2021 tax year you didn't need to decide on the election until the filing date of your tax return (March 15th). For 2022 onward, a valid election requires the first payment be made by June 15th of the tax year. That means that for 2022 you must have made an estimated tax payment by June 15th to be eligible to claim the deduction.

The June 15th estimated tax payment is the greater of \$1,000 or one-half of your total PTE tax for the previous year. There is no provision for an estimate based on current year projected income.

**What's next?**

AB150 is set to expire in four years but could be gone sooner if there is tax reform at the federal level. AB150 provided that the legislation would be automatically rescinded if the Federal SALT deduction limitation is eliminated. The most recent drafts of federal tax reform have included some form of change to the SALT limitation, so it is not

outlandish to think that the California PTE tax election may go away.

**What should you do?**

Tax legislation is evolving more quickly than ever, and it is important you have someone on your team that is able to monitor the changes and harvest benefits that might be available to you. If you'd like to talk with someone about the latest tax legislative changes or overall tax strategy, please contact us at [info@hw-cpa.com](mailto:info@hw-cpa.com) or give us a call at 831-759-6300. CS

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***Tax legislation is evolving more quickly than ever, and it is important you have someone on your team that is able to monitor the changes and harvest benefits that might be available to you.***

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# Ken & Ann Dubas

By Alli Elliot, Photography by Patrick Tregenza

Driving past the peak of Vereda Del Portal road overlooking Corral de Tierra Country Club, you come upon homes with spectacular views, privacy, and immediately feel a sense of community. It was this sense of community which made Ken and Ann Dubas fall in love with their forever home when they least expected it. Having lived in the Villas in Corral de Tierra for the past 30 years, this felt new and exciting for the Dubas. Ken, a retired lettuce seed breeder (aka “The Lettuce Man”), and his wife Ann split their time in between Salinas and Yuma as a true Ag couple. They bought the home on Vereda Del Portal eight years ago. The home needed a few renovations, but they added many of their personal and meaningful touches to this home. The home was originally built in the 1970’s and started life out as what Ann would describe as a “brown shack”. However, over the years the home underwent multiple remodels transforming it to what it now stands; a beautiful 5,500 sq foot multi-level sanctuary with 3 bedrooms, 3 and a half bath, and an additional 500 square foot guest house, complete with views that would pain any guest to leave.

As one makes their way down the charming, pebbled driveway they are welcomed with the calm sounds of a beautiful Carmel stone water feature, potted plants, and native trees. Entering the Mediterranean inspired home, you will find an original mural painted on both walls of the entryway. This was something the Dubas kept after they moved in, with painted details of a beautiful ivy filled pergola and rolling hills with flowers. The main floor is composed of light hardwood floors, cabinetry, and railings throughout. Skylights fill the home with ample natural light and give the feeling that you are walking in the clouds. With all the natural light, the Dubas have been able to display their stunning collection of Hawaiian volcanic dishes. Every year when they visit Hawaii, they bring back a new piece adding color, texture, and shape to the overall décor of the home. Novice collectors, they have decorated their home with an abundance of





mixed media art and personal heirlooms. Perched on a table in the living room, Ann displays a grandfather clock, a family treasure at 85 years old. It was given to her grandmother as a gift from her grandfather for their anniversary. On each side of their spectacular stoned fireplace lies two copper tubs from Ken's family farm dating back to 110 years ago. And let's not forget the 110-year-old doorknobs that have been installed from Ken's mother's home on their existing doors. The master suite and bathroom are accompanied by the second bedroom on the main floor. The open floor plan that includes a kitchen, breakfast nook, dining and living room area on the main floor then leads you out

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***Novice collectors, they have decorated their home with an abundance of mixed media art and personal heirlooms.***

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to not only their favorite part of their home, but where they spend most of their time, the deck. Outfitted with new Trex composite decking, the large space is complete with barbeques and the grand view of Corral De Tierra Country Club. It's decorated with vibrant pots and flowers, whicker lounge seating, and a stone fire pit that make the outdoor space cozy and relaxing. The family also appreciates the privacy each of the 24 homes in their neighborhood provides. Ken feels that it is the best mix between country living and being in a close-knit community, a community in which they are heavily involved as members of the home owners association board.

Walking down to the second level you arrive at memory lane. Here the Dubas have created their own sports lounge with the third bedroom and bath









off the side. Photos of family and sports memorabilia consume the walls creating a nostalgic space for the Dubas. Through the sliding glass doors, the outside area continues onto the second level with a pool, hot tub, and newly renovated fire pit made of Carmel stone. A massive outdoor barbeque area that has a stunning new granite countertop complements the fire pit. You also can't help but notice the pristine yard surrounding the outside. Ken and Ann take pride in tending their own yard and work themselves. In fact, they said they maintain 90 percent of it. You can find native plants and trees planted among the hillsides with ginger rock adding texture to these layers. You can even catch Ken trimming their own olive trees!

As you make your way down to the last level, past the pool, you will find a 500 square foot guest house. With Ann coming from a family of nine siblings, you will often find one of her family members staying in this one-bedroom casita with its own living room area, dining area with grand window views, an outside lounge area with a new hand-crafted table made of wine barrels and a wood top. Here guests can enjoy their own little oasis with stunning views of the hills and golf course nestled in between the beautiful oak trees. Alongside the guest house is a small greenhouse where some of the gardening is tended to on the sunny hillside.

Ken and Ann have explored the world and continue to be inspired by their travels when it comes to decorating their home. The Dubas have created a home that is a collection of who they are, where they came from, and where they've been. They have really made incredible use of space with this lot, and it is as wholesome and inviting as they are.





