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Though he sought a more harmonious life – through stone sculpting – to offset the fast lane, he didn't return from the wild until 1995 when captivated by the greater horizons of the Central Coast.

Akin to the Franciscans who brought grapes to San Miguel 200 years ago, Jon's instincts prevailed, perhaps as keen as the mythical creatures who roam his 40-acre hillside vineyard in the Paso Robles Appellation. His affinity to Southwestern culture, familiarity with indigenous life and distinctive sense of balance and vision transformed an undulating walnut orchard into the lush vineyard and art colony that it is today, predictably adorned with ancient adobe style architecture. Save the near future for Manucci's other meticulous sketches: exquisite individual bed

& breakfast casitas adjacent the wine-tasting room, facing a westerly awe-inspiring panorama of fresh air.

Manucci Winery Inc., home of trademark wine labels **Wild Coyote** and **Coyote Creek**, was born to be wild as they say, capturing the personae of the spirits that

consummated the land. Jon's philosophy is "to be a small estate winery and be the best at what we do."

While this is the stated objective of most successful boutique wineries we have encountered on the Central Coast, it is the common denominator

that binds those who have succeeded and that which separates the amused wine palate from the discerning. Wild Coyote is no exception, and according to Jon, will never conform to the trappings of commercial winemaking.

"If that means we should stay to our vineyard capacity of 3,000 to 5,000 cases per year, so be it. To us, it is quality over quantity – pounds per acre, not tons. We began at the roots by pushing through the





Embracing the Spirit

Gianni Manucci knew he was predestined to be a winemaker. However, while growing up in California, rather than apple in his ancestry as seen in a third generation European grape farmer, Jim became a successful architect, living large in Laguna Beach, providing his passion for design in Southern California.

photo by Alison Stegall

rocky limestone soils and terracing the hillsides similar to our European ancestors," he says.

Focused on hand-to-hand grape farming and traditional wine production of Zinfandel, Merlot and Syrah, Gianni and Katie, with a sweetheart of a son, Alex, to keep them honest, affectionately identify their business as the *house of reds*. This is why...

With their inaugural bottling of 1998 Zinfandel, of which they produced 200 cases, they began what would be an exclusive focus on a trinity of Central Coast reds. In 1999 they added Merlot and Syrah to the lineup, producing less than 1,000 cases of that vintage.



Currently available in the tasting room are the 2000 Merlot and 2001 Syrah and Zinfandel. The Merlot is a smooth, traditional style with a full nose of fruit and delicate oak balance with an authentic flavor of the grape. The Syrah, with its fragrant aromas of blueberry and earth, is fruit forward and layered. The Zinfandel is lighter than some, yet is deeply complex with perfect balance.

The quiet hand-cultivating of the grapes is evident in every varietal. To add to the graciousness of the way they do business, the wines are extremely reasonably priced. At \$16.50, the Syrah is the most expensive bottle.

Mother Earth has graced this beautiful land, and the Manucci family works it ethically, with the ultimate respect for their kismet – making her proud and bountiful.

