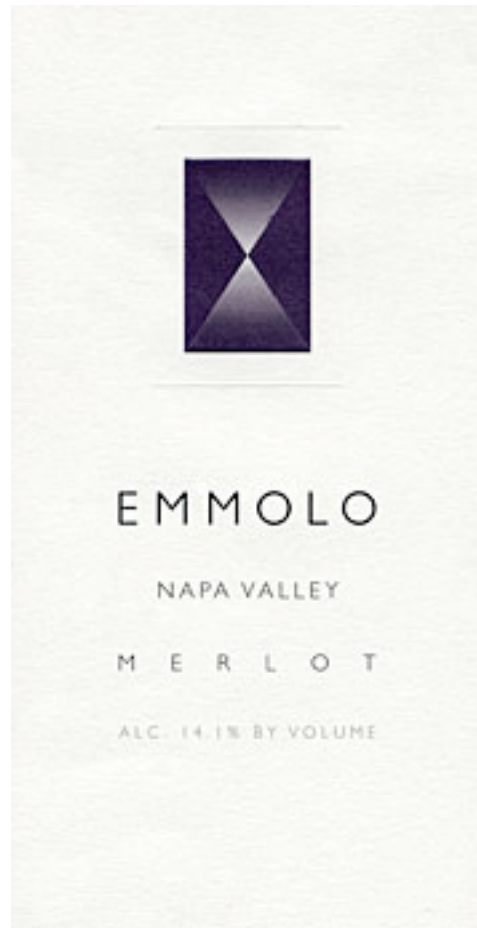


EMMOLO 2007 MERLOT

“Our 2007 vintage is bold with seductive layers of ripe fruit and eloquently balanced acidity. Generous layers of rich black cherry, berries and spice fill out the middle palate. A lengthy finish of sweet roasted coffee leaves behind one’s desire of another sip.”

Cheryl Emmolo, Owner



Notes from the Vineyard - The Emmolo South 40 Ranch was the main fruit source for our 2007 Merlot. Our vineyard is situated along the Silverado Trail near the Southern tip of the Stags Leap District in Napa Valley. This vineyard is known for producing inky wines with deep fruit characteristics. We also selected a small percentage of Merlot grapes from two distinct vineyards in Carneros and Atlas Peak. It's our family's consensus that the cooler regions of Napa Valley are well suited to the varietal needs of Merlot. Both vineyards are situated above the coastal fog layer and receive ideal sun exposure and cool afternoon breezes. The combination of growing conditions between these three vineyards yields wines that are better balanced without excessive blending. Stags Leap's sandy loam and clay sediments from the Napa River, along with volcanic soil deposits from the Vaca Mountains, play out in the wine. The unique soil composition of Carneros and Atlas Peak are also evident in our 2007 Merlot. Carneros, with its clay - shale qualities and Atlas Peak, with its volcanic origin, are well drained and known to produce bold wines of true varietal character.

The 2007 growing season began with meager rainfall which ended abruptly in mid-February. Unusually warm March days encouraged the vines to wake up early from dormancy. The rapid bud break inspired an early harvest. We monitored our irrigation to keep the vines perfectly hydrated, during some of the sizzling heat spells. The Merlot canopies were carefully maintained throughout the summer and shaded the grapes like cooling umbrellas. We hand-picked the Merlot in two phases on September 15 and October 1.

In the Cellar - We tended to the wine on a lot by lot basis to broaden the scope of complexity. To achieve optimal concentration of color and flavor, the temperatures were controlled during fermentation in two distinctive stages (allowing temperatures up to 90 degrees F in the first few days to encourage high extraction, then dropped temperatures to 75 degrees F as fermentation finished.) This method also allowed us to maintain refined and well-integrated fruit tannins. The wine then cooled to 65 degrees F for a 30-day period of gentle extended maceration on the skins. Malolactic fermentation was completed in custom-toasted French oak barrels. The wine underwent fourteen months of barrel aging marrying the rich fruit flavors with notes of light smoke and toasted spices.