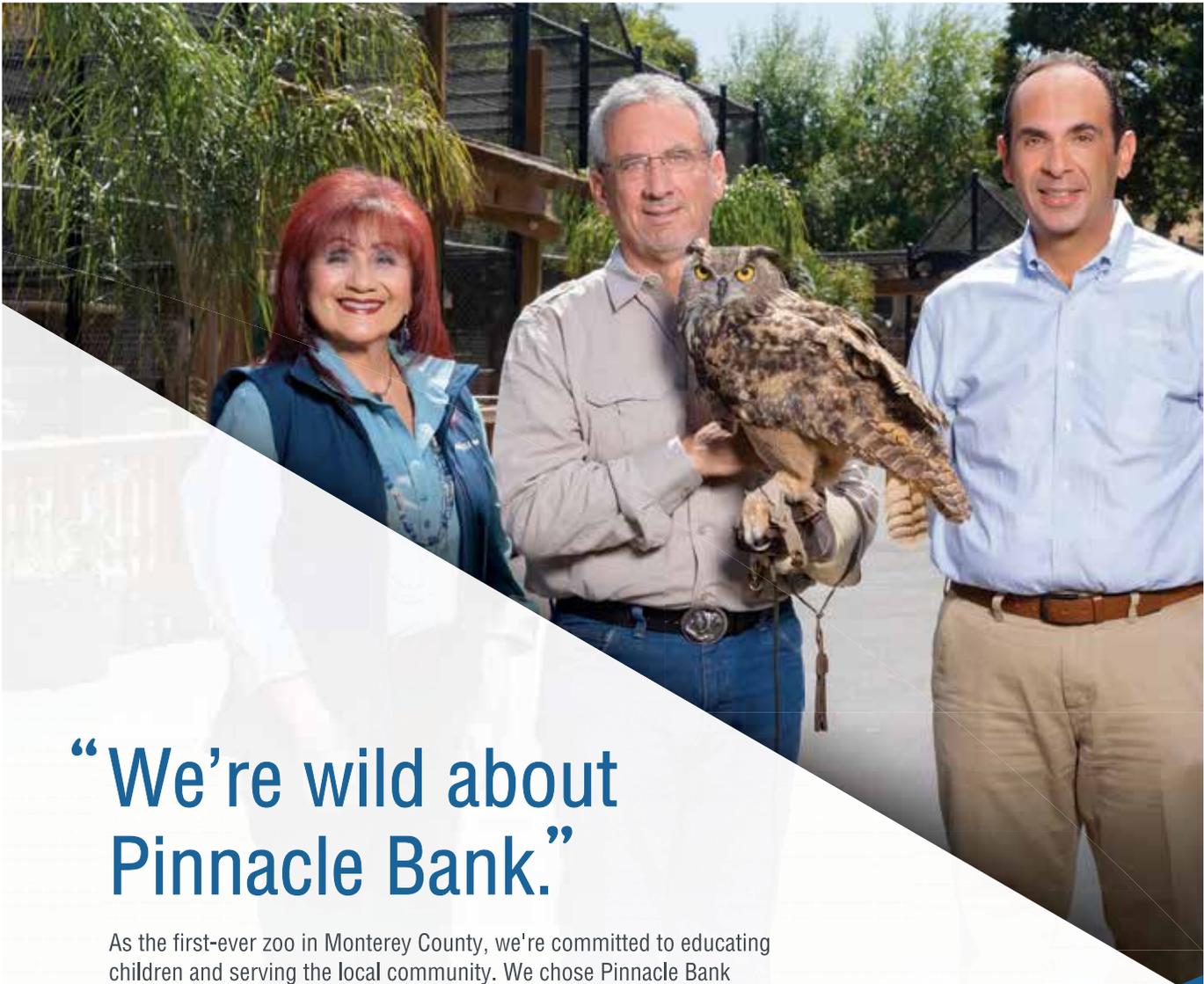
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*They have really made incredible use of space with this lot, and it is as wholesome and inviting as they are.*

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# What Matters When Selling Your Home

By Matt Pridey



There is no doubt that there are a lot of question marks surrounding the outlook of the real estate market. One thing remains true, even amidst the uncertainties, the current market still provides sellers the opportunity to capitalize on historic home prices. With those uncertainties comes a greater need to pay close attention to some of the key factors that will arise when considering to sell your home. Let's take a look at some of those factors:

## Curb Appeal

That first impression could seal the deal, or ruin it. First impressions are important, right? Think about it from the practical sense, do you feel that someone will be more likely to pay the price tag on your house if the yard is manicured, the paint is touched up, new mulch is on the ground, garden gnomes are removed (sorry for all those gnome lovers)...The answer is

absolutely YES. Perception is everything when getting your home ready to take to market and a little clean up and a few cost effective updates to the exterior can make a world of difference in getting the price you hope for.

## Market Analysis

A thorough market analysis accomplishes a few things: It helps to determine what your home is worth in the current market and helps to establish who you are selling to (target market) and what is the best way to reach them. It's important to consider a variety of factors as you research the market in your area such as present economic conditions, condition of the home, location and interest rates (as we are seeing today) to name a few.

## Pricing Makes Perfect

Naturally, everyone wants the most they can possibly get for their property but using market data to drive the current and/or

potential value of your home is critical in obtaining the best price possible. Pricing too high can lead to missed opportunities when the property generates the highest point of interest when it first hits the market. The number of showings is greatest during this time if it's priced at a realistic market value and many homes that start high end up selling below market value.

## Marketing

The power of great marketing when it comes to selling a home can be the deciding factor in obtaining what is likely most important to the seller, the price. Especially in a market similar to what we have seen over the past year, strategic, professional marketing material can be the deciding

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***In any market, there is a process that should be adhered to in order to provide sellers with the opportunity to maximize the potential sale of their home.***

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factor in the successful sale of a home. Marketing is much more than snapping a few photos, it is about creating an experience for potential buyers and giving the opportunity for your property to shine and stand out among the crowd.

In any market, there is a process that should be adhered to in order to provide sellers with the opportunity to maximize the potential sale of their home. The key points above merely scratch the surface of the detail that goes into ensuring a positive outcome in any sale but do help to establish a framework. Finding an agent that has the tools at their disposal to execute these points is the first step toward a successful sale. ☞

Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago. –WARREN BUFFETT

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# Destination Santa Cruz via Telluride and Beyond

Interview with Michael Martelon, CEO, Visit Santa Cruz County

By Jess Brown



Michael (left) shows off beautiful strawberries.

JESS: Where did you grow up?

MICHAEL: This always seemed like a trick question to me. I did more “growing up” at 19 when I moved to Spokane, Washington and then Knoxville, Tennessee as a laborer for a telephone installation company; a gap year before having to move back in with my parents to afford college. Or, when I moved to Boston, Massachusetts at 26 years old to start my hospitality marketing career. Short answer: I was born in Denver, Colorado. I’d say I “grew up” in Boston.

JESS: What was a typical Martelon family vacation when you were growing up?

MICHAEL: With a family of eight kids, vacations were few-and-far-between and always included driving long distances to see extended family and motel stays. Disneyland was a seminal childhood memory. That trip started with a visit to Uncle Jack’s in Boise, Idaho. That trip also included a photo taken on San Francisco’s

Lombard Street.

JESS: Did you and your siblings have a say in vacation planning?

MICHAEL: None, that was an adult decision.

JESS: Where did you go to college and what was your major?

MICHAEL: Metropolitan State University in Downtown Denver. I majored in Communications: Broadcasting with a Journalism Minor.

JESS: What was your first job out of college that related to tourism?

MICHAEL: Receptionist at Irma S. Mann, Strategic Marketing, Inc., a tourism-focused marketing agency that had, at the time, recently won the ITT Sheraton Club International account, which was one of the first hotel loyalty programs from an international hotel corporation.

Unknowingly, it was the beginning of my obsession with data as well. I had the honor and pleasure to work with brands like Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket Islands, the Islands of The Bahamas, Sheraton Hotels of New York, and many other destinations, accommodations and attractions.

JESS: Prior to coming to Santa Cruz, where did you live?

MICHAEL: Telluride, Colorado

JESS: What was your occupation?

MICHAEL: President and Chief Executive Officer of the Telluride Tourism Board

JESS: Why did you decide to accept a position with Visit Santa Cruz County?

