

# Avocados serve as a fruitful enterprise

BY LISA CAREY

What's not to love when it comes to the bell-shaped goodness of a ripe avocado? Healthy friend to any dish, benefit to "any body."

To the Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust, its avocado trees are rooted in a legacy of stewardship that embraces both productivity and preservation. "It's really about creating a balance," says Richard Atmore, who, along with his wife Bonnie are co-founders of the 6,000-acre Rancho Ventura that is home to Two Trees. "By sustaining a working landscape, including 91 acres of avocado trees within the Ventura foothills, we can honor the natural and agricultural resources of these protected lands, and keep it accessible to all."

Their ideal co-collaborator, Ventura's own Mission Produce. As the global leader in producing, distributing and marketing fresh Hass avocados, the company also recognizes their avocados are only as good as the ground they come from.

Richard says, "Here at Rancho Ventura, we're so thankful for the support Mission Produce provides as our growing partner. It's more of a long-term, interdependent relationship. Their goal is to provide the world's finest avocados, and Rancho Ventura's is to be a world class conservation trust."

The first avocado trees were planted on the Ranch in the 1980s. Harvest time begins late spring and peaks into early summer, actually now. Avocados are alternate bearing fruit that thrive in the coastal climate. Meaning they may produce a large crop one year, and then will produce a small crop the following year. It is possible for a tree to produce 200 to 300 avocados per tree, once it reaches five to seven years of age.

According to Mission Field Representative Chris R. Dryden, "You make life-long friends in the work we do here at Mission. Richard and I have



Ventura's Mission Produce is a global leader in producing, distributing and marketing fresh Hass avocados.

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known each other for more than 20 years. All that time I have been Mission's field representative and Richard's partner in managing these trees. We appreciate the loyalty and partnership that we share with RA."

Avocados have become a favorite food source. More so in recent years as chefs and foodies explore new ways to make them a delicious and satisfying part of every meal. "Avocados are my favorite fruit, great tasting and super beneficial," says Bonnie. "They're a complete food that's good for your skin, mind and body. It's a clean, healthy fruit that complements many a dish, but also stands alone as a food. I love sharing my favorite recipes."

The VC Star Wine & Food Experience, presented by Mission Produce, benefits Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust

## A NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSE

While avocados are relatively high in calories and fat, the good news is that avocados are nutrient dense and the fat they contain is the 'good' kind—monounsaturated, which is readily used by the body as energy. These facts make avocados a good caloric investment.

- One-fifth of a medium avocado (2 Tbsp.) has 50 calories and contributes nearly 20 vitamins and minerals.
- Avocados act as a nutrient booster by enabling the body to absorb more fat-soluble nutrients, such as alpha and beta-carotene as well as lutein.
- Avocados offer a better nutritional choice as a spread compared to butter and mayonnaise.



## BONNIE'S AVOCADO BRUSCHETTA WITH BALSAMIC GLAZE

The perfect midday treat or party time tapa, with ripe avocado and juicy grape tomatoes.

### Ingredients:

- 1 baguette, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup olive oil, divided
- 2 cups of cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 avocado, halved, seeded, peeled and diced
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
- ¼ cup of basil leaves, chiffonade
- Balsamic glaze

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place baguette slices on the prepared baking sheet, then drizzle with 2 tablespoons olive oil. Place into oven and bake for 8-10 minutes, or until lightly golden brown.

In a large bowl, combine tomatoes, avocado, remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper, to taste. Top each baguette slice with avocado-tomato mixture, garnish with basil.

Serve immediately, drizzled with balsamic glaze.

**Yield:** 4 servings; Prep time 10 minutes; Cook time 15 minutes.

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CONSERVATION TRUST

The mission of the Rancho Ventura Conservation Land Trust is to protect the natural diversity, scenic open space and agricultural vitality of our Ventura County ranch and coastal areas.

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