

# MEET JARED.

**“The last thing I was going to do was farm,”**

Jared Balcom says with a wry smile, “but look at me now—I’ve got potatoes, grapes, apples and cherries ... a lot of worry and very little quiet time, but I love it.” His grandfather started farming near Ellensburg in 1957 and they just followed the water as Columbia River irrigation turned the hot desert into the land of plenty. Today, Jared works 3,500 acres near Pasco, producing 50,000 tons (10 million pounds) of potatoes and employing nearly 100 people during the busy season. His Russet Norkotah potatoes are the large, brown bakers found in grocery stores across the U.S.; locally, they often appear under the “Basin Gold” label. For a few years, Jared’s family also produced award-winning wine under the “Balcom and Moe” label. Rich soil, hot sun and cool water, together they bring a golden bounty to a once dry land. Next time you’re flying over Eastern Washington and you look down on the giant circular fields of green, say thanks to Jared Balcom—he’s a part of the Heart of Washington.

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