MICHAEL: In a word, growth. I genuinely love what I do; it has become even more so when you see and appreciate how it supports an entire community. We all look forward to elevating the image and the understanding of Santa Cruz County and the people and places that, together, make the visitor experience so rich and diverse. From our circa 1907, world-renown, remarkably rich, seaside park, with its, not one but two, National Historic Landmarks – the 1924 Giant Dipper, and the 1911 Loeff Carousel, to the home of the certified organic movement, Driscoll’s world-famous berries, the ever-growing variety of apple juices from the 153-year-old S. Martinelli & Company, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to an artist community with more artists per capita than all but four other communities in the country, including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Santa Fe. Who knew? With 29 miles of shoreline, 30 surf breaks and

redwoods that reach to the heavens, which have been worshiped longer than both St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and Notre Dame in Paris, I look to sharing and celebrating our entire community and the exceptional environment that we now call home.

JESS: What is your elevator speech about Santa Cruz County?

MICHAEL: Ultimately, it's the elegant diversity that jumps off the charts.

JESS: What is the most effective way to reach out to potential visitors?

MICHAEL: The most effective, and efficient way to connect with potential visitors is primarily digital, otherwise known as the Internet. Before jumping into that pool, you need to have established suitable, verifiable consumer segments of folks who have already discovered the destination. Investors if you will, who have paid for overnight accommodations. We hope to become proficient at identifying and targeting those segments – micro-targeting consumers based on established behaviors.

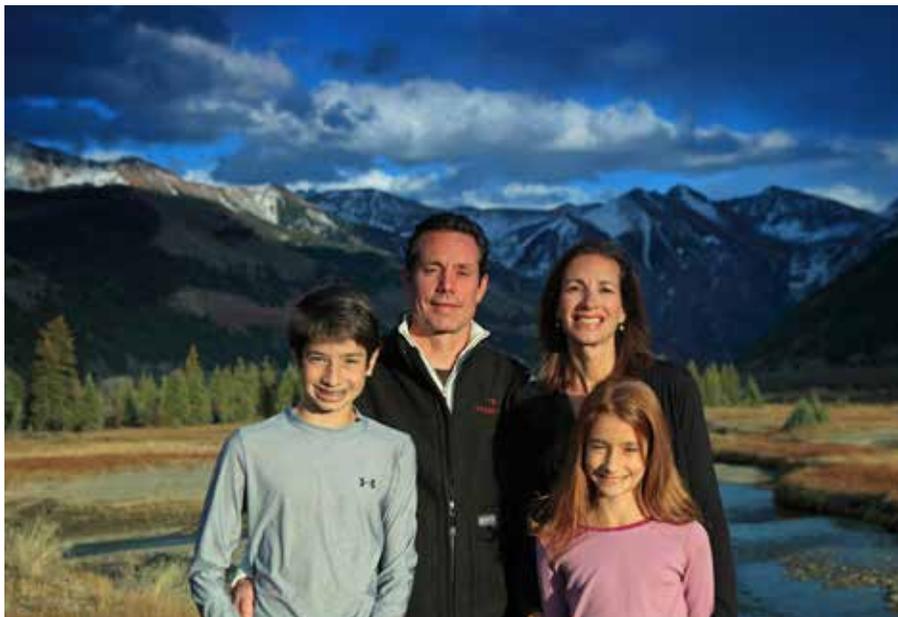
JESS: How important are social influencers in promoting our area?

MICHAEL: Social influencers are a single touchpoint. They can be influential, both positively and/or negatively. Influencers are an additive though. First and foremost, the brand needs to stand on its own two feet; speak with its own voice. If those are firmly established, influencers just amplify those pillars.

JESS: Who is the target audience when promoting Santa Cruz County?

MICHAEL: I've inherited some target audiences established based on third-party data and research. We are committing to establishing a primary data source to be more proactive with this subject matter and to paint a more definitive picture of our overnight guests, both in-state and beyond. And then, target those segments that promise the optimal return on investment.

JESS: Is agriculture something that should be promoted to bring people to our area?



MICHAEL: Agriculture is a foundational brand attribute. From a market demand perspective, I tend to avoid pigeonholing consumers into particular feature and benefit interests. The destination is a wonderful, diverse collection of community assets. Agriculture is obviously a rich, captivating, and delicious asset of Santa Cruz County. We absolutely celebrate and will continue to celebrate its value to life itself as well as the destination.

JESS: How has leisure time changed in the past 20 years for families with young children?

MICHAEL: In North America anyway, I think that it has become much more solitary, which is a little depressing. Technology, however efficient and useful, has done some damage to the family unit. Leisure-time screentime, which didn't exist 20 years ago, other than Hollywood and the three major networks, has become a primary leisure time activity for a majority of Americans. According to data from DataReportal, the average American spends seven hours and four minutes looking at a screen every day. It's not unrealistic that one day, virtual reality will become the "channel" for vacations. "Family" could use some nurturing. The flip side is, you can use it to stay closer to your kids as well. In my family, we like to do the New York Times Wordle puzzle every day and send our "We

Are Family" group text a picture of our finished puzzle when everyone is done.

JESS: If you could predict the local tourism business in 20 years, what would it look like?

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***Agriculture is obviously a rich, captivating, and delicious asset of Santa Cruz County. We absolutely celebrate and will continue to celebrate its value to life itself as well as the destination.***

