

BODEGA

Evelyn Piazza Casini: The Heart of Bodega

1926-2024



Evelyn “Evie” Casini, the beloved owner of The Casino Bar and Grill in Bodega, California, has passed away, according to close friends and social media posts. (1 Oct 1926 ~ Sep 3, 2024)

In 1949, Evelyn and her husband, Art Casini, took over The Casino Bar and Grill, transforming it from a simple bar into the heartbeat of Bodega. For 75 years, she welcomed every customer, whether a local or a visitor, with genuine warmth and a friendly smile. She wasn’t just running a bar; she was creating a gathering place for all kinds of moments — celebrations, casual get-togethers, and even memorials. Her ability to connect with people, sharing stories that captured decades of local history, made The Casino a beloved spot for everyone.

Under Evelyn’s care, The Casino became a place of community and inclusivity. It was where everyone could find a good meal, play a game of pool, or just enjoy the company of others. She believed in feeding people, caring for the community, and keeping the doors open to all. This philosophy showed in the Casino’s long-

standing traditions, like community potlucks and providing meals during the holidays, ensuring everyone felt a sense of belonging.

“This place is comfortable, like an old coat,” Evelyn said. “After I’m gone, I don’t know what the hell they’ll do. I have a boy and a girl, but neither one of them want it. They’ll probably sell it, but I hope it’s to someone who doesn’t change a thing.” - *Sonoma County Gazette*



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Bodega Matriarchs Pass On

by Andrea Granahan

Bodega is already in mourning for 99 year old Josephine Franceschi (31 Dec 1925-17 Aug 2024) and Evelyn Casini in September who would have been 98 in October. Evelyn Casini, just a couple weeks before her death, had danced and celebrated with the community in celebration of her 75th anniversary of owning the Casino Bar and Grill. The Casino is a lot more to Bodega than a saloon; it is the town hall and town living room for everyone.

Both matriarchs were from old Italian families in Sonoma County. Josephine was a Mantua before she married Humberto Franceschi and Evelyn was a Piazza until she married Art Casini right after he came home from serving in WWII. Both families had originally emigrated to Sonoma County in the late 1800's.

The two women attended Potter School in Bodega when they were girls, and became best friends when, Josephine was 14, on a school bus to Tomales High School. They were both hard-working with Evelyn still tending bar and flipping burgers until bedridden, and Josephine working at Willie Bird's Restaurant until she was 85. They grew up milking cows and collecting eggs on the family farm and Josephine making Christmas wreaths to add to the family income.

Both women had three children: Josephine had three sons, Evelyn a daughter and two sons, but lost one to cancer at the age of three.

They have large extended families who adored them.

In Bodega both were beloved. Josephine had a more private life but was always at anything that was happening in Bodega. Evelyn had more public life. She did a lot for her community.

Every Thanksgiving Evelyn held a pot-luck at the Casino so no one had to be alone. She provided turkeys and ham. Locals brought pot-luck side dishes even if they were eating at home just to share in her generosity.

They both lived not just long lives, but rich ones, filled with love and affection. They have left a large hole in Bodega. ■



**Josephine
Franceschi**