



A CELEBRATION OF LOCAL FOOD, WINE & BEER  
October 6 - 8 ★ 2017

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**Award Winner Photos:**

<http://ow.ly/XtRT30eDsjs>

## **Sonoma County Harvest Fair Honors Joe Rochioli with “Methuselah Award”**

*Healdsburg Farmer recognized for Lifetime Contribution to Sonoma County’s Wine Industry*

SANTA ROSA, CA – August 23, 2017 – Joe Rochioli has many passions – baseball and animals, to name a few – but his passion of choice is grapes. Although the realization that he wanted to make wine came later in life, he has made tremendous impacts on the industry and pushed the boundaries of wine making in Sonoma County. Early on, he encouraged his father to plant varietals before anyone else in the area would, and later on worked to improve quality of life for vineyard workers. This year, the Harvest Fair is proud to honor Joe Rochioli with the Lifetime Contribution to Sonoma County’s Wine Industry “Methuselah Award.”

After Rochioli got his degree in animal husbandry at Cal Poly State San Luis Obispo, he spent several years as a researcher for the United States Army. In 1959, he left the service and started working with his father on their Healdsburg family farm, growing a variety of crops, like hops. When the hops industry plummeted, the ranch increased their production of green beans and grapes. Rochioli quickly learned how to tend his own grapevines and experimented with many new practices and techniques.

An innovator at heart, Rochioli was one of the first in Sonoma County to plant varietals, the first vineyard owner to start plucking leaves in brushy varieties, and the first to start putting canes on both wires instead of using the more common wire trellising system. Rochioli simply says, “I learned by doing.”

In 1976, Rochioli began making a bit of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, while the property was still Fenton Acres. Fenton Acres became J. Rochioli Vineyards and Winery in 1982, and in 1987, the Rochiolis released their first estate wine, the 1985 Rochioli Pinot Noir. The wine went on to top the Wine Spectator’s list, and to become ‘The Best Pinot Noir in America.’ Since then, Rochioli wines have become known worldwide for exceptional flavor and quality.



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In his free time, Rochioli gives back to the community. He served 16 years on the Westside Union Elementary School Board and 25 years on the Healdsburg Future Farmers Fair Board of Directors. He was one of the founding members of the Healdsburg Fair, dedicating decades to support youth in agriculture. He has also been a member of the California Farm Bureau for 51 years.

“I’m honored. Winning this is the best and biggest award outside of the Coppola Award,” Rochioli said. “This award is a life achievement and life is coming to a close.”

The Sonoma County Harvest Fair is proud to recognize Joe Rochioli for his hard work and influence in Sonoma County. Rochioli will be honored during the Harvest Fair awards ceremony and dinner to be held October 1 at Luther Burbank Center for the Arts. A limited number of tickets are available at the Harvest Fair Box Office located at 1350 Bennett Valley Road in Santa Rosa.

The 2017 Sonoma County Harvest Fair is October 6-8 at the Sonoma County Event Center at the Fairgrounds. Visit [HarvestFair.org](http://HarvestFair.org) or call (707) 545-4200 or find "Sonoma County Harvest Fair" on Facebook.

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