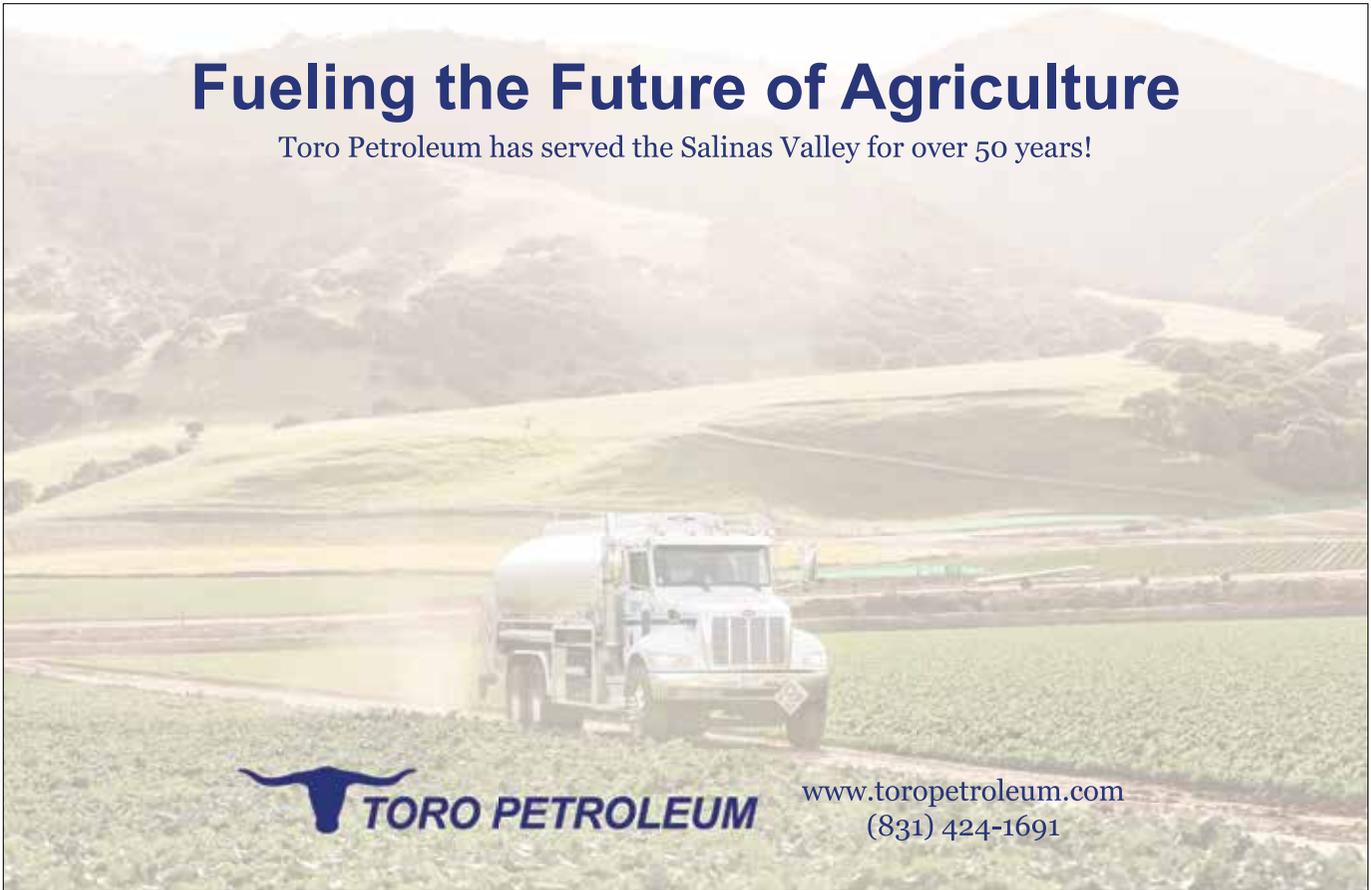
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MICHAEL: So, I would say "wishful prediction". In a single word: balanced. I'd like to launch an effort and work with the county and the other municipalities to more fully understand the tourism ecosystem, its benefits and impacts, and balance those realities with the other industries here in an effort to create the known and appropriate industry mix for the area. Hoping to support the concept of "smart growth" knowing full well that it's not about more, more, more. It is a commitment to the environment and community and how tourism can best support them both.

JESS: Do people come to Santa Cruz County for a culinary experience?

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MICHAEL: Absolutely. According to the latest Economic Impact of Travel in California for Visit California by Dean Runyan Associates, over the past decade, food service was the top grossing segment accounting for 28 percent of visitor spending.

JESS: Who has been the most influential person in your life?

MICHAEL: My wife. She centers and grounds me. I wouldn't be here today without her. She is my North Star and the primary reason that I am so professionally driven and personally thoughtful.

JESS: What is something about Michael Martelon that most people don't know?

MICHAEL: However ironic now, that, as a high schooler, I ran the half-mile (800 meters) in one minute and 56 seconds.

JESS: If you could have dinner with three people (alive or deceased), who would you invite?

MICHAEL: My wife (alive), my mom (deceased) and my dad (deceased). If I could invite three people to join us, they would be John Steinbeck, Martin Luther King and Andy Warhol.

JESS: Where will we see Michael Martelon in 15 years?

MICHAEL: Hopefully, right here: on the beach, at the Boardwalk, in the redwoods, in the vineyards, in the strawberry fields, at a play or open studio, or just hanging out at Abbott Square. ☺

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# Catching Zzz's

## *The Importance of Sleep*

By Stephanie Bouquet, MS, RD, CSSD, CDCES



**C**hronic sleep deprivation has become commonplace among the United States population. Coffee houses and energy drink companies have capitalized on this trend enjoying increased sales from customers searching for a “pick me up” to get them through the day. Insufficient sleep can occur occasionally without detriment to the body, but it is the chronic lack of sleep that is linked to disease development (specifically diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and depression) and body weight fluctuations. Reduction of sleep can lead to making poor food choices, bypassing physical activity, and ultimately changing the body’s metabolic efficiency.

The body has a series of gut hormones that work to regulate sleep and eating patterns. The two most notable ones are Ghrelin and Leptin. Ghrelin is the hormone

that produces our “appetite” for food. Its production increases and signals the brain when we are hungry. Ghrelin makes the stomach “growl” for food. Leptin is the hormone that promotes satiety when eating is completed. Chronic lack of sleep or disordered sleep (such as sleep apnea) can cause an imbalance of these hormones. An improper secretion of the gut hormones (producing too much ghrelin and not enough leptin) surfaces as inefficient sleep hours become a common pattern. This can lead to a desire to overeat with a lack of fullness and subsequent weight gain. In addition, these hormone imbalances trigger the action of insulin, a hormone involved in blood sugar control, to be produced at irregular times leading the body to “resist” its action. Insulin resistance is a precursor to prediabetes or Type 2 diabetes development.

Here are a few tips to help you get a better night’s sleep:

### **Have a Consistent Sleep Schedule:**

The body requires six to eight hours of nightly sleep for restoration. Try to go to sleep at the same time each night to establish a consistent sleep pattern. This may be especially challenging on weekends where there are more temptations to stay up. If your bedtime is currently later than it should be to obtain enough sleep hours, move the time back in 15 minute increments until you reach your optimal bedtime. Relaxing activities such as reading a book or taking a warm bath can promote improved sleep with a smooth transition from a state of wakefulness to drowsiness.

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***Chronic sleep deprivation has become commonplace among the United States population.***

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### **Choose Nutrient Dense Foods:**

Fueling the body with a well-balanced diet of carbohydrates, fats and lean proteins will keep the body in balance. The energy from foods consumed raises blood sugar level in a four hour bell shape curve. Waiting longer than that to refuel, causes blood sugar to drop too low and extreme hunger can lead to “less than optimal” food choices. Chronic sleep deprivation has shown a direct relationship to eating a larger volume of food at one sitting, changing food choices to higher fat, refined carbohydrate sources (like sweets) and shifting timing of meals (eating later in the day). It’s important to have consistency in the diet and to plan for a snack if mealtimes are delayed.

