



TRENTADUE HISTORY

ARRIVING IN SONOMA COUNTY

The Trentadue family arrived in Sonoma County long before the region gained a reputation as the Wine Country. Life-long, hands-on agriculturists, Evelyn and Leo Trentadue contributed significantly to the advancement of their region over the years. In 1959, the Trentadues decided to flee the developers encroaching on their apricot and cherry orchards in Sunnyvale, the area known today around the world as Silicon Valley. To preserve their way of life, these hard-working Italian ranchers purchased 208 acres of land in Sonoma County's then remote Alexander Valley.

There was little market for the region's dry-farmed apples, prunes, pears, and grapes in the late 1950s, so land was cheap and plentiful. Scores of ranches were for sale but, because it was blessed with an excellent combination of climate, soil, and water, Leo settled on a special piece of property in the heart of the Alexander Valley. Little did he know what this ranch had once been, much less what it was to become.

The piece of land, which is now home to Trentadue Winery, has a remarkable history. In 1868, a French botanist named Andrew Bouton established Heart's Desire Nursery on this excellent site east of the railroad tracks. With a passion for breeding new and improved strains of fruit trees, Bouton devoted himself to plant propagation, becoming a major supplier of young tree stock to orchardists throughout the western United States. His reputation attracted the attention of a young man named Luther Burbank who visited Bouton frequently. Influenced by Bouton, Burbank conducted his own work in nearby Sebastopol and Santa Rosa.

SHAPING THE TRENTADUE ESTATE

Leo Trentadue has a reputation for openness to new ideas. Over the years, this inveterate tinkerer has been among the first to experiment with what resulted in a number of viticultural/wine industry innovations. An overview of his unheralded achievements: From dry farming to irrigation. Horse drawn plows and dry farming were still practiced when the Trentadues arrived in the Alexander Valley. Leo introduced advanced irrigation practices common to his former home in Santa Clara County.

The Trentadues were among the very first to plant new vines in Sonoma County since the days of Prohibition. Italians love their red wines, especially hearty reds like Carignane. In 1962, the Trentadue family began planting new Carignane vines in addition to the 68 acres of old vines already growing on their ranch. Now more than 505 years old, these vines are among the oldest producing Carignane vineyards in America. The family remains steadfastly devoted to this grape, and their wine ranks indisputably among just a handful of top ranked California Carignane. These vines continue to provide valuable character in many of our award winning wines.

Understanding the importance of growing only those grape varieties, which excelled in his vineyards, in 1974 Leo installed half-acre blocks of eight different varietals. The quality of the Sangiovese was extraordinary, so all other vines were replanted to this famed variety from Tuscany. Because Evelyn and Leo share a Tuscan heritage, it is not surprising that in 1984 Trentadue was the first producer to release a 100% varietal wine named for this famed grape of Italy. The superior quality of this fruit has produced our most popular Tasting Room wine and has been the backbone for our La Storia Cuvee 32 blend, which is consistently one of the top wines produced from the Trentadue Estate.

Leo had produced an incredible, award-winning 1973 Angelica and finally, in 1987, he encouraged his winemaker to experiment with fortified wines. An excellent Petite Sirah Port resulted, among the very first of its kind. The wine was well received, so a Merlot Port and eventually a Zinfandel Port were added to the line. Over the years, Trentadue has become the leading producer of dessert wines in the area, including the wildly popular Chocolate Amore.



RIDGE VINEYARDS CONNECTION

This winery's story cannot be told without mention of the Trentadues' remarkable long-term relationship with Paul Draper of Ridge Vineyards. Their personal history began in 1952 when the Trentadues became Paul's neighbor in Santa Clara, after buying an old abandoned wine estate at the end of Montebello Road. Paul began buying fruit from their ancient vines, striking up a friendship which continues to this day.

Both Draper and the Trentadues know a good thing when they see it. Draper was quick to benefit from the Trentadues' aptitude for viticulture. The Trentadues have similarly benefited from Draper's wine business savvy. Indeed, it is Draper who encouraged the family to take advantage of their location and establish an estate winery.

The list of mutual benefits derived from the Trentadue and Ridge association is extensive: Fruit from the Trentadues' Geyserville estate has been sold to Ridge Vineyards every vintage since 1967. In 1974, Ridge Vineyard acquired the Trentadues' mountaintop winery and vineyard today known as Montebello. Victor Trentadue manages not only 99 plus acres of his family's estate-owned fruit contracted to Ridge, but is also entrusted to manage 188 additional acres of Dry Creek Valley grapes under contract nearby to Draper.