



Breeding Resilience

By Chandler James



From left to right: Jeff Giumarra, Nomi Karniel-Padan, Rafi Karniel, Randy Giumarra, Vered Karniel, Adi Karniel, Mimi Corsaro, Shachar Karniel, and Joe Giumarra

I recently learned

that even when they are seedless, each and every table grape has an embryo inside.

This soft-shelled nugget nestled into the heart of the berry acts as a sort of barometer for the fruit, kickstarting the maturation process when conditions are just right. In a way, fruit breeders mirror this relationship. They are, like this tiny nucleus of a table grape, the source at the center of the industry. These research and development experts provide growers with all of the components they need to bring a premium product to market: short production cycles, tolerance to adverse weather, long shelf-life, and, of course, excellent flavor and eating quality. Take ARRA™ varieties, for example, which have exploded in demand due to their ideal growing qualities. These grapes are the fruit of a partnership between the Giumarra and Karniel families, headed by industry pioneer

Shachar Karniel. In June of this year, the two families formed an official partnership, Grapa Global LLC.

"We are two farming families that have joined together based on a common mindset: Founded by a Farmer for the Farmer. Our deep connection to farming inspires us to prioritize the grower's needs throughout the development process including crop performance at harvest time," says Randy Giumarra, Vice President of Sales for Giumarra Vineyards. "It is worth mentioning that the ARRA Breeding Program remains privately owned by the two families, which sets it apart as the only one among the three leading table grape breeding companies."



This uniqueness carries significant meaning for the Giumarra and Karniel families. The company is not driven exclusively by ROI; its focus lies on the people with whom it works and the sincere care it has for colleagues and partners worldwide. In speaking with Nomi Karniel-Padan, I learn that this mission is at the core of everything the Grapa Global team does. "The Grapa international teams are like extended family."

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Randy Giumarra,

Vice President of Sales, Giumarra Vineyards



They provide support in their designated areas and share their knowledge of what they have learned with one another. It's a dynamic process that keeps our licensed farmers with the most updated growing guidelines and results for each of the varieties, both in their own growing region, and across the globe," Nomi, Grapa Global's Commercial Director, explains. The marketing teams are also key pieces of the Grapa puzzle. They are busy promoting the varieties not only to potential licensees, but also to the retailers who distribute and

promote Grapa's varieties around the world. Tasting panels introduce the buyers to the characteristics of each variety while learning which regions are producing them to help with continuity of supply. They also build excitement within their buying team for the delicious new varieties that are available for their customers. "As Early as ARRA" was one of Grapa's first slogans. In addition to producing early-season varieties, the company's current and future breeding efforts

are concentrated on proven genetic profiles, which have achieved conclusive resistance to both rain and to drought and desert conditions. Grapa continues to develop grapes for different segments, including a line of unique, multi-sensory varieties, which are already showing very promising results, plus some new main-line introductions from their breeding pipeline. These new varieties created some very palpable excitement for the attendees of the early ARRA field day in mid-July of this year.

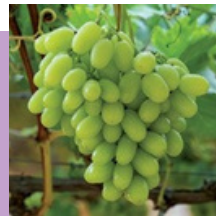


Some of the most successful current commercial ARRA varieties produced by Grapa include:



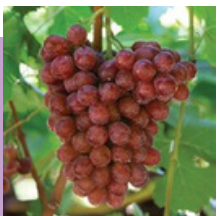
ARRA Honey Pop™

The perfect example of a short cycle variety that has it all—a green grape variety that stands out for its unique very early ripening time and extreme ease of growing. This variety is known for its firm and meaty berries with a burst of mild honeydew flavor and an excellent shelf-life.



ARRA Sugar Drop™

A unique green variety that has been performing exceptionally well in the market. It boasts an elongated shape and offers a delightful combination of sweetness and crunchiness.



ARRA Fire Kiss™

This variety possesses exceptional eating qualities and the remarkable ability to self-color. It stands as a classic example of the true essence of being "As Early as ARRA," as it is an exceptionally early red grape variety.



ARRA Fire Crunch™

This variety stands out with its exceptional bright pinkish-red color, large, crunchy berries, and outstanding flavor profile. An advantage of this variety is its high fertility, making it easier for growers to achieve a bountiful harvest.



ARRA Mystic Charm™

The earliest black variety that exists in the market, which ripens at the same time as ARRA HoneyPop, making it an ideal choice for growers looking to diversify their harvests. One of the key advantages of this variety is its ease of cultivation and is known for its sweet flavor and crunchy eating quality.



ARRA Cherry Crush™

Distinguished by its bright red-to-burgundy, elongated berries, and a rich, deep sweet flavor reminiscent of a Bing cherry. It has exceptional storage ability, making it a top choice for commercial growers who require long-distance transportation. It is also renowned for its full rain resistance, allowing it to withstand wet conditions during the growing season.

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Nomi Karniel-Padan,
Commercial Director, Grapa Global



One of the main advantages of having very early varieties, as Nomi tells me, is the shorter production cycles, enabling earlier harvests and thereby further reducing the risk of exposure to unfavorable conditions. This approach to table grape breeding meets growing sustainability requirements as well.

Grapa's short cycle varieties allow growers to harvest their crops earlier in the season, which further enhances sustainability by requiring less water, fewer pesticides and fungicides, lower emissions, and reduced labor," Nomi adds. "This leads to a decrease in the overall environmental impact of grape cultivation. ARRA varieties that are more tolerant and robust in the face of a changing climate and extreme conditions can provide a solution that will benefit growers and minimize risk."

ARRA Sweeties, ARRA Cherry Crush, and ARRA Fire Crunch have demonstrated their ability to flourish and endure substantial rainfall, both in humid climates, and in growing regions where unprecedented levels of precipitation have occurred. In California, Tropical Storm Hilary validated the resilience of the ARRA varieties to increasingly difficult weather conditions and changing weather patterns. By breeding these grape varieties with long-term goals in mind, Grapa is proactively preparing for future challenges.

The company has proven that understanding the growers' needs and listening to consumer preferences is of paramount importance "Our first obligation as breeders is to the growers. We must provide growers

with varieties that enable them to maintain production levels and ensure consistent quality to ultimately satisfy consumers," Nomi concludes. "Our varieties distinguish themselves through their utmost reliability, profitability, and consistent crop performance. They are easy to cultivate, possess a great shelf-life, and exhibit excellent cold storage capabilities—these are all unique defining characteristics of the ARRA varieties."

While not much is promised in fresh produce, one thing is for sure: Change is constant. Like the embryos hard at work inside each and every table grape, the experts at Grapa Global will continue to keep a watchful eye on the changing climate of the table grape industry. And new, advantageous varieties are sure to follow.



ARRATM
VARIETIES