**Monitor Intake of Caffeine, Alcohol and Nicotine**

Caffeine is a naturally occurring substance and is considered a drug because it works as a stimulant in the body. Drinks (such as coffee, tea, or energy drinks) and food products (like chocolate or engineered sport products) containing caffeine can affect sleep patterns for many hours after consumption. Sensitivity to caffeine consumption is different for each individual and can change throughout life cycles. General guidelines are to avoid caffeine for at least four to six hours before bedtime. Nicotine works in the same way and avoidance is recommended. Alcohol affects the body two-fold. It first functions as a relaxant to the central nervous system leading to drowsiness. Unfortunately, as alcohol is metabolized in the body, it then provides a stimulating effect disturbing sleep quality and promoting a more wakeful state. Limit or avoid intake in the hours before bed.

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*The combination of moderate eating coupled with regular physical activity are imperative lifestyle behaviors but improving sleep habits may be a missing link to permanent success.*

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**Consume Larger Meals Early**

We have heard the adage, “Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper” and this could not be truer when it comes to attaining a healthy sleep schedule. Larger meals require extra digestion and may interfere with a restful night of sleep. Fatty, acidic, or spicy foods can contribute to increased stomach motility and inability for your body to relax into a peaceful slumber.

**Reduce Use of Electrical Devices**

Current research suggests that lighted screens of electronic devices (such as computers, tablets, cell phones and televisions) may stimulate brain activity and promote wakefulness. Try to reduce usage

and turn them off at least one hour before going to sleep.

**Exercise at the Right Time**

A regular, consistent exercise pattern improves sleep patterns. It fatigues the body and produces natural pain killers, called endorphins, which assist in falling and remaining in a deeper sleep state. However, watch your timing of exercise as

high intensity activity within two to three hours of sleep may contribute to alertness and inability to relax before bedtime. A good night’s sleep is not the ultimate cure to weight and obesity problems in this country. The combination of moderate eating coupled with regular physical activity are imperative lifestyle behaviors but improving sleep habits may be a missing link to permanent success. ☞

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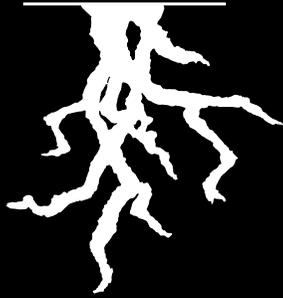
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## *Recipe*

### MELON SALAD WITH MINT & FETA

1 piel de sapo or honeydew melon  
1 avocado  
1 lime  
2 cucumbers  
3 tbsp olive oil  
1/4 c crumbled feta cheese  
fresh mint leaves

1. Cut melon and avocado into cubes. Sprinkle 1 tsp lime juice on the avocado to prevent browning.
2. Slice cucumber and combine with melon and avocado in a salad bowl. Toss gently.
3. Whisk olive oil with 1 tbsp lime juice and season with salt and pepper.
4. Drizzle dressing on top of salad and top with crumbled feta and mint leaves. Enjoy!



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# Escaping to Pristine Lake Tahoe

By Mike Hale



When Mark Twain first laid eyes on Lake Tahoe, it sparked something deep within his soul. Known for his cynical, critical and often humorous prose, the author could only wax poetic about such a remarkable American treasure:

“As it lay there with the shadows of the mountains brilliantly photographed upon its still surface, I thought it must surely be the fairest picture the whole Earth affords.”

What Twain called “a noble sheet of blue water” — more than a mile above sea level and surrounded by a rim of snowy mountain peaks — has captivated the world for centuries.

One of the most pristine water lakes in the world (testing at 99.994 percent pure), it is more than two million years old. First called home by the Washoe Tribe more than 10,000 years ago, the lake and its environs

have drawn countless visitors over the years.

Today, the year-round, long-term population for the Tahoe Basin sits at around 53,000 people, but it swells considerably throughout the seasons due to its lure as a prime vacation spot. The area’s natural beauty, grandeur and sheer

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***When Mark Twain first laid eyes on Lake Tahoe, it sparked something deep within his soul.***

---

immensity certainly seduced Stu and Diana Roberson, co-owners of RnR Vacation Rentals in South Lake Tahoe.

The college sweethearts built lifelong memories with their two daughters during weekend ski trips, but also summer adventures (on average, the sun shines for 274 days a year in Tahoe.)

Diana grew up an hour from Tahoe in the small town of Portola, before heading to Sacramento to study business at Sacramento State, where she met her future husband. After Diana accepted a job as the university’s Ski Club Cabin Manager in South Lake Tahoe, the two spent many happy weekends skiing and exploring the area.

“It is great to be back to where we started, we have strong roots and so many great memories built over a lifetime in Tahoe,” she said.

Each riding Silicon Valley’s high-tech wave for 20 years, Stu and Diana successfully brainstormed their way out of the corporate rat race in 2013. They founded RnR through an organic, hands-on approach to property management.

Stu began his career with Osborne Computer Corporation, makers of the first commercially successful portable computer

in 1981. Through the years he added stops at Electronic Arts, Apple and Interactive Pictures.

Diana worked at ComputerLand Corporation before landing at several networking companies including 3Com and Broadcom, where her product marketing specialty became Wi-Fi.

Leaning on their extensive experience in marketing, technology and business management, Stu and Diana began managing their own South Lake Tahoe vacation home.

“We felt existing vacation rental management companies were charging too much for the limited services they provided,” said Diana. “The existing companies did not meet our high standards for screening guests, cleaning the home, and ability to generate the revenue we were expecting. This was our baby, and we didn’t want someone else managing it.”

They began assembling an effective and sustainable rental management model built around personal service, exceptional home care and cleaning, and effective marketing. Word spread among other Tahoe homeowners, and the couple formed

RnR Vacations Rentals, slowly taking on local clients searching for superior rental management solutions within the paradise that is South Lake Tahoe.

RnR grew organically through homeowners unhappy with high service charges, hidden costs, unreported damage, lackluster cleaning and ineffective communication

“It wasn’t just the price but quality of home care, that’s what people wanted,” Diana said.

Stu and Diana’s professional background proved invaluable. RnR became the first property management company in South Lake Tahoe to adopt effective new technologies and marketing strategies to make homes stand out in a crowded marketplace.

RnR broke new ground with its advanced yield management pricing engines, and was the first to integrate mobile guest applications and a mobile friendly website.

What’s more, RnR homes boast home automation, including video security, noise monitoring and secure digital locks.

“Stu to this day installs the door

locks and video cameras himself,” Diana said. “Owners love Stu. They can call him anytime, he can answer any question about any home, it’s crazy. Having that top guy still be in touch with homeowners and available any time is so unique.”

“Most importantly, we have a talented team that reflects our values and our commitment to providing an unmatched guest experience,” said Diana. “We bring over 50 years of marketing experience to RnR and are lucky to love what we do and live where we love.”

While Stu and Diana spend countless hours making “happy” happen for guests looking to experience the beauty and majesty of South Lake Tahoe, they are able to carve out time for themselves, too.

