

Emmolo



2018 Emmolo Merlot Tasting Notes

A vibrant velvet red, the 2018 vintage is earthy and alluring, featuring scents of ripe plums, wild berry pie and freshly wet soil. Notes of new leather, sweet cigar, sage and a whiff of mint add intriguing layers to the nose. The palate quickly builds and expands, offering flavors of mulberry, espresso, toasted wood and sweet spice. Tannins are extremely smooth, giving this wine a supple, soft texture. The lingering finish fills the mouth with the richness of lush fruit and Mexican chocolate, with rustic accents of cinnamon and clove.

From the moment I began making Emmolo wines in 2011, I was intrigued by the possibilities of producing Merlot. This varietal can be wonderfully rich, earthy and concentrated, and I took it as a challenge to offer people a wine that they may not typically expect.

Production and Style

Like those preceding it, this vintage of Emmolo Merlot is made from grapes grown in Oak Knoll, a sub-appellation of Napa Valley that is perfectly suited to this varietal. Located just north of the city of Napa, Oak Knoll is slightly cooler than other parts of the Valley like Rutherford – allowing for a longer “hang time” that enables us to push grapes to full ripeness. The 2018 growing season featured ample sunlight during the day and cool nights, with no heat spikes. This mild, extended period before harvest provided ideal conditions to create Merlot that is dark, supple, lush and balanced.

Techniques in the vineyard are also essential to achieving this style. These include hands-on practices such as crop thinning throughout the growing season, so that yields are smaller and the resulting wine is more intensely concentrated. My goal is to create Merlot with superbly ripened fruit and soft tannins.

A long family history

I feel incredibly fortunate to have deep roots in Napa Valley and owe a great deal to those who came before me on both sides of my family. Emmolo (EM-oh-lo) is named after my mom’s side of the family, who came to Napa Valley in 1923. For many years, the Emmolos ran a grapevine rootstock nursery that supplied many Napa Valley growers (including my Dad and grandparents, who started Caymus Vineyards in 1972).

Meanwhile, my mom Cheryl, who has no brothers, dreamed of keeping the Emmolo name alive by starting a wine label using family vineyards. She launched Emmolo in 1994 and handed the reins over to me almost a decade ago. Most of our grapes are still grown on family property, and my grandparents, Frank and Annie, still live in Rutherford and keep an eye on the vines.

“I’ve always been passionate about Merlot’s potential. Nothing makes me happier than when people tell me that Emmolo helped them see Merlot in a new light.”

 Owner and Winemaker

