Geoffrey Bloomingdale ’67
Condor Ridge Ranch
Grower of Organic Cherimoyas and Exotic Fruit
Santa Barbara, California
www.calimoya.com

Geoff Bloomingdale is owner of Condor Ridge Ranch, growers of Calimoya™ brand cherimoyas and other exotic fruit, located in the Santa Barbara foothills of the Santa Ynez mountain range in Southern California.

Briefly describe your journey from Portsmouth Abbey to the present.

After graduating from Portsmouth, I went to Claremont McKenna College. I met my wife of 38 years there. We moved to Los Angeles, and after four years as a stockbroker at Drexel Burnham, I realized I wanted to work outside. In 1974 we found a 120-acre property in Goleta, Cal., and planted 50 acres of avocados and 10 of lemons. Today, after making every mistake in the book and surviving two fires, two floods, an earthquake and a wind storm that literally blew some of the lemon trees out of the ground, we have 30 acres of avocados and three acres of cherimoya.

This week (late June) starts cherimoya pollination season... once the flowers on the cherimoyas come out, the cherimoya flowers are hand pollinated. We do this every afternoon for six to eight weeks. The flowers are male in the morning and female in the afternoon! The fruit can grow as large as 2 pounds and tastes like a combination of a mango, papaya and pear. The cherimoya market is small, and most of the fruit is sold to the Asian market, and it has a short – one week – shelf life.

Our greatest concern is the sustainability of the unique environment that produces such remarkable fruit. We use neither pesticides nor herbicides, and to ensure good crops season after season we care for each tree using special organic nutrients, pruning techniques and hand-pollination procedures, always innovating to improve our production and the quality of the land.

Following the seasons as I do in this business, I’ve developed a deep respect for nature. I don’t believe this perfect earth, where every flower and fruit has its four weeks to shine and be the star, could have happened by accident.

I know I chose the right life for my family.

If you could invite any three personalities (living or dead) to the ranch for a meal and conversation, who would they be, and why?

William Shakespeare – “All the world’s a stage” (from As You Like It 2.7). This pretty much sums life up as well as anyone ever did....

Michelangelo – “The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection.” How fun to learn from the master!!

Mark Twain – “Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn’t.”