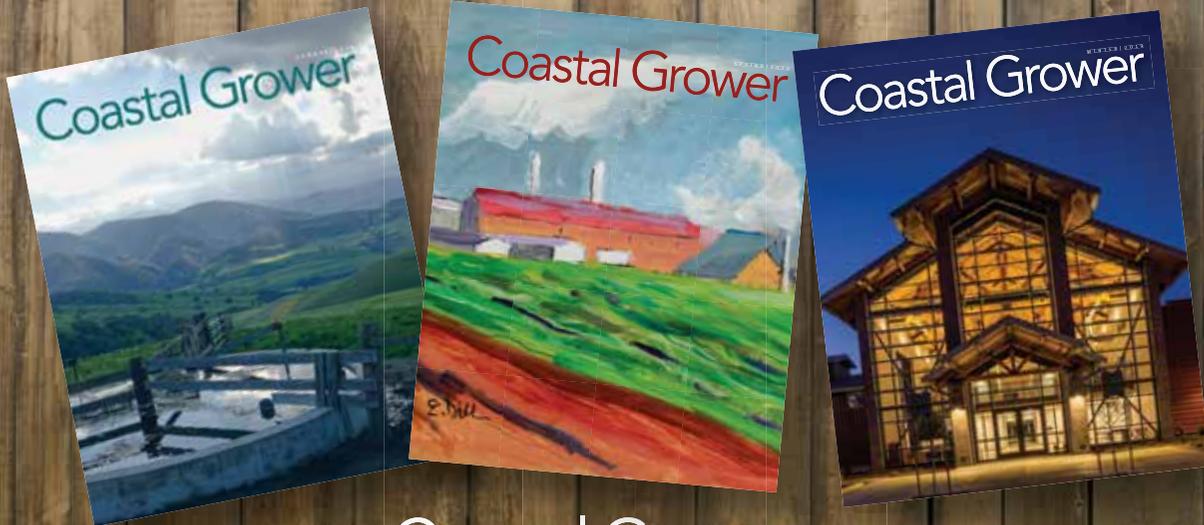
“There’s just something about Tahoe that pulls you in,” Diana said. “I think it’s the air.”

She may have a point. Twain called Tahoe’s air “pure and fine. Bracing and delicious.”

“And why shouldn’t it be?” he wrote. “It is the same the angels breathe.” ☞



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# Farmers' Market Salad

*Courtesy of Montrio Bistro, Monterey*



**A**t Montrio, the Farmers' Market Salad is an exceptional representation of our local farmers' markets and seasonal availability. It is mostly a raw vegetable salad. Except for a couple of methods for roasting beets and emulsifying the herbs and avocados in the green goddess dressing, there are no rules.

The recipe calls for a very small amount of oil, vinegar and salt. Choose these ingredients wisely. The more pronounced their flavors, the greater the contribution and the less you will need to use. Olive oils and vinegars range in complexity and viscosity. Select ones that satisfies your preference and complement the vegetables you have. For example, we use a locally

produced velvety, slightly peppery, organic California arbequina olive oil and an aged champagne vinegar that brings a bit of sweetness. I like how these play against the earthiness of the winter vegetables in the salad on our menu right now.

Experiment with vegetables as a raw item that you might have only tasted cooked. Vegetables, like beets, fennel bulbs, sunchokes and kohlrabi are absolutely delicious when sliced thin or julienned. Broccoli stems peeled and sliced thin across the stalk are sweet and crunchy (better than them going in the rubbish after the florets have been cut off.)

Radish and carrot varieties are so incredibly different in taste, shape and

color. Only a few leaves of beautifully tasty lettuces are necessary. Be thoughtful and deliberate with your choices. More bitter leafy vegetables, red radicchios, castelfranco, endive, escarole and frisée are beautiful in color and taste against peppery arugula, tart red veined sorrel and delicate, earthy watercress. A head of baby gem or hearts of butter lettuce will give crunch, coolness and volume to your salad. Try mixing in lots of picked soft herbs like tarragon, fennel fronds, cilantro, flat leaf parsley and chervil. And finally, edible flowers are a wonderful addition for color, texture and flavor.

The green goddess dressing should showcase the fresh soft herbs that are represented in the salad. If you have collected

chives, parsley and tarragon at your market, reserve some for the salad and some for the dressing. If you do not like tarragon, omit it and use chervil and cilantro instead.

Explore your garden and local markets. This salad can be as simple or as elaborate as you would like. Our salad at Montrio usually ranges in ingredients from 15-28 vegetable varieties depending on the seasonal availability and the mood I'm in. Whatever you do, have fun with vegetable varieties and your knife cuts. Vegetable peelers are a great tool as well for making long thin ribbons.

Your farmers' market salad will be sure to wow your guests and most importantly, represent the seasonality of your region and your adventure in creating a bountiful presentation.

### Montrio Farmers' Market Salad

Vegan/GF  
Serves 4-6

#### Salad Dressing Ingredients:

20gms Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
15gms Champagne Vinegar  
2gm Sea Salt or Himalayan Pink Salt

#### Method:

EVOO & Champagne Vinegar will be used for lightly dressing the greens. Use a very small amount of oil and vinegar only to gently coat all of the vegetables so the tiny bit of sea salt will stick and your salad will glisten. The green goddess should be served on the side for dipping or spread into the bottom of dish with the salad plates on top.

#### Salad Ingredients:

*What to hunt for!*

#### Local Organic Greens

- 1-2 pcs of each depending on the size
- *Baby gems*
- *Living watercress*
- *Castelfranco*
- *Red endive*
- *Dandelion greens*
- *Frisée*
- *Butter lettuce*

#### Herbs

- 1 bunch of each
- *Flat Leaf Parsley*
- *Cilantro*
- *Tarragon*
- *Chervil*
- *Chives*
- *Ruby veined sorrel*
- *Amaranth*
- *Micro greens*
- *Edible Flowers*

#### Root Vegetables

- 1-2 of each depending on the size
- *Carrots - various colors and shapes*
- *Parsnips*
- *Radishes- Watermelon radish, French Breakfast Radish, Icicle Radish, Easter Egg Radish Fennel*
- *Kohlrabi*
- *Sunchokes*

#### Method:

Wash and dry the vegetables very well. A small salad spinner is great for drying the veggies. Being that most of the ingredients in this salad are raw, a thorough washing is paramount. Most of the vegetables can be prepared without peeling. So many nutrients lie just below the skin of vegetables. I usually choose not to peel carrots and radishes. The watermelon radish and kohlrabi are the only real exceptions. Their skin is woody and fibrous and must be cut away.

### Roasted Candy Cane Chiogga Beets

8-12 beets depending on size, baby or full size are fine. Plan 2 large beets for 4-6 salads or about 3 baby beets per salad

#### Ingredients:

20gm EVOO  
15gm Sherry or champagne vinegar  
2 sprigs Thyme  
2gm Sea Salt  
Orange peel from one orange and squeezed juice

#### Method:

Rinse any dirt off on the outside of the beets and trim off the greens and any long roots. Toss beets in a bowl with the ingredients. Wrap in aluminum foil and roast at 375 for about 1-2hrs depending on the size of the beets until fork tender. Remove from oven. Let rest for about 30 minutes, then peel. Set aside for later. Can be prepared a day in advance.

