

Our ranch has been part of our family for generations, shaped by hard work, family gatherings, and life on the land. In 1946, Manual and Florence Freitas sold a pear orchard near Alviso, CA and purchased a ranch in the east foothills of San Jose overlooking what was once known as the Valley of Heart's Delight.

The ranch was planted with apricot and walnut trees, and every year the family cut and dried apricots, bringing in friends and relatives to help during harvest. Much of that fruit was sold to nearby canneries like Sunsweet. Manual also worked at a local tallow company, Crown Byproducts, and combined what product he brought home with beef from the ranch to render tallow for household use. Practical and resourceful, he made things by hand — from apricot whiskey and tallow soap bars to a homemade “Mountain Tea” red wine made from grape vines that his family brought over and planted from Madeira, Portugal.



Manual and Florence welcomed daughter, Babe, into the world in 1934. Growing up, she raised and showcased animals at the Santa Clara County Fair, rode in local parades and horse events, and she was active in local rodeo circles — even earning Rodeo Queen of San Jose in 1953. The entire family were longtime participants in the Pleasant Acres 4-H Club, raising and showing livestock and staying involved in the community’s agricultural life.

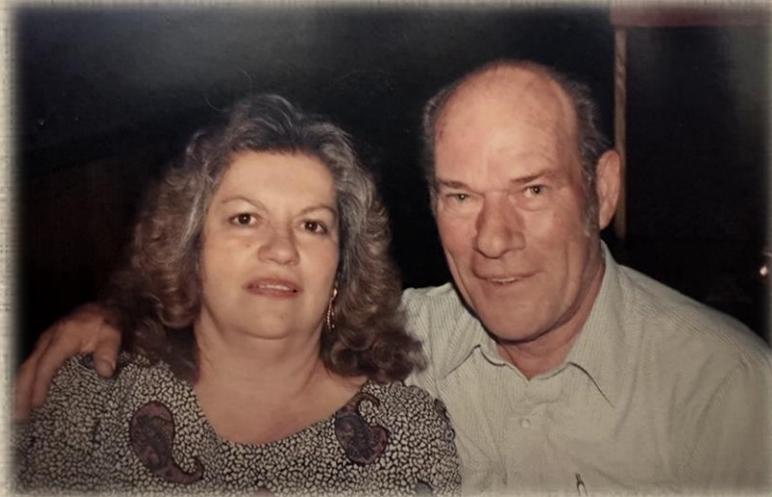


RODEO QUEEN—Florence Freitas, queen of the fair Riders' fourth-annual all-western horse and rodeo show, practices her show entrance. Freitas will lead the Grand Entry at 1 p.m.

In 1955, Babe and her then-husband Jimmy Abreu welcomed a daughter, Rhonda. From an early age, Rhonda was deeply involved in ranch life—raising and showing livestock, helping with the family’s ranching work, and developing a natural love and understanding of all animals. She excelled in showing livestock at the County Fair and quickly became known for her skill, confidence, and knowledge across a wide range of animals.



Babe and Jimmy eventually divorced and years later Babe married second husband Al Larton; Al owned a trucking company in San Jose and spent many years working with the Freitas family—transporting the ranch's dried fruit and helping with the day-to-day ranch work. After Manual's passing in 1981, Babe and Al retired from the ranch life and moved to Grants Pass, Oregon, selling half of the San Jose ranch and leaving the remaining portion to Rhonda and her husband, Bob Bolli.



Bob and Rhonda met while working at an Alpha Beta grocery store—Bob was a butcher and Rhonda as a grocery clerk. They married in December 1974, and Bob soon began helping with the family's apricot business alongside Rhonda and her family. They raised three boys on the ranch: Robert, Michael, and Christopher. Ranch life continued even after the commercial apricot harvests ended. The boys grew up learning the value of hard work and gaining hands-on experience with livestock, ranch chores, and daily tasks. Of the boys, Robert continued the 4H tradition. Bob worked for more than thirty years as a commercial meat cutter and grocery manager and still cuts meat a few times a year for neighbors to this day.





Michael, the middle son, grew up familiar with the family's tallow soap tradition having used the bars from Manual Freitas on occasion, as supplies were limited after his great-grandfather passed away. As an adult—while helping his father butcher beef from the ranch, Michael became interested in making his own soap from rendered tallow. That curiosity deepened into a focused practice: experimenting with recipes, testing blends, and learning the craft of natural soaps, balms, and skincare.



For generations our family has continued enjoying those traditional methods. What started as a way to honor family practice has grown into the small, practical line of soaps and balms we make and share today— products shaped by traditional ranch practices and a practical, hands-on way of living.

Today Bolli Ranch remains a family endeavor built on respect for the animals, the land, and the people who worked it. We keep our process simple and hands-on: rendering tallow, testing formulations, and making small handmade batches of soaps and balms that we use ourselves and love to share with all of you.

We hope you've enjoyed a little glimpse into our family's history and how the Bolli Ranch products have come to be.

