

SUMMER 2023

ROUSES

100 YEARS OF
CITY PRODUCE

FAIRE SON MARCHÉ
(MAKIN'
GROCERIES)

FARM TO GLASS



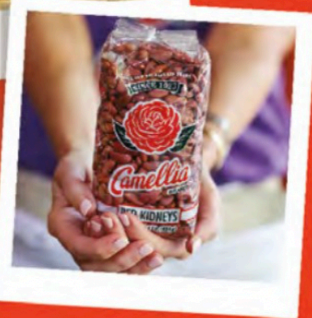
RECIPE INSIDE

Quick-Pickled Vegetables



ROUSES MARKETS
100 YEARS OF
CITY PRODUCE

IT ALL STARTED WITH
A PRODUCE TRUCK.



Go Behind the Beans as Camellia Celebrates 100 Years

By David W. Brown

This year, New Orleans celebrates the 100th anniversary of Camellia Brand Red Beans. This means that for over 5,200 Mondays, Camellia has been on our stoves during the day and on our plates at dinnertime. Just as important, however: They've been at the center of our community and our culture too.

“We feel more like a citizen of New Orleans than just a company here,” says Vince Hayward, the CEO of L.H. Hayward & Co., which owns Camellia. “Red beans are one of the great traditions of the city, and we are so fortunate to be part of what makes New Orleans what it is.”

Though a hundred years is a long time for any company, the story of Camellia goes back even further than that. Like so many Louisiana culinary success stories, the tale of Camellia Brand beans began at the French Market. In 1850, a ship carrying an immigrant from the West Indies named Sawyer Hayward docked in the port of New Orleans. Industrious and looking to make a living for his family, he got into the business of dry goods and beans, which he sold to French Market vendors. Even then, the French Market was old — it had been the city's produce hub for more than half a century — and Sawyer's crops were a success.

In part, it is because Sawyer was from the Caribbean, where beans are a dietary staple. He knew what the people wanted, and how best to cook and eat them. In the 1800s, just as today, New Orleans was a food city, attracting immigrants and empires from all over the world, and the tradition of red beans and rice on Mondays was going strong.

Sawyer's son, Lucius, and grandson, Lucius Jr., eventually joined the now-burgeoning business of beans, and in 1923, the latter founded the L.H. Hayward & Co., naming their brand Camellia after the favorite flower of Lucius Jr.'s wife, Elizabeth. That same year, the company moved into an old cotton warehouse on Poydras and South Front streets in New Orleans — present-day Convention Center Boulevard.

An early indicator that the company would be around for a hundred years was its willingness to adapt. At the time of its founding, you bought beans in brown paper bags that were filled with a scoop from big burlap sacks. With supermarkets growing in popularity in the 1940s, Gordon Hayward, son of Lucius Jr., had a stroke of genius: Why not prepackage beans in store-ready, individual, one- and two-pound bags? Gordon's revolutionary cellophane packages, each adorned with a camellia flower, soon became synonymous with premium-quality beans.

That high level of quality is exactly why the city embraced Camellia Brand, and why it is still going as strong as ever. “The fact that we've been doing this for 100 years means we've learned a lot about what it takes to source the beans, we know which characteristics our consumers have come to expect, and learned a lot about what it takes to clean them up properly,” says Vince Hayward, who is the great-great-grandson of the company's founder, and the fourth generation of his family to lead the company.

Beans are an agricultural item, he explains, describing how they vary from region to region and year to year. They are like fine wine, in that soil, sun, weather and water affect flavors in subtle ways. “Many of our efforts are centered around making sure that we have consistency in the package, and that when our consumers cook our product, that it comes out like they expect it to,” says Vince. “And we are really, really selective.”

Being around for so long means that the company's relationships with their growers have deep roots. “We have generational relationships with our growers,” Vince says. “We've been working with our growers for many, many years — in some instances, my

grandfather did business with their grandfathers! So there is a real continuity there, where they've come to know what we expect, and they grow what we need."

And they need a lot. Every day, L.H. Hayward Co. packs a stunning 100,000 pounds of Camellia peas, lentils and beans for grocery stores everywhere, including your local Rouses Market. In fact, Camellia Brand beans are the best-selling red beans in the United States, by far — which makes Camellia not only a business success, but a sort of international ambassador for the city that made it all possible.

"If you mention the dish of red beans and rice anywhere in the world, the city of New Orleans instantly comes up in that conversation," says Vince. "The dish is tied to the city, and vice versa. It's one of the emblems of New Orleans, which is one of the great food cities in the world." Though there are many theories for why this dish specifically so conjures the spirit of New Orleans, given that the city is celebrated for so many culinary creations, Vince thinks that it is because red beans and rice is the rare, almost universally affordable dish that — when cooked in that New Orleans style — is utterly filling and lands perfectly on the palate.

"A dish of red beans and rice is a tradition that crosses economic and geographic boundaries," he says. "It's something that we all enjoy, no matter who we are. So for that reason, among so many others, I feel very fortunate and blessed to be able to operate this company."

To celebrate its 100th anniversary, Vince says that the company is engaging artists, the city, schools — everyone. The goal is less to throw a party for themselves than it is to throw a yearlong party for the community that has for so long embraced Camellia Brand. First, they're making a documentary. "We commissioned a filmmaker to create a film on the relationship that the city has with the dish of red beans and rice, and the culinary implications of that," Vince explains. "In essence, how the dish has impacted families for generations."

Another way they are celebrating is by literally giving back to the community, making significant contributions to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater



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New Orleans and Acadiana, the largest food bank in Louisiana, feeding about 32 million meals to over 200,000 people a year across 23 parishes.

Lastly, he says, the company and Camellia Brand are taking their show on the road, touring public schools in the state. "We're talking about beans and where they come from and how they make it from a farmer's field to their table, and of course, the dish itself," he explains. On these stops, they will also be exhibiting the documentary they filmed, which helps contextualize red beans and rice in our culture, and how the local cuisine is as much about spiritual and cultural nourishment as it is physical. So far, Vince says, the tour of schools has been a great experience. And it might also be contributing to the next generations of entrepreneurs in the state. "It has been wonderful having conversations with the schoolkids. And interestingly enough, many of their questions have been about business: what it's like to run a company and how can they get in business."

Everyone knows Camellia Brand beans. And for 60 years of the hundred-year journey they have been on, Rouses has been there. Rouses Markets has proudly worked with L.H. Hayward & Co. to carry their products even when we were a single, small, family-run store in Houma, and Anthony Rouse himself — the founder

of the company — was the one who was on his hands and knees unloading packs of Camellia Red Beans and stocking the shelves. His son, Donald, would later do the same thing, and his grandson, Donny, would again do the same. Three generations of the Rouse family are proudly part of the hundred-year, four-generation Hayward legacy.

Ultimately, though, it is the guest pushing a buggy down the dry goods aisle who has given Camellia Brand and L.H. Hayward & Co. a century of serving Louisiana, and who, it is certain, will give it another.

"We wouldn't have been around for a hundred years without the support of our consumers," says Vince. "We feel a deep sense of gratitude for that relationship, without a doubt. And with that comes the responsibility of being a good citizen in your community. You help people when they need it, you show up when it's called for. And you add to the collective success of everybody around you. That's been our attitude toward how we show up as a company and an organization." ®