



## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER AND COMMODITY REPORT

MARCH 16th, 2010

### CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT



Sa Za is set in a bohemian atmosphere reminiscent of "The Village" in NYC with cool bold colors, a deep ocean blue ceiling and an open kitchen. The art reflected in the restaurant is by Marco Bronzini and Chef Joe DiMaggio himself. As abundance and variety describe the interiors, so too must these terms be ascribed to the food. The sights, smells and sensory overload doesn't prepare you enough for Sa Za's extreme Peasant Cuisine. Owned and operated by Chefs, their mission is to make every meal a memorable one.

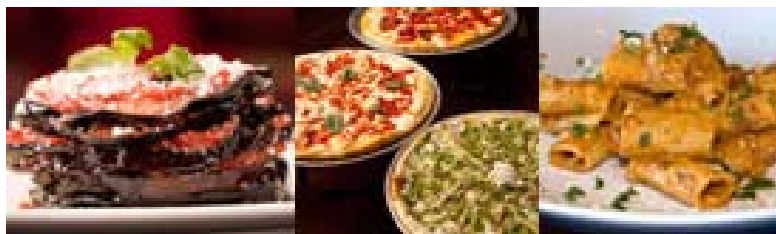
Eggs in Purgatory - fresh organic eggs poached in marinara with extra virgin olive oil, chilies, reggiano cheese, fresh herbs and served with Sa Za garlic styx for dipping

Stuffed Hot Peppers - a blend of three meats, carrots, onion, fresh mozzarella, and cognac, all stuffed into Anaheim chilies, slow roasted and topped with more fresh mozzarella

Number One - angel hair pasta served with Maine lobster meat, chopped shrimp and spinach in a chardonnay, exploded garlic and olive oil sauce

Also known for their out of the ordinary pizzas, you can find selections including the Greek (feta, lamb gyro, calamata olives, pepperoncini, and Tzatziki cucumber sauce) or the Wild Mushroom (porcini, morels, chanterelles sautéed with roasted garlic, sherry wine demi glace, goat cheese and fresh mozzarella).

At the helm of Sa Za is Chef Joe DiMaggio, Jr. . He has been hailed as a visionary in his theme, concept and design, and has an attitude that inspires, a focus and work ethic that translates into great culinary representations enticing the recipients to expand their consciousness of what is healthful, flavorsome cuisine!



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### WEATHER REPORT

High pressure out west will bring clear skies and warmer temperatures the western growing regions through the week. Temperatures are expected to reach the low 70s in Central California with low 80s likely in the desert locals the latter half of the week. This will increase growth rates in the fields this week after weeks of cooler temperatures and rains.

Partly cloudy skies with mild temperatures (upper 60s to low 70s) are expected in Florida into Wednesday. An upper level low pressure system moves into the area mid-week bringing a 20-30% chance of showers and slightly cooler temperatures the latter half of the week.

#### **\*\*WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW\*\***

- Green bell peppers remain very short and quality is only fair
- Tomatoes in all areas are in short supply. Demand exceeds supply, FOB's are high.
- Bartlett pears are finished for the season
- Honeydew and cantaloupe supplies are limited
- Napa cabbage will be light in availability due to excessive seeder in the fields. Product will be light all this week.

A strong high pressure ridge off the West Coast will keep the region dry with gradual warming into next week. This is a welcome relief from the cool temperatures and rains this winter season. The improved weather pattern will spur growth rates in the upcoming transitional acreage and spring stands. With the beginning of the transition to California fields fast approaching supplies look to be on the light side due to numerous factors. Adverse growing conditions throughout the Southeast have greatly lessened supplies from this region putting added pressure on western growers. Near ideal growing conditions in the desert region has brought product on ahead of schedule creating less supplies for the end of the season. Rain and cool temperatures in California and Mexico this winter have impacted growth rates and yields of upcoming spring crops. Heavy rains and strong winds in the transition region of Central California has caused mold, mildew and maturity issues (head size) in this region. Processors will likely come up short on product for their plants due to these factors and will be sourcing product outside their allotted acreage. This will put further pressure on spring and transitional supplies from California. Bottom line is that supplies, quality and shelf life will be problematic during the transition possibly well beyond. Future weather patterns will play a crucial role as to how these stands recover throughout the Western growing regions.

