

Saint Jean Gastelluberry

March 5, 1935 - June 17, 2025

Saint Jean Gastelluberry, a longtime Chino resident and prominent dairyman, died June 17, 2025, at the age of 90. He was born in Basque, France to Jean Gastelluberry of Armendarits and Rosalie (Laby) Gastelluberry of Suhescun on March 5, 1935, at his home "Jaureia."

He was the fourth of six children, three boys and three girls. He attended school until he was 14 and went into the French Military at the age of 20 for 29 months. He was a Colonial Paratrooper and fought in the Algerian war.

His brother Peyo was in the United States in 1954 sheepherding and milking cows. Saint Jean was able to purchase an airline ticket to the United States with the help of Peyo and arrived in 1959. He received help from Jean Baptiste Robidart with documents to and from the United States.

Saint Jean started milking cows for Jean and Rosalie Bachoc (Rosalie was his first cousin) and their two children. In 1963, Jean Bachoc and his family and Peyo returned to France.

Saint Jean and his associate Jean Pierre Parachou decided to purchase a dairy. In 1964, they purchased 160 cows and leased the dairy for five years. With so much work, they realized they needed help with the cooking and house cleaning. A friend of theirs, Michel Plaa, reached out to Catherine, a widow with two children and expecting a baby, asking if she would be interested in working for two single men: Saint Jean and Jean Pierre.

It didn't take long for Saint Jean to fall in love with her cooking and with Catherine herself and proposed to marry her. He raised her children Marie Anne, Veronique and Jean Baptiste who was born Aug. 6, 1965. On April 30, 1966, Saint Jean married Catherine Jaureguiberry Tristant at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Chino. Henri was born in May 1967.

Saint Jean and Catherine owned and operated Basque American Dairy in Ontario, California from 1969 to 2013.

Jean Pierre Parachou sold his share to Saint Jean and returned to France in 1966. Saint Jean not only spoke French and Basque but he learned to speak English and Spanish through his years in California. He loved the dairy business and had a love for sheep. He enjoyed watching baseball, football and the Tour de France. In his younger days his passion was to go fishing at Mount Baldy. He enjoyed handball games and loved playing mus. In 2000, St. Jean and his mus partner Beñat Inchauspe, representing the United States team, competed in the World Championship of Mus held in Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain.

He was a member of the Chino Basque Club from the beginning in 1968. He loved his Basque friends, sharing meals, drinks and singing. His last trip to the Basque Country was in 2008. He loved his family, friends and visiting the countryside. He was joyful, enjoyed conversation and good laughs. The dinner table chair is empty and quiet now. The family would like to thank all the doctors and medical personnel, caregivers and hospice who did a wonderful job caring for him in his final months.

Saint Jean is survived by his wife Catherine Gastelluberry, his daughters Marie Anne (Victor) Tellechea, Veronique (Francois) Challet, Jean Baptiste (Lourdes) Tristant, Henri Gastelluberry (Steve Lawson); his grandchildren Joline Tellechea, Nicole (Nick) Krasensky, Christophe (Melanie) Challet, Damien Challet, Katrina Challet, Maitena Challet, Andre Tristant, Amelie Tristant (children of Cathy Tristant); great-grandchildren Abel Challet and Elisabeth Challet; his brother Xemartin (Jeanette) Gastelluberry; his sister Annie (Jeannot) Trentin and numerous nephews and nieces in France.

He was preceded in death by his father Jean Gastelluberry, his mother Rosalie Laby Gastelluberry, his sister Marie-Jeanne (Daniel) Escondeur, his sister Ida (Jean Baptiste) Claverie, and his brother Pierre "Peyo" (Marie-Jeanne) Gastelluberry.

The visitation will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. with the Rosary at 6 p.m., on Wednesday, July 2 at Draper Mortuary, Pearl Chapel, 811 N. Mountain Ave. in Ontario, California. The funeral will be held from 10 to 11 a.m. on Thursday, July 3 at St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, 12686 Central Ave., in Chino, followed by burial at 11:30 a.m. at Bellevue Memorial Park, 1240 West G. Street in Ontario.

In lieu of flowers, kindly make a donation to the charity of your choice in Saint Jean's name.

