

Emmolo



2019 Emmolo Merlot Tasting Notes

The enveloping color of black cherries, this wine unfolds with an array of scents that are both savory and lush – sweet spice and rosemary are layered onto ripe cherries and dried apricot. Earthy notes of tree bark on a dewy morning mingle with a homey hint of sweet dough and cinnamon. Entry on the palate is extravagantly soft, leading into a balance of rich flavors and lively fruit. Juicy cherry carries over from the nose, along with bright pomegranate and the warmth of baking cocoa. The smooth, long finish features the alluring character of spiced mocha.

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

Grapes for this wine are sourced from vineyards in Napa Valley, including land which has been in my family for generations. We seek out areas with light gravelly soil and ideal growing conditions that enable longer “hang time” for the grapes to achieve full ripeness. The 2019 growing season started with healthy rainfall, followed by a long summer of warm days and cool nights, with few heat spikes. As summer lingered, so did the grapes on the vine, developing a distinct character that translates to dark, supple, lush and balanced Merlot.

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 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.

“When a Merlot is good, it’s really good – and I’m passionate about bringing out the full potential of this varietal. Nothing makes me happier than when people tell me that Emmolo helped them see Merlot in a new light.”

Jimmy Nguyen Owner and Winemaker

