

Gert Upton – Schoonbee Landgoed

Giving the Cara Cara navel the send-off it deserves



© Schoonbee Landgoed The beauty of the Cara Cara navel is hidden: from the outside, it is indistinguishable from a typical navel, and it can get mixed up with other navel types, which is why Schoonbee Landgoed pays particular attention to how they package their Cara Cara range.

"We decided to place our Cara Cara fruit in a pink or red wrapper with a PLU that specifies the variety," says Gert Upton, marketing manager of Schoonbee Landgoed in Groblersdal, Limpopo. Not many South African farms offer the distinctive navel anymore, despite its aesthetic qualities, and on many farms, the Cara Cara orchards have been removed – it is not the easiest category to sell, Upton observes.

"It is a bit finicky; it has a soft peel, it easily takes on a more squared shape, which is why we pack it in an open top. Our boxes have a large Cara Cara label for maximum exposure."

Not many destinations in the world regard it as something special, but among those in the know, it is a premium niche product.

He remarks that in North America, it is a very strong category, and although the United States is only accessible to Western Cape growers, Canada is open to all South African exporters, and the Canadian market loves Cara Cara navels. "Our marketing plan further includes placing the most handsome fruit, the select class,

in China, and fruit that is class 1 and class 2, we send to our European clients with niche programmes, particularly in Italy, where the Cara Cara is highly regarded, as well as a bit in the Benelux region."



© Schoonbee Landgoed *Cara Cara navels, a niche fruit for clients looking for differentiation within the category*

From Africa and the Middle East, there's not much demand for the Cara Cara, he notes. In the local market, it's not easy to obtain a premium, he says, but differentiating lines do exist. "There are South African customers particularly looking for this variety as they enjoy the taste profile, the unique red flesh colour and the high vitamin C content."

He continues: "The category earns a premium when it's well packaged because it offers an excellent eating experience, but if anything goes wrong, it becomes more complicated: it's not a category you can easily divert to another client."

The planned Cara Cara volumes are good, with bigger sizing than normal navels, therefore good for the open top cartons as per their planning. The high rainfall of the past summer has had an effect on acid levels, but with excellent brix levels, he remarks, their Cara Cara navels are delicious.



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Cara Cara navels for the local market in 7kg and 10kg mesh bags

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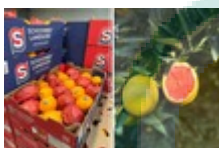
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