



Kootenay Street store inside and outside



INSIGHT CANADA / BOSA FOODS

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Importers of Italian 'home-flavors' since 1957

The CETA trade agreement, the war-related inflation, the quality certifications. But also market trends, labels and major trade shows. Today's Canadian food market in an interview with the buyer Armando Loiero.

It is a leading importer and distributor of specialty Italian and Mediterranean food products to Western Canada, thanks to a wide and varied offer aimed at grocery retailers like Walmart, foodservice operators and industry, as well as its two own specialty grocery stores in Kootenay Street and Victoria Drive, Vancouver. Bosa Foods, founded in 1957 by Augusto Bosa, is one of those companies that have contributed to spreading the knowledge of Italian food products Overseas, and continues its journey still today, as Armando Loiero, buyer, told us.

How did your long-lasting story begin?

Toward the end of the 50s Augusto Bosa, pioneer of his time, began to import Italian specialty food into Powell River where there were a large number of Italian immigrants working in the mines and the lumber and pulp mills. Sourcing and bringing to them the finest traditional Italian products contributed to recreate a 'feeling of home', even if they were far away from it.

How has the company evolved, through the years?

Today Bosa Foods continues the work of Augusto Bosa. Even though it services a larger demographic, it is still committed to the same purpose: bringing true Italian cuisine to the table. In 2006, the third generation of the family built a modern 5,000 sqm distribution centre and two retail stores where people can find over 5,000 SKU's of specialty products belonging to the Italian or Mediterranean food tradition.

What kind of products?

We import plenty of products: cheese, deli meats, olive oil, tomato, vinegar, preserves, pasta, pulses and much more. I don't think there is a product category that we do not import (he smiles, ed). Of course we import several Italian brands, but the core of our business are Private Labels.

Which Private Labels?

We have more than 20 PLs. This choice comes, on the one hand, from the need to satisfy the national labeling regulations (labels in French and En-

glish, Nutrition Facts written in a certain way and so on); on the other hand, our brands are synonym for high quality and we could never distribute a product that we can't completely rely on: our brands are just like our company image.

Let's go back to products: which are the most requested today?

Over the last years, and more precisely since CETA came into force, we have definitely increased the import of cheeses and deli meats from Italy. A trade deal which not only allowed to cut on duties, but also to start importing products that were not allowed before. More in general, Canadian consumers are asking more and more for 'authentic' Italian and European specialty food.

Are you going to further widen your offer?

Unfortunately, the current geopolitical situation in Europe and the price increases determined by the war are temporarily halting our desire to adding new products to the range. The goal we have set ourselves is to focus even more on what we already have, and to widen our range only if necessary, perhaps upon request from clients.

Is Canada also experimenting a return to inflation?

Definitely, and we now see the first consequences. Because of the uncontrolled inflation, the Central Bank raised interest rates and this will probably cause a recession, which will almost certainly turn into job losses.

Which are, in your opinion, the major obstacles to the promotion of Italian food abroad?

As an Italian I can say that what we miss, most of the time, is precision. Delays in orders, different volumes and different packages with respect to the ones agreed are just some examples of how complicated it can be, sometimes, to promote Italian food abroad.

What would you suggest to a company willing to enter the North American market?

My suggestion is: wait. The current uncertainties in the global scenario and the price increase we already mentioned are not a good starting base.



Victoria Drive store outside and inside



Furthermore, now the market is also quite saturated and competitive.

In order to work with you, which criteria should they meet?

Companies willing to start a dialogue with us necessarily need to own the certifications that assess not only that they respect high food safety measures, by also and above all high quality standards.

One last question related to trade shows: which are your not-to-be-missed ones?

In Europe, we mainly attend as visitors Cibis, Tuttofood, Sial and Anuga. In America, the most important are the Fancy Food Show in New York and Las Vegas.

Bosa Foods: "Dal 1957 importiamo in Canada i sapori dell'Italia"

È uno dei più grandi importatori e distributori di specialità alimentari italiane e mediterranee del Canada occidentale. Con una ricca e variegata offerta destinata a insegne della Grande distribuzione come Walmart, al mondo Horeca e all'industria. Oltre che distribuite nei suoi due punti vendita al dettaglio in Kootenay Street e Victoria Drive, a Vancouver. Bosa Foods, fondata nel 1957 da Augusto Bosa, è una di quelle aziende che ha permesso all'agroalimentare italiano di affermarsi Oltreoceano. La sua storia è quella di un'azienda tutt'ora a conduzione familiare (giunta alla terza generazione). A raccontarcela è il buyer Armando Loiero.