

# Augustino's Olive Oil

*Bringing the  
quality, flavor  
and tradition of  
Old-World Italy*

*In 1909 a young man from a farm in Lucca, Italy, set sail with three friends for the shores of America, carrying with him, along with his meager belongings, grand dreams and Old-World traditions.*

Story and photos by Jim Brumm

Having been raised on the loamy, sun-kissed soil of Tuscany on land peppered with olive trees and stone farmhouses, young Augustino Giovannoni left behind his brothers and his family's land to seek his fortune in the New World, as so many before him had done.

Upon arriving in America, Augustino worked his way across the continent, a span of unbroken land that must have seemed overwhelming to a young man raised on a small farm in Europe. The horizon and the possibilities were endless.

Augustino worked many odd jobs along the way. He made fruit boxes, worked as a common laborer and as a field hand. Learning English in his travels, he felt that inexplicable pull, shared by so many newcomers to America, to keep moving west.

Eventually he reached his own Promised Land, California, and settled in Napa Valley, world-renown today as one of the world's premier wine growing regions, but then little more than a string of small towns and farms. Though there were wineries in the valley then, prunes, wheat and orchard fruit were the cash crops of the day when Augustino arrived, dusty and breathless, to begin his new life.

Augustino moved into the Milliaavacca Building in Napa, and procured a job at Milliaavacca Winery. Later, he had an ice-cream wagon and, after working hard, bought a lot on the corner of Brown and Oak Streets in Napa. By this time he had met and married his wife, Josephine. Together they planted a vegetable garden and began selling vegetables to the town out of their basement, an enterprise that eventually grew to become Giovannoni's Market, which still stands today. There they raised their family, reveling in their good life and working hard to instill values and a sense of community in their children.

In his later years, he frequently went fishing with his grandson, Billy, the two of them spending long, lazy afternoons together, laughing and talking.

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With Augustino's Olive Oil, Billy Wilcoxson is carrying on the tradition and memory of his grandfather, Augustino Giovannoni.

Augustino spent this time teaching Billy lessons about life and how things were in the old days, and Billy, wide-eyed and attentive, soaked it all up.

Through it all Augustino retained his love of cooking and eating. Entertaining friends and business associates was a favorite pastime for him and Josephine. They held large dinners, serving traditional Italian foods cooked with fine, Italian olive oil. Augustino also made his own wine vinegars.

Regarded in his time as a great humanitarian, Augustino was sometimes chastised for extending credit to all who asked, but that was his nature. After his death, in 1966, many came forward to express their love and tell stories of how he had helped them during difficult times. A man who loved his friends and his family, Augustino has been described as embodying “old-world gentility and charm.”

Though Augustino has been gone for forty-years now, his legacy lives on in his children and grandchildren. Billy Wilcoxson, in particular, clings to the memory of his Grandfather and has found a way to honor that memory.

At his Grandfather’s passing, Billy inherited a ring with a simple design of what appears to be the head of a Roman soldier emblazoned on it. Billy has kept this memento of his Grandfather with him throughout his life, feeling that it imparts a special connection to him.

“I’ve always felt my Grandfather is my guardian angel,” said Billy. “In everything I’ve done I’ve been able to feel his presence.”

Billy has a copy of the ring, which he wears daily. The original – the ring Augustino wore – sits in a black velvet bag high up on the rafters of Billy’s store, Stanly Lane Marketplace, overlooking the entrance and all who enter, where its energy, Billy feels, imparts his Grandfather’s presence and guidance each day.

As owner of Stanly Lane Marketplace in South Napa, Billy is famous for his incredible pumpkin patch that he creates each Autumn for the children and young-at-heart of the valley.



Augustino Giovannoni

Augustino Giovannoni’s legacy lives on at Stanly Lane Marketplace, where Augustino’s Olive Oil and other fine oils and vinegars can be sampled and purchased

For a long time, Stanly Lane Marketplace has sold a myriad of specialty foods, from barbeque sauces to mustards and oils, all from small, family-owned companies. In addition, Stanly Lane Marketplace sells wine-barrel furniture and other unique, hand-made items.

Now, in honor of his Grandfather, Augustino, Billy has begun producing a line of high-quality Italian olive oils, aptly named, Augustino’s.

“We have four different types of Italian olive trees, over 300 trees in all, here on our property,” said Billy. “And they all produce wonderful oil.”

Lucca, Augustino’s hometown in Italy, is world famous for its olive oils. Each year a large olive oil festival is held there, and Billy’s family continues to receive bottled olive oil from his family’s ancestral farm, which is still in the family.

Augustino’s Olive Oil proudly carries on this tradition of the finest, most savory olive

oils in the world. With different infused varieties, from lemon and basil to rosemary and roasted garlic, Augustino’s Olive Oil perfectly captures that blend of Old-World tradition and flavor, with the choices and innovative varieties that we have come to expect in today’s world.

Augustino’s Olive Oil has caught the attention of many, among them Kelly McDonald, world-renown chef on the Napa Valley Wine Train. Kelly uses it extensively in the gourmet meals he prepares daily for visitors from around the world, who come expecting the best—a testament to the quality and flavor of Augustino’s Olive Oil.

At Stanly Lane Marketplace, Billy has created a large tasting bar to showcase Augustino’s Olive Oil, where aficionados and the curious may, at no charge, taste not only Augustino’s Olive Oil, but other oils from the area as well, such as tuffe oil, balsamic vinegars, champagne vinegars, grapeseed oil and herb-infused dipping oils.

Plus, there are other fine, gourmet foods to be sampled and enjoyed. A friendly staff helps guide guests through the flavors and nuances of each.

Augustino Giovannoni came to the United States with a dream, and that dream touched many lives. Though he is gone, his dream lives on, through his family and the olive oil that bears his name. Each splash of Augustino’s Olive Oil carries the quality, flavor and tradition of Old-World Italy to the palate. Billy Wilcoxson invites you to visit Stanly Lane Marketplace and share Augustino’s vision and his love of life, laughter, friendship and fine dining.

*Stanly Lane Marketplace is located at 3100 Golden Gate Drive, Napa. Head toward Sonoma on Highway 12, take your first right on Stanly Lane, and you’re there. 707-253-7512. [slmarketplace@aol.com](mailto:slmarketplace@aol.com)*