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History of Casa Larga Vineyards

ITALIAN BEGINNINGS

Casa Larga is dedicated to preserving its Italian heritage. The legacy of its founder, Andrew Colaruotolo, is a key part of its continued success. Andrew was born in July of 1931 to Antonio and Josephine Colaruotolo, in Gaeta, Italy, a small Mediterranean fishing village located between Rome and Naples. He was the third of four children.

His Father, Antonio, was a merchant marine as well as a fisherman and farmer. Antonio spent many months abroad in the newfound land of America, working as a laborer to send home money to his wife and four children.



In his youth, Andrew spent much of his time working alongside his grandparents in the fields and in their small family-owned grocery store. In Italy, it was customary for a family to have several very small farms that were in different climatic regions perfectly suited for growing different types of fruits and vegetables. It was here in the fields of Italy where Andrew fostered a stewardship for the land.



Each of the Colaruotolo family's farms had a different name and specialized in a different product, such as olives, cheese and citrus fruit. Casa Larga was the farm where Andrew's family grew grapes and made wine. Of all the vineyards in the Gaeta area, Casa Larga was known as the one where the highest quality grapes were grown. Here, Andrew was taught by his grandmother that only a meticulously tended vineyard will yield the fruit required to produce high quality wine.

After World War II, at the age of 17, Andrew immigrated to Rochester along with his sister, Eliza. Leaving behind their mother, father, sister and a war-torn country, the siblings joined their brother, Frank, who had already come to Rochester in search of a better life.

Andrew began his career as a mason, studying architecture at RIT and learning English at night.

In 1957, he married Antoinette Campbell. Together, they had three children: John (Marie), Mary Jo (Stephen) and Andrea (Dennis). Andrew and Ann were also blessed with a healthy harvest of grandchildren (Nina Marie, Andrew John, Alana, Andrea, Maria, Lucy, Andrew and Thomas).



After mastering the art of stone masonry and becoming a successful home builder, Andrew (or Mr. C as he was fondly called) set out to reconnect with his passion for the land

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PLANTING ROOTS IN NEW YORK

In 1974, Mr. C planted the first two acres of vines atop a picturesque hill in Fairport, New York, naming it "Casa Larga" after his grandparents' vineyards in Italy.

A piece of Italy in the heart of Monroe County, Casa Larga embodied Mr. C's dream—serving as a symbol of his dedication to the preservation of his Italian Heritage. Passion, patience and tenderness were his gifts to the vines and the wines that they produced.

It takes about four years for vines to mature enough to produce good wine-quality fruit. The first harvest came in 1978, producing Casa Larga's first vintage, along with three awards at the New York State Wine Competition.

Estate White (currently Pallido) and Estate Red (currently Tramonto) were two of the first wines produced.



Mr. C's hobby matured into a larger business, and Casa Larga became the 21st licensed winery in New York State. Casa Larga had now entered the golden era of New York State winemaking, becoming an icon as well as a sparkling jewel of the Finger Lakes and Rochester regions.

A NEW ERA

In 2004, Casa Larga's founder Mr. C passed away. Anyone who knew him was immediately captivated by his striking

build and charismatic personality.

Mr. C was succeeded by his wife, Ann (Mrs. C), who assumed the role of Casa Larga's President. She is assisted by her son, John, who maintains his Father's passion for winemaking, daughter Mary Jo, who manages the winery's financial department, and daughter Andrea, who focuses on operations.

The vineyard and winery continue to operate under the watchful eye of Mr. C's wife and children, with a variety of other family and non-family employees at various positions. Several grandchildren can be seen on occasion at the winery, doing their parts to continue the family tradition.

