

Published September 30th, 2009

## "The Best Peaches Are At Diablo Foods"

By Sophie Braccini



Bill Fujimoto (right) works with Mike Callahan outside Diablo Foods Photo Sophie Braccini

At the last Lafayette Farmers' market two residents were having a conversation about peaches, "I think the best ones are at Diablo Foods," said local artist Marcia Barrow Taylor, "I cannot say, with certainty, that Diablo Foods peaches are 'the best,'" responded Steve Falk, Lafayette City Manager, "I can say, however, that they are something beyond delicious. . . way beyond." At the store, Produce Manager Mike Callahan would not disagree, "our business has grown by 15% since this summer," he said, adding, "I myself have never eaten so many fruits in my life, everything tastes so good." What created this produce-induced craze at Diablo Foods? The phenomenon has a name; it is Bill Fujimoto. For those who have been hunting the best food in the Bay Area, that name is a legend. In 1961 Tom Takumi Fujimoto and Mary Nobori Fujimoto, Bill's parents, founded Monterey Market, one of the stores of destination in North Berkeley for those seeking top quality produce. Bill was born to the business; he attended UC Berkeley, traveled the world and participated in the family business until recently. "He is an encyclopedia," says Callahan, "he knows everything about produce and where and when to find the best." Fujimoto is working as a consultant for Diablo Foods to create a beautiful outside market that features locally grown vegetables and fruits.

"Here outside we will have year round seasonal produce which comes directly from the farm and have, for the most part, never been refrigerated." says Fujimoto. "In winter, when it rains, we will have produce that has been grown under the rain and can stand it; it's like stepping in out into your own backyard to bring fresh produce directly into your kitchen." Right now Diablo Foods is featuring the last peaches of the season that are coming from higher in the mountains, and the first apples and grapes are arriving.

"I had heard a rumor in North Berkeley that Bill was leaving Monterey Market and I was very sad," said Orinda resident Sharon Krause, "but to discover that he came here is wonderful; he can get an amazing selection of local food and I do not have to go to Walnut Creek anymore."

Fujimoto is getting ready now for the winter season, "people here know what great food is and we just have to provide it for them," he says. He is planning to introduce new varieties at Diablo Foods; perhaps even local black and white truffles.

"Customers have been reacting very well to our new policy," says Connie Collier, daughter of store founder Ed Stokes and a great believer in partnering with local growers and vendors. "Look at those pies," added Collier (see photo), "a customer just brought them in appreciation of our work."

Diablo Foods is located at 3615 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette, phone 283-0737.



Diablo Foods received a gift of freshly baked pies Photo provided

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