

# SLO COUNTY Gazette

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Serving Paseo Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Santa Margarita, and other communities of the North County

## Guest Winemaker

### Behind the scenes of a vision

By Gianni Manucci

As new wines and winery owners come into the area, it is sometimes hard to



keep up with their stories and personalities. I'd like to take this opportunity to salute both the original pioneers of the

local wine industry, acknowledge the continuing and new efforts being extended to make this area such an exciting wine region, and to share the story of how and why Coyote Creek Vineyard and Manucci Winery has been established.

I believe (and have made it the Coyote "vision quest") that to acknowledge the root of anything is to recognize the origin of its manifestation, and to express gratitude to the source of its own roots, while following the path of our hearts, to achieve the state of living in the balance.

Although the path of my life has been to grow up in California, become educated in architecture and computer graphics (I run a successful technology practice in southern California) and bring creative balance to my life through stone sculptur-

ing, my roots in grape growing began in Italy over three generations ago.

You see, my grandfather was a farmer and a grape grower, and it was the main source of income for supporting the family, and my childhood memories of roaming around my grandfather's vineyard inspired a vision to get back to these roots.

My dream came true in 1996, when I purchased a small (40-acre) dry-farmed orchard on Adelaida Road, located on the West Side of Paso Robles. I fell in love with this location because of its virgin soil hillside terrain and extreme climate, as well as for its proximity to some of the finest red wine varietal wineries in the Central Coast California.

For me, the transformation of this land became a challenge, just like the emergence of a beautiful piece of sculpture from a block of stone, or a building design. I knew from the get-go that this would be my longest project ever, a ten-year commitment.

It took more than six years of designing and planning to create the winery. The labors of love have included planting my favorite red varietals (Zinfandel, Merlot, and Syrah), chiseling away at the limestone to terrace the vineyard, personally caring for each plant, designing the wine label, and carefully crafting and producing the first wine in 1998 (which was finally released in 2000).

My dream still has four more years to fruition, when I reach my case production limit of three to five thousand cases. By then I hope to become known as one of the finest "boutique wineries" in Central Coast California.

By the end of next year, I hope to complete construction of a small winery, tasting room, and a five bedroom bed and breakfast inn. The building design I am using is inspired by one of the oldest architectural styles alive, the adobe pueblos from Taos, New Mexico. (It's one of my favorite places in the world to visit every year, to slow down and walk the path of spiritual retreats.)

Someday really soon, I wish to open my door and heart to the public, and particularly to kindred spirits who might appreciate my handcrafted wines and humble winery, as well as those who would love to discuss architecture and participate in sculpture workshops - all my life's passions. It is my hope that my own experience might help inspire anyone else in search of his/her own roots and path of life to create a harmonious balance.

*Editor's note: Gianni "Jon" Manucci is the owner-proprietor of Coyote Creek Vineyard, in Paso Robles. The tasting room is open by appointment and during major local wine events and holidays. Call 239-4770, or visit the web site, at [www.coyotewine.com](http://www.coyotewine.com)*