

ALLA CORRENTE

The Ghiringelli Family and Deer Park Villa

This month's Alla Corrente deals with the new venue for our Sal Reina Opera Outing. This is the 60th anniversary of this popular Il Cenacolo event and it will be held at Deer Park Villa. I thought it would be fitting to give a little background about the Villa and relate some of its story.

A two-story carriage house was the first structure built on the four-acre property of Deer Park Villa in 1902. It served as a lodge for many years; then, in 1922, Dan and Irene Celani started a restaurant there.



*Antoinette and Joe Ghiringelli, c. 1957.
(Marin History Museum website photo)*

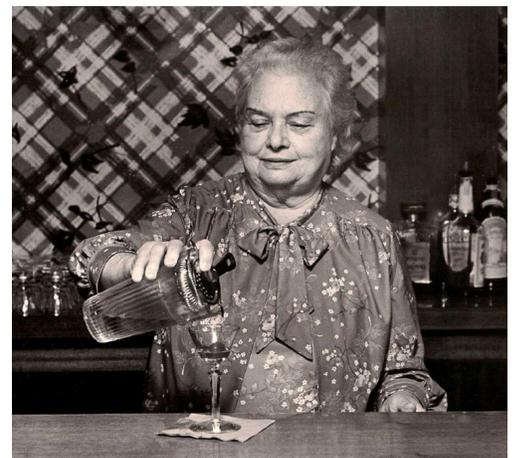
It was at this restaurant in 1927 where Joseph and Antoinette Ghiringelli had their wedding dinner. Joe had immigrated from Italy at the age of sixteen, and met Antoinette Pagani at the famous Fly Trap Restaurant in San Francisco. On their wedding day, Joe made Antoinette a second promise: that he would one day buy this 'remote' establishment for his bride and run a family restaurant that would bring the flavors of North Beach to Marin County for generations to come.

His promise became a reality when, ten years later, in December 1937, Deer Park Villa opened in Fairfax under the ownership of Joseph and Antoinette Ghiringelli. In addition to being an avid sportsman, Joe served as chef and gardener at the Villa. His grandchildren today fondly remember him as he worked in the vegetable garden behind the house. He also planted the redwoods that still tower over the Redwood Tree Grove on the Villa's site. (It is in this Redwood Grove that Il Cenacolo will have this year's Opera Outing.)

Some in the restaurant business measure success by how many years they continue serving their guests, but Deer Park Villa's success is measured in decades. Today, Deer Park Villa is the longest-running restaurant in Marin County and, spanning four generations, the oldest family restaurant in the Bay Area.

In 2012, a new era began. Mike Ghiringelli and Ed Ferrero joined with Mike's sister and Deer Park general manager, Debbie Ghiringelli, to make over the restaurant into the new *Steakhouse and Grill at Deer Park Villa*. It is open for dinner seven days a week, and offers fine steaks and an outstanding grill side menu featuring fresh dishes as well as many of the classic Villa entrées.

So, while you're enjoying the ambience at this year's Sal Reina Opera Outing under the beautiful redwoods planted by Joe, raise a glass of wine in honor of him, his wife, and their descendants, who had the vision and the fortitude to succeed in a very trying business.



*Antoinette Ghiringelli.
(The Steakhouse and Grill at Deer Park Villa website photo)*