### Green Goddess Dressing Recipe

#### Ingredients:

2ea. avocados  
1ea. Lemon zest  
20g. tarragon  
20g. chives  
20g. Parsley  
20g. Fennel top  
2g. Salt  
2-4oz. EVOO

#### Method:

Branch all herbs in boiling salted water for about 30-45 seconds then shock in ice water. Squeeze dry.

Using a hand blender or small food processor, combine the avocado pulp, herbs, salt and olive oil and blend until smooth. The blanched herbs will bring a beautiful color and flavor to the avocado. ☺

# Donna Zoller's Z Gal's Invitational

**D**onna Zoller's Z Gal's Invitational is a unique, ladies-only event named to honor Donna's commitment to growing confident young ladies through First Tee—Monterey County programming. The event includes a 9-hole scramble, charity auction, and exclusive luncheon at the beautiful Tehama Golf Club. To date, they have raised nearly \$1.8 million for the young ladies at First Tee—Monterey County. To learn more, please visit [firstteemontereycounty.org/zgals](http://firstteemontereycounty.org/zgals).

A huge thank you to the following sponsors!

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1). Chapin Foursome enjoying tee gifts on Hole #9. 2). Elissa Nelson and friends enjoying the reception. 3). Participant Speakers Natalia F. and Isabella F. sharing what it means to be a part of First Tee – Monterey County. 4). Trina Nguyen and foursome ready to begin the tournament. 5). Guests rallying together to raise funds for the young ladies at First Tee – Monterey County.

Party NEAR the Library

# RIPPLE

May 12, 2022

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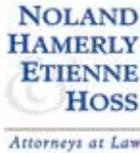
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# Hartnell ‘Party’ is Huge Fundraising Success

On May 21, the Hartnell College Foundation event known as Party in the Library became an outdoor celebration—the Party NEAR the Library – for a second straight year, as the Foundation raised more than \$400,000 for scholarships and other student support programs.

About 250 guests gathered on Hartnell’s newly redesigned Main Campus for lunch, libations, live music, a live auction and the opportunity to honor longtime Salinas Valley grower John Romans. Among the speakers was Jane Hernandez, a first-generation student from Castroville who completed her High School Equivalency before becoming a Hartnell student. She graduated in May and will attend Stanford University after receiving the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke scholarship, awarded to just 100 community college students across the country.

Presentation of the Foundation’s 2022 Leadership Award to Romans culminated the midday event. He was honored as a dedicated member of the foundation Board of Directors and a generous donor, with his wife, Annette, in support of student internships, the King City Education Center and more.

“These foundations don’t work without all of us to gather as a community and as faculty, as staff, as administration and hardworking students,” Romans said. “The goal of this foundation and the goal of this college is to get students into this school, give them the resources, give them the assistance, give them the scholarships, give them the help they need to improve their lives and move on to a four-year university.”

Many generous guests bid on live auction packages and stepped forward to fund both internships and scholarships for Hartnell students.



- 1). Some of the group representing Taylor Farms enjoy the party.
- 2). Stanford-bound graduate Jane Hernandez shares her story with the crowd.
- 3). Friends of John Romans gather in support.
- 4). Susan and David Gill.
- 5). Alla Zeltser and Butch Lindley start the live auction.
- 6). An overview of the event in Hartnell’s Central Plaza.
- 7). Bidders vie for live auction packages that helped raise more than \$400,000.
- 8). Hartnell Governing Board President Erica Padilla-Chavez greets guests.
- 9). John Romans accepts the Leadership Award, with wife, Annette, and longtime friend Gary Vincenz.



# WELI Spring Soirée Highlights Mentorship

With support from many important sponsors, the Hartnell College Foundation held a first-ever Spring Soirée for its Women’s Education & Leadership Institute (WELI) on April 23. The afternoon event on Hartnell’s Main Campus celebrated the power of mentorship in support of outstanding WELI Scholars.

WELI, founded in 2011, has graduated more than 2,500 scholars and granted approximately \$500,000 in scholarships. The program serves women who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Despite their life challenges, WELI Scholars have been able to achieve outstanding outcomes through the support of the program and its members.

The Hartnell College Foundation supports a corresponding program for male students, the Men’s Institute for Leadership & Education (MILE).

## Lead Sponsors

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1). Ana Ibarra-Castro (right), a former WELI Scholar and staff member of the Hartnell College Foundation staff thanks her longtime mentor, Jackie Cruz, vice president of advancement and development. 2). A group of WELI supporters smile for a photo. 3). Andrea Bailey, community engagement manager for Chevron, shares her support for WELI’s mission of student success. 4). Tama Bistran of Taylor Farms enjoys the event. 5). Monica Tovar, president and CEO of TMD Creative (left), shares her mentor experience with former WELI Scholar Nerina Campos.



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SCAN ME

# The Inaugural Sip, Savor & Support Wine Trail Event for Breast Cancer Assistance Group

Thanks to the ingenuity and efforts of Alix Lynn Bosch, co-owner of De Tierra Vineyards, Winery & Tasting Room, the Breast Cancer Assistance Group of Monterey County (BCAG) benefitted from The Sip, Savor & Support Wine Trail event. The three-day event held April 29 through May 1 marked BCAG's 25 years of serving women with breast cancer. The event was attended by more than 500 people and helped raise more than \$5,000.

"Since I moved to the Monterey Peninsula over 10 years ago, the Breast Cancer Assistance Group of Monterey County has been a cause very near and dear to my heart," said Alix Bosch, a breast cancer survivor. "Organizations like BCAG are vital in assisting women like me, as well as their families, as they try to navigate their new and frightening world."

Leading the way, De Tierra Vineyards donated 30 percent of all sales during the three-day event to BCAG. Alix also went to work garnering the support and participation of more than 25 Monterey County wineries and tasting rooms. "We were touched and honored by Alix's leadership and her efforts that raised vital funds to help women undergoing treatment for breast cancer," said Susan Jordan, BCAG Vice President and Board Member. "It is through efforts like this that we are able to continue our 25-year legacy of helping women and their families. This event was special in that it showcased the many incredible and generous winemakers who call Monterey County home. We are grateful to Alix and to all those who came out to join in the event, enjoy the excellent wines, and the beautiful weekend."

Each year, nearly 240 women in Monterey County are diagnosed with breast cancer. In 2021, BCAG provided more than \$143,000 in financial assistance to local breast cancer patients. The grants help cover basic living expenses such as housing, gas, utilities, food and childcare during treatment and recovery.

A list of participating wineries, photos of the event and more information about BCAG, can be found at [www.bcagmc.org](http://www.bcagmc.org).



1). DeTierra team. 2). Lisa from Manzoni shows off her shirt. 3). Members of the Sheid team pose outside of the tasting room. 4.) Guest enjoy Puma Roads outdoor space.

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# Gil Basketball Academy Celebrates Court Heroes at Annual Gala

Believing that strengthening a community begins with supporting its youth, Jose Gil started a basketball academy in East Salinas in 2009.

