

Louis Lucas

Louis Lucas is one of California's premier wine grape growers and a legendary pioneer of the California Central Coast wine region. Prior to co-founding Lucas & Lewellen Vineyards with Royce Lewellen, Louis supplied premium wine grapes to many of the most famous wineries in Napa and Sonoma. Best known as an innovator and master at utilizing a variety of growing practices and techniques, Louis' vast knowledge and viticulture experience span over 40 years.

Grandson of Croatian immigrants, Louis is originally from the Central Valley where his father was also a leading grape grower. Louis graduated from Notre Dame University with a degree in Finance and Business Economics. He returned to California to join the family's wine and table grape business, in search of a place to grow premium varietal wine grapes. He became one of the first commercial wine grape growers in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. During this time he developed Tepupsquet Vineyards in Paso Robles and in Santa Maria (now Cambria) and also developed Edna Valley Vineyards in San Luis Obispo and River Bench Vineyard in Santa Maria.

Louis studied the great vineyards of the world by touring wine regions throughout Europe, Australia and Chile. He learned from these trips some of his theories on grape growing, leaf exposure to the sun, manipulation of canopy and the importance to limiting vine stress. His travels also confirmed long held practices and specific techniques he had been using, essential for growing quality grapes, including going against conventional wisdom by planting more vines per acre and adaptations to existing trellis systems to fit specific varieties. Louis has continued to innovate viticulture practices.

In 1996 Louis joined forces with retired Judge Royce Lewellen and founded Lucas & Lewellen Vineyards. They added to existing properties and ultimately developed three premium vineyards in three principal wine grape growing regions of Santa Barbara County allowing access to these distinct climates unique to Santa Barbara's coast: the Santa Maria Valley, the Los Alamos Valley and the Santa Ynez Valley. The estate encompasses 400 acres, 24 varieties of grapes and three major wine labels; Lucas & Lewellen features Pinot Noir and Chardonnay along with Bordeaux varietals, Toccata features traditional Italian varietals, and Queen of Hearts features classic varietals. Lucas & Lewellen and Toccata each have a popular tasting room in Solvang with estate wines made in their state-of-the-art production facility in Buellton.

Never too far away from his vines, Louis and his wife Jill live in Solvang, California, overlooking the beautiful Valley View Vineyard. Here they welcome their six daughters and many grandchildren to enjoy the vineyard views and viticultural seasons.

