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By Mike Knowles

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## **Fruitbox 45 · Franco Fubini, Natoora**



Franco Fubini, Natoora

The supplier-retailer's founder explains how provenance and seasonality have the power to generate a premium

Labeling Natoora as the world's first vertically integrated global greengrocer might not be completely accurate, but for founder and chief executive Franco Fubini it's a description that is not completely wide of the mark.

"We're not massive fans of the word greengrocer, but I think you're right," says Franco Fubini. "We're trying to build a company that can deliver through very unique and transparent supply chains a level of trust and confidence to consumers around the quality of the fresh produce that they buy, both in terms of flavour and in terms of nutritional density. We feel there is the opportunity and scale to do this across the world."

In the past decade and a half, Fubini and his colleagues have taken what began as an online farmers market and transformed it into a producer, importer, supplier, distributor, retailer and brand

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marketer – in short, a vertically integrated fresh produce company that aims to bring its diversity of range, quality and flavour to customers and consumers wherever they need it.

Focusing exclusively on provenance and seasonality, Natoora's raison d'être has always been to source seasonal products and deliver them to consumers via sustainable supply chains. Staying true to that ethos, the group has been able to carve itself a niche at the very top end of the market. "It fits a growing need," Fubini explains during his conversation with Fruitbox host Chris White. "There's a consumer out there that is looking for something of higher flavour, particularly when it comes to fruits."

The success of that approach over the past decade and a half has seen the company set up operations in New York, Paris, Barcelona, Los Angeles and London, where it has five of its own

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upmarket greengrocer outlets. Now there is talk of further expansion for the firm in places like Tokyo too. Plus, it has also managed to convince retailers like Waitrose, Whole Foods and Ocado to stock its branded products. No mean feat for a fresh produce company with its origins firmly rooted in the wholesale trade.

Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in every week to hear exclusive interviews and expert analysis. Produced by Fruitnet Media International, the show is essential listening for everyone in the fresh produce industry.

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