Few believed the idea would work. Gilbert Medina was not among them. “People said at the time it would go nowhere, that it was impossible,” said the now 90-year-old Medina. “But look how wrong they were.”

Medina became one of Gil Basketball Academy’s original volunteer coaches, instrumental in the nonprofit’s quest to surround youth with positive adult role models and peer influences while immersing them in meaningful and constructive activities.

On March 19, Medina was presented with GBA’s 2022 Court Heroes award at its Annual Gala, recognized as someone who is “heroic, exceptional, respectful and outstanding in the community.”

Gil co-founded GBA with his wife Eva Gil-Silva, and serves as the boys basketball coach and athletic director at Alisal High School.

In Alisal’s gymnasium, next to all the banners marking the school’s on-court success, is one picturing Coach Medina. The words read “honorary legend” — representing Medina’s induction into the school’s Wall of Fame.

“Coach is still involved and managing to keep those he surrounds anchored, together, and standing tall,” Gil said. “He tirelessly comes in ready to coach and work with the kids.”

Held at the Salinas PAL Center, the GBA’s gala included a live band and DJ, no-host bar, dinner, dancing and a silent auction. The evening also saw the launch of the Coach Richard Solis Memorial GBA scholarship.

“GBA lost one of our most committed, giving and passionate volunteers,” said Gil. “Coach Solis was empathetic and always identified with players. He pushed them to be the best version of themselves and always set high standards.”

Moving forward, one deserving GBA player will be awarded the scholarship to pursue higher education, a major component of GBA’s philosophy. While GBA was formed to promote the sport of basketball through camps, travel teams and leagues, it also supports academic goals, and routinely arranges field trips to college campuses.

For further information on Gil Basketball Academy, visit [www.gilbasketballacademy.com](http://www.gilbasketballacademy.com).



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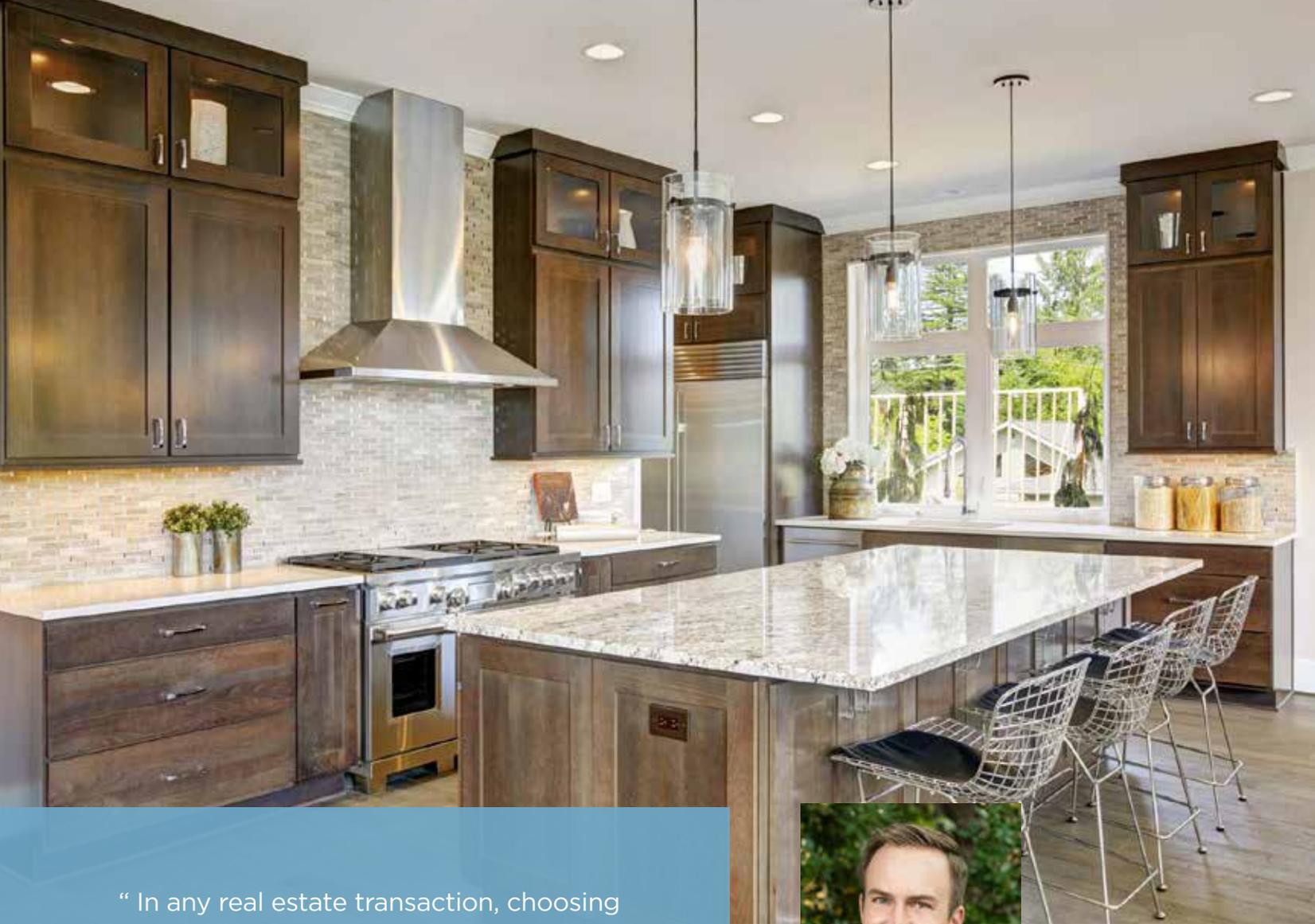
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**THANK  
YOU**

*Fans, volunteers, contestants  
and everyone who made  
2022 a great year at the  
California Rodeo Salinas!*

**SAVE THE DATES**  
*for next year*  
**JULY 20\*23 2023**  
**CARODEO.COM**





### Kingdom

- Early maturity
- Good crown quality for early-type
- Nice dome shape
- Multi-use



### Dynasty

- Harvest uniformity
- Head quality
- Anthocyanin free



### Empire

- Crown cut/short trim type
- Overwinter and fall harvest slots in Coastal California
- Blind plant tolerant



### Meridian

- High level of heading
- IR to Fusarium and bolting

# BUILT FOR THE SEASON

No region is the same, which is why versatility is key. Sakata proudly offers a range of broccoli well-suited for longer days with excellent performance in the summer and fall harvest slots while also providing lettuce with a high level of heading and adaptability. No matter your region, there's a variety bred specifically for you. Visit our website to spruce up your program and find the right varieties for you.



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# SSB SOLAR PANEL CLEANING



## Let the **sun shine in!**

Over time, dust, dirt and pollen can settle on the thin layer of glass that protects your solar cells, decreasing your energy production. Hire the experts at SSB to safely clean your panels—and maximize the efficiency of your solar investment.

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