

PRESS RELEASE

Tasty Trend³



Tasty Trend³: VOG and VIP present a trio of new apple varieties

RedPop[®], Cosmic Crisp[®], Giga[®]: 3 new apples facing the world

Bolzano, January 27, 2021 - Tastes vary – and they change. That is why the South Tyrolean apple sector is always on the lookout for new varieties to add to and extend its range. Three new varieties have now found their way into the South Tyrolean apple growing community, which means they will soon be available everywhere. Apple Consortiums VOG and VIP presented the three new varieties at the International Apple Summit 2021 held digitally on 27 January 2021 in Bolzano with the title “Tasty Trend³”.

Alongside leaders of the South Tyrolean fruit sector, the speakers included fruit growers, technicians, breeders, researchers, marketing experts, and taste professionals. “The diversity and innovation of varieties is in the DNA of VOG; the key selection criteria of course include the taste of the apples, but also the characteristics of the varieties in cultivation and storage ability, as well as in terms of market trends and consumer needs,” said VOG chair Georg Kössler. Thomas Oberhofer, VIP chair, underlined the advantages of South Tyrol in cultivating a wide range of varieties: “The many different altitudes and the blend of Alpine and Mediterranean climate provide excellent conditions for many different varieties. This means that quality products truly thrive here, both in integrated and organic farming.” The new varieties are also a good fit for the South Tyrolean fruit growing community’s drive towards increasing sustainability: two of the new varieties (Ipador/Giga[®] and CIVM49/RedPop[®]) are scab resistant, making it possible to significantly reduce the amount of plant protection measures. All three varieties are also intended for organic farming.

VOG director Walter Pardatscher explained the consortium’s varietal strategy, which would see no variety making up more than 25% of total production: “We have to position ourselves even more broadly and offer a diverse range that can meet all future consumer needs.” The next few years will therefore see the South Tyrolean farming community take up more new apples. Martin Pinzger, director of VIP, reiterated the strategy of cultivating Golden

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Delicious in future as Val Venosta's most important variety, yet continuing to add further red and bi-coloured apples to the range. "We will still focus heavily on natural and sustainable cultivation. Organic farming, which already makes up 20% of cultivated land in Val Venosta, is a good example of this." South Tyrol will therefore continue to position itself as a reliable supplier of high-quality apples with modern and market-oriented properties.

As it is important to be able to supply customers with a wide range of apples throughout the year, storage ability takes on a particularly key role – one in which these new varieties excel. That is why they will come to market in the second half of the season.

Consumer needs and market demands are indeed constantly changing. For Helwig Schwartz, an expert from AMI (Agricultural Market Information Company) in Hamburg, the quality and taste of apples are playing an ever more important role for consumers. Each variety needs a clear brand and marketing strategy in order to be a market success. And one has been developed for each of the three varieties.

Hannes Tauber and Benjamin Laimer, marketing experts at VOG and VIP, introduced the newly developed brand names Giga® and RedPop® and explained the brand communication for Cosmic Crisp®, which has been specifically adapted for the European market. The head pomologist at Laimburg Research Centre, Walter Guerra, spoke about the characteristics of the apples in terms of cultivation, storage ability and taste. Apple growers Sonja Matzneller, Michl Bradlwarter and Karl Dietl reported on their initial introduction to the different varieties and about their first experiences of growing them. The breeders responsible for creating the varieties commented on this and their motives for doing so: Nicolas Stevens, from Belgian breeding institute Better3Fruit (Ipador – Giga®), Bruce Barritt from Washington State University (WA38 - Cosmic Crisp®) and Marco Bertolazzi from the Consorzio Italiano Vivaisti in Ferrara (CIVM49 - RedPop®).

Since taste is ultimately critical, this aspect was given special prominence at the International Apple Summit 2021: presenter Anna Zangerle invited apple expert Vera Platzgummer from the Variety Innovation Consortium South Tyrol on stage, along with sommelier Claudia Rier and star chef Martin Obermarzoner. These three tasted the apples and shared their impressions and taste sensations, visualizing them using an aroma wheel. The international trade audience also got a taste: as the International Apple Summit 2021 had to be held as an online event due to coronavirus, invited international guests were sent a tasting box of apples along with the necessary equipment and instructions in advance.

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From apple variety to brand

Ipador, WA38, CIVM49: The names of apple varieties are not always easy on the ear, but they do serve to categorize them in a first phase at breeding institutes. As soon as an apple variety enters the phase of commercial production, the search is generally on for a memorable and attractive name for consumers. Apples that meet the quality demands of the brand are then marketed under the brand name. This means that consumers will find the brand quality of the Ipador variety on the shelves as Giga[®], WA38 as Cosmic Crisp[®], and CIVM49 as RedPop[®]. All three varieties have a separate, clear brand identity and characteristic market positioning.

All three varieties are also grown organically.

Ipador –Giga[®]

Better3Fruit N.V., a breeding institute based in Rillaar, Belgium, is the owner of the variety and brand. The International Pome Fruit Alliance Ltd. (IPA) owns the global master licence for allocating cultivation rights. VOG is the first to introduce Giga[®] apples in Europe.

This variety is resistant to scab, which has the advantage of reducing the need for plant protection products.

The fruit is large and has an extremely good storage ability. Its taste is very intense with a very balanced sweet / tangy taste. The taste is full-bodied with flavour notes ranging from banana to honey to cinnamon and dried fruits.

The flesh is particularly firm. Giga[®] is stored for several months to reach perfect ripeness.

The Giga[®] brand name reflects the characteristics of the apple and it is presented with a clear, memorable logo and “mighty good” slogan positioning.

WA38 – Cosmic Crisp[®]

The WSU – Washington State University in Wenatchee, USA – owns this variety and brand. Bruce Barritt is the breeder.

Proprietary Variety Management (PVM), from Yakima, USA, owns the master licence for allocating global cultivation rights. Both associations have already started commercial cultivation and will have the first commercial quantities available after the 2021 harvest. Initial tests are being carried out with selected customers during this current season.

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This variety has a good storage ability, the fruit remains very crisp and juicy whilst keeping its full flavour, which ranges from exotic fruit to kiwifruit and gooseberry to orange peel.

The fruit has a special texture, its cells are about twice as large as in other apples.

Cosmic Crisp® has already been introduced in the US and is now entering European market thanks to the partnership with South Tyrol's apple sector.

The brand logo has been directly transferred from the US branding without change, as has the colour scheme. The imagery, however, has been adapted to European requirements and depicts photos of moments of enjoy. The brand slogan is: "Heavenly taste. With every bite."

CIVM49 – RedPop®

Consorzio Italiano Vivaisti (CIV) in Ferrara, Italy, owns this variety and brand. The Consortium of South Tyrolean Fruit Growers Cooperatives (VOG) and the Association of Val Venosta Producers of Fruit and Vegetables (VIP) own the master licence for allocating European cultivation rights. VOG is the first to introduce the apple.

This variety is resistant to scab and has a very good storage ability; the fruit grows up to a manageable size and it is an intense red.

The flesh is firm, has a very sweet taste and is both juicy and crisp. The flavours range from plum to elderflower to dried fruit and honey sweetness.

The RedPop® brand name is based on the properties of the apple – handy, striking in flavour and appearance, and modern. The brand slogan is: "Little big sweet."

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