### MARKET REPORT

#### **ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS VOLATILE, PRICES UP**

Asparagus Avocado Bell Peppers Blueberries Broccoli Celery Cucumbers Grapes  
Honeydew Onions Pears Potatoes Squash Tomatoes

#### **ITEMS TO WATCH -- MARKETS GOING DOWN/STEADY**

Apples Blackberries Cantaloupe Carrots Cauliflower Green Onions Iceberg Lettuce Leaf Lettuce  
Lemons Oranges Strawberries Raspberries Stonefruit Watermelon

#### **APPLES/PEARS**

Washington packers are still looking for help on larger fruit while still struggling to get the smaller sizes. Expect this trend to continue for the season as the fruit is large this year. Supplies of the smaller fruit will continue to get lighter until new crop starts in late summer/early fall. Demand remains very strong on small fruit and light on larger fruit. There are still some tremendous deals on 48/56/64's in most varieties other than Gala. Please consider varieties other than red delicious for your foodservice orders that require smaller fruit. Specialty apples including the Honeycrisp variety are still available and in adequate supply although Gala's will start to go up this month as the smaller shippers finish packing. Most varieties are also large and heavier to the premium grades. D'Anjou pears are in excellent shape with good supplies in Washington and like the apples are mostly large. Bosc, Seckel, Concorde, Comice and Red Crimsons varietal pears are available as well although the varietal supplies are starting to get low.

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### ASPARAGUS

This asparagus market is getting stronger on all sizes. Supplies will continue to be lighter on jumbo sizing from Mexico and California. Peruvian product is still available on the East and West Coast. The Quality of Mexican product continues to be good. California production can be loaded in Salinas and Yuma.

### AVOCADO

California growers have improved their harvest. Fruit is beginning to size up. Chilean fruit volumes are very light as season is coming to the end. Mexico's volume is lighter as growers are holding off on production.

- **Mexican Fruit:** Mexico still represents the bulk of the avocados on the market. Growers are being conservation with their harvest to firm their market.
- **California Fruit:** Growers are picking better supplies as fruit is beginning to size.
- **Chilean Fruit:** Chile is winding down quickly, with many shippers received the last of their fruit this last weekend. Quality remains good.

### BELL PEPPERS

**Eastern Bells:** Very little product is available. Prices are high, some reports of a \$ 50 XL price. Rain last week is making matters more difficult, and cold weather that went through Florida has kept plants from growing. This will not change for the next few weeks. Look for product to remain tight, and prices high, as Nogales also has limited availability. Prices have not been this high on peppers in twenty years or more.

### BERRIES

- **Strawberries:** California Strawberry market is steady with building supplies. Demand is good. Weather looks to be ideal all week. Quality is great. The Easter pull will start later this week which will tighten up supplies and firm up the market. Florida strawberry growers were hit with some heavy rain the tail end of last week which has tighten up supplies out of this area. Quality is fair with good demand. Mexico strawberry growers are almost done for the season. Supplies are limited and quality is fair.
- **Raspberries:** Steady supplies and demand is keeping this market steady. Quality is good.
- **Blackberries:** Good supplies of blackberries coming out of Mexico this week has caused this market to weaken. Quality is fair.
- **Blueberries:** The supplies are limited due the last of the boats that were on the water before the earthquake hit over the weekend. Most shippers are trying to fly blueberries in and are having problems with air space. So supplies will be hit and miss over the next couple of weeks. There are quality problems showing up in most packs. Look for the market to firm up as this week moves.

### BROCCOLI

This market continues to be active on bunched product as well as crowns. Yuma supplies are starting to dry up and production in Salinas has picked up but only in moderate numbers. Contract business is being covered first by suppliers. Expect supplies will be light throughout the week. Crowns continue to have small size heads.

### CARROTS

California carrots are coming out of Bakersfield for the next week or two weeks with good supplies. Yield and quality are good and there should not be any gaps for the next couple of months.

### CAULIFLOWER

This market has eased up a little due to production in Salinas but overall supplies are only light to moderate. Some shippers are buying on the outside as their product is not quite ready to harvest. Other suppliers are harvesting in Salinas now, and this will inevitably cause for a shortage of product later. Some discoloration continues to be seen upon arrival but not as extensive as in past weeks. This commodity will be a roller coaster throughout the season.



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### CELERY

This market continues to be active on all sizes, especially on small sizing like 30s and smaller. Production is lighter in Oxnard and Santa Maria compared to previous weeks. There continues to be a few shippers of celery in Yuma. The quality continues to be good from all the growing regions. Book orders early as demand looks to increase throughout the week.

### CITRUS

- **Lemons:** Supplies are good on 115's and larger, with 165's and especially 200's are less available with pricing firming. Quality is very good.
- **Limes:** Limes are very short and expect them to stay short until mid May.
- **Oranges:** Demand remains steady. Crop continues to peak on fancy 72's, 56's and 88's. The supplies of choice grades remain tight.

### CUCUMBERS

**Eastern Cucumbers:** Most cucumbers being shipped on the East Coast are from Honduras. Quality is fair to good, and prices are up from last week. The offshore deal is winding down, and only has a few weeks left.

