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THE MAZZEI TRADITION – A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE

A Historic Beginning: The history of the Mazzei family is closely woven into Tuscany's winemaking history, as well as the region's rich political and cultural past. The first recorded mention of the Mazzei family – originally from the area of Carmignano – was noted in documents dating back to the early 11th century. Through the marriage of Ser Lapo Mazzei's niece, Madonna Smeralda, to Piero di Agnolo da Fonterutoli, the Mazzei family came to own the Fonterutoli estate. The property has remained in Mazzei hands since 1435, passed down through 24 generations.

The Father of Chianti: Ser Lapo Mazzei (1350-1412), a winemaker from Carmignano is considered father of the Chianti name. He authored the first-known document referencing the designation, a commercial contract bearing his signature, dated December 16, 1398. *"To be paid, on December 16, (1398), 3 florins, 26 soldi and 8 dinars, to Piero di Tino Riccio, for 6 barrels of Chianti wine ... the above pay by letter of Ser Lapo Mazzei."* (Datini Archives)

An American Patriot: The Mazzei family's winemaking influence has extended far beyond the realms of Tuscany. *"I thank you for your obliging act of the culture of the wine, and I am happy to bear that your plantation of them is in so prosperous a way,"* wrote none other than George Washington to Filippo Mazzei (1730-1816). Mazzei, an eccentric and relentless traveler, was asked by his friend Thomas Jefferson to plant a vineyard at the Jefferson estate in Monticello, Virginia. Filippo eagerly undertook the journey with a group of vineyard workers and planted the first vineyards in that part of the New World.

Jefferson was inspired not only by Filippo's viticultural knowledge, but also by his ideas regarding equality. It is said that Jefferson drew from them one of the founding principles of the Declaration of Independence: *"All men are created equal."* For this reason, Filippo Mazzei is considered an "American Patriot" and has been officially honored as such with a commemorative U.S. postal stamp.

Today, after almost six centuries, the Mazzei family – under the guidance of Lapo, who oversees the property with the help of his sons, Filippo and Francesco – still devotes itself to winemaking, with an eye towards innovation and an abiding respect for the land. A rich history combined with consistent high quality winemaking over the centuries has made the Mazzei family like none other and one of Italy's most renowned and respected wine producers.

