



2016 CIBPA ENTREPRENEUR AWARD



LOUIE TOLAINI PIERLUIGI'S PROMISE

Pierluigi (Louie) Tolaini's story begins at daybreak on a summer's morning in 1956. For generations, his family had scraped a living from a hardscrabble farm in Tuscany, and for a time Pierluigi's future looked much the same. At 19-years-old, however, Pierluigi was eager to dig his fingers into something more than Tuscan soil. Intrigued by stories of bright Canadian skies and endless wheat fields, young Pierluigi bought a one way ticket to Canada, woke up one morning before his family and walked toward his destiny as Louie Tolaini, entrepreneur.

Louie truly never looked back, but he did make a promise to himself on the dusty dirt road that led from farm to fortune. It was tough to leave what he knew as home, but Louie recalls telling himself that life would become better with each step he took, and that one day the road would lead back to his homeland.

"I said to myself, 'I will never, ever be poor again. I will never eat polenta or drink bad wine, and someday I will come back and make the best wine in Italy.'"

Think big, be respectful, work hard, and your dreams might just come true. That's long been Louie's mantra and his advice to young people seeking his wisdom. As owner of Winnipeg-based TransX, one of North America's leading transportation companies, and Tolaini Estate, his villa, vineyard and winery in Siena, Tuscany, Louie is both a respected entrepreneur and honoured winemaker.

The roots of TransX are in the oilfields near Virden, the western Manitoba community Louie first called home after arriving in Canada. He bought an old truck and hauled water to nearby drilling rigs. One thing led to another, and another thing to another, until he saw that the rewards of owning a fleet of trucks heavily outweighed the risks. Today, TransX is a group of companies that employs 3,000 people, operates 6,500 pieces of road and rail equipment, and delivers 72,000 shipments a month between 12 terminals in Canada and the United States.

"We're Canada's largest privately owned transportation companies and one of the top 50 carriers in the USA," Louie says. "Dreaming about being successful was the first step, but you also have to rely on the people around you to help you realize your goals. I have thousands of people to thank."

If a dream of success is a promise to oneself, then Louie's long-ago pledge as 19-year-old Pierluigi did come true. Instead of retiring on the laurels of a well-earned business reputation, Louie returned to Tuscany and founded an estate that grew grapes and made wine. Over the years, Tolaini Estate has become a successful boutique winemaker.

It's been a long while since Louie left his family's farm. His promise has been kind to him. Today, if you're looking for Louie, he can be found either in his office just inside the front door of TransX's Winnipeg head office, or occasionally in the vineyards of his sunny Tuscan estate. There is a considerable distance between the two locations, but when you call two countries home, no amount of kilometers can keep you from your destiny.

by Bernard Kruchak

**TOWER
ENGINEERING
GROUP**

JAGUAR LAND ROVER VOLVO
WINNIPEG

Luigi's **Romantic**
ITALY
A GLASS FOR EVERY OCCASION

FREEMAN
AUDIO VISUAL CANADA