### GRAPES

Product will be limited this week and getting orders in early will help to get product covered. Crimsons are just starting to come in, flames will be finishing up over the next couple of weeks. The greens, Sugarones and Thompsons, will be the most prevalent over the next few weeks as shippers are trying to get them in prior to the marketing order. Black seedless are in short supply. Red Globes with very good quality and good availability.

### GREEN ONIONS

This market is steady with product coming from Mexico. Demand is light. Pencil sizes continue to have the largest availability. There have been some issues on light yellowing on processed items. Suppliers are working on fixing this problem as quickly as possible.

### LEAF LETTUCE

The leaf market has eased up slightly to start the week. Huron production is expected to start the middle of next week so in essence product will be available in Huron and Yuma. Most suppliers are entering new fields so product is expected to be of good quality. Green and red leaf have been clean, and supplies will be good throughout the week.

### LETTUCE

The lettuce market has lowered. Production numbers have increased. Huron should have lettuce available next week so again Huron and Yuma will see production. Yuma is expected to be harvesting product through the month of March and part of April. There continues to be a few issues of pink ribbing, discoloration, and mechanical damage seen upon arrival.

### MELONS

- **Cantaloupe:** Product continues to be limited. Honduran and Guatemalan product are both coming into the US. Unfortunately Guatemala has struggled with white fly and have started out very slow. Honduras product is still not prevalent enough to cover demand either. Florida product is coming into both Pompano and Manatee. There is product on the West Coast out of the LA area and some fruit coming into New Jersey as well.
- **Honeydew:** Demand continues to exceed supply. Offshore fruit is still arriving into Florida, California and New Jersey with volume supplies still mainly in 5's and 6's. Product quality is fair as we are seeing sugar netting on the skin of the fruit but the meat quality is not affected and the fruit is eating well. Nogales is getting Mexican fruit in with good availability and fair quality as well.



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### **ONIONS**

Northwest yellows & reds are up again as the supplies continue to drop. A couple more major shippers have finished for the season. Most shippers are managing their storage inventories to cover contracts and regular customers only. Any new business will be tough to cover. The northwest sizing is still heavy to jumbos and larger while mediums are very short. The northwest quality has been holding nicely. Mexico continues to consume most of its own yellow and white onion crop instead of sending it to the U.S. and until they have enough to satisfy their own demand that will continue. Domestic whites are very limited and in a demand exceeds supplies situation although the market has stabilized. A few whites, reds, and yellows have crossed from Mexico but the volume is very low. Mexico was supposed to be getting better volume to us this week but it hasn't happened yet. The Texas crop is going to start in April but we're still expecting them to be late due to the cool weather and rain that they've had.

### **POTATOES**

80 count and smaller Idaho's are still abundant as the Burbank variety is peaking on that size. Only a few shippers have Norkotahs left so expect the smaller size profile to remain for the rest of the season. There are still quite a few 70's available as well but 60's and larger are very short. Washington Norkotahs are steady on all sizes and they are still getting excellent quality while peaking on 70's and 60's. The smaller counts are tight in Washington. Wisconsin & Colorado shippers are also packing Norkotahs and have a steady to slightly stronger market with light demand, and they are slightly heavier to 70 and 80 count but are spread evenly between 40's and 100's. Mount Vernon, Washington continues with excellent quality on reds and Yukon-Golds but they are nearly finished for the season. North Dakota has good supplies of red & yellow potatoes with few whites although a few shippers have finished. California packers have lighter supplies of all colors. They will get back into better volume in April. South Florida is going with reds and Yukons but the volume remains light due to the freezes.

### **SQUASH**

**Eastern Squash:** Florida squash has come back a bit, but the quality remains questionable, especially after last week's storms went through. Heavy winds will increase scarring on yellow squash. There is some product available, and that's the good news.

### **STONE FRUIT**

Peaches, Nectarines and Plums are all available with good quality and availability.

### **TOMATOES**

**Eastern:** Demand continues to exceed supply. Florida continues to be a non-factor in the tomato supply chain. There has been significant crop loss from the early freeze and supplies out of Florida will be down and won't rebound probably until spring and some are now saying possibly the end of May. Compounding the already desperate situation, Florida had experienced more cold weather in the 30's in the recent weeks and this will slow an already injured Florida crop. We can expect to see higher fob's probably up through the spring accompanied with shortened supplies. It is looking like the Florida crop may get back into production around late May.

### **VALUE ADDED**

On the value added front, chopped romaine and romaine blended items continue to experience some brown and red discoloration on finished product. Expect to see some red to pink discoloration on shred and chopped lettuce items as well. Green onions have been reported to have some yellowing upon arrivals.

### **WATERMELON**

Light supplies on both seeded and seedless product as demand continues to exceed supply. Quality on the Mexican fruit is fair at best. The mini seedless are in better supply and quality is good, the market has leveled off.