



METRONews

ITALIAN TRADITION ON LONG ISLAND



EACH HARVEST brings the Medollas to this vineyard, where they carefully handpick merlot grapes for the season's wine production. JOHN MEDOLLA proudly checks on his grapes as they ferment in stainless steel vats.

"A relationship between a great wine and food is an essential part of life and we celebrate each day that way."

This is the philosophy of Denise and John Medolla, founders of Medolla Vineyards in Peconic, located on the North Fork of Long Island, New York. The philosophy is the guiding principle behind their young winery, which just released its first

vintage and is already being heralded by the American wine community.

The roots of the Medolla family - and of their dedication to producing top quality wines from grapes that are meticulously grown and cared for - are found at the base of Mount Vesuvius in Italy.

"My family used the Piedi Rosso ("red foot") grape and, as legend has it, the Moscato grape as well," John says.

John's grandparents worked the area's rich soil as winemakers in the nearby town of Torre del Greco until 1913, when his grandmother decided to take the journey to America. She settled in Red Hook, Brooklyn, a neighborhood of many southern Italian immigrants who took pride in carrying on winemaking traditions from the old country. At each harvest, John's grandmother continued to make wine as well.

Cut to 2002, the year that John



DENISE AND JOHN MEDOLLA produce Old World style Merlot on the east end of Long Island.

and his wife Denise produced their first Merlot. Aged in European oak to create an intensely aromatic flavor with rich, fruity overtures, this vintage exemplifies the Medollas' taste for, and dedication to, superior wines. The Medolla Merlot 2002 was recently released to the public and has been heralded by several wine critics.

John and Denise both work in the aviation industry, so winemaking is more of a passionate pursuit than a job for the couple. Although Medolla is one of the smallest producers located in Long Island's East End - which is densely populated by Italian and Italian American wine producers - the couple has produced 500 cases that will be sold to local restaurants and fine wine shops.

Medolla Vineyards operates under a tenant license at Lenz

Winery, meaning that while overseeing all aspects of the winemaking process - from picking the grapes to bottling the final product - John and Denise alternate production sessions with Lenz. The arrangement allows the husband-and-wife team to use grapes grown in ideal climatic conditions in order to create the merlot that they love - a rustic, medium-bodied wine that with each sip reminds the taster of the many Italian winemakers who came before.

It's the intense passion for the craft of making wine that allows all small-scale producers to realize their dreams and continue their family traditions. As such winemakers, John and Denise Medolla exemplify their company's ideal by celebrating their heritage and the dreams of their forebears through their relationship with fine wine.