The Sun-Blest Brand: Heritage Timeline & Early California Prune History

- **1850–1856 – French prune cuttings arrive in California.**
  French nurseryman **Louis Pellier** establishes the City Gardens nursery near San Jose in 1850. In the winter of **1856–57**, his brother **Pierre Pellier** returns from France with cuttings (scions) of the famous **Petite prune d'Agen** (French prune), carried in potatoes to keep them alive during the long voyage around Cape Horn. Louis successfully grafts these French prune scions onto local plum rootstocks in the Santa Clara Valley, creating the first true California prune trees.

- **Late 1800s – Santa Clara Valley becomes the "Prune Capital of the World."**
  With ideal soils and climate, French prunes rapidly become the dominant crop in Santa Clara Valley—later called the **Valley of Heart's Delight**—and by the early 1900s the valley produces the majority of California's prunes. As transcontinental rail service develops after 1869, these prunes and other dried fruits begin moving east in bulk, establishing California prunes in national markets.

- **1922 – First recorded use of SUN-BLEST for canned fruits and vegetables.**
  U.S. trademark records show **SUN-BLEST** used in commerce on canned fruits, canned vegetables and mayonnaise by **1922**, the date claimed as first use for Registration No. 677063 (Serial 72049215). This places the brand squarely in the era when California's prune and tree-fruit industries were already supplying the East Coast by rail.

- **1920s–1950s – Sun-Blest on canned peaches, prunes and vegetables.**
  Through the mid-20th century, Sun-Blest appears on colorful canned **Elberta peaches**, **prepared prunes in syrup**, dark sweet cherries and mixed vegetables packed and distributed from the **San Francisco/Burlingame** area, with labels featuring a red "Famous for Quality" ribbon and the **Sun-Blest Seal of Quality**. These products extend the French-California prune heritage into branded, national grocery distribution.

- **1959 – SUN-BLEST registered on the U.S. Principal Register.**
  The word mark SUN-BLEST is formally registered in the United States for canned fruits and vegetables, later owned by **Gibbs-McCormick Inc., Burlingame, California**, reflecting the brand's Bay Area packing roots.

- **1979–2000 – First era of Sun-Blest ends.**
  The registration is renewed in 1979 and then allowed to lapse in **2000** when maintenance filings are not submitted, causing the original SUN-BLEST registration to expire and leaving the mark unused at the federal level.

- **2025–2026 – Sun-Blest revived by California growers.**
  The Sun-Blest revival was championed by CPGMA board chair **Ranvir Singh** after his wife **Nina** discovered a vintage 1950's Sun-Blest can of prunes in an antique store and urged that the cooperative bring the brand back. The **California Prune Growers Marketing Association**, a cooperative of prune growers in Yuba City, subsequently filed a new SUN-BLEST trademark application in 2025 for prunes and walnuts (reflecting that many members also grow walnuts) and advanced it to **Notice of Allowance in 2026**, formally restoring the historic California fruit brand for modern dried fruit and nut products. Vintage Sun-Blest imagery—orchards, mountains, and the "Famous for Quality" ribbon—is now re-interpreted on contemporary packaging for premium California prunes for both domestic and export markets.