Emmolo carries on a family tradition dating back to 1923, when my great-grandfather Salvatore Emmolo immigrated from Italy to Rutherford, Napa Valley. He bought property that remains in the family to this day and started a grapevine rootstock nursery that became the leading supplier to Napa Valley growers. My mother, Cheryl, has no brothers and 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 in 2011. Most of our grapes are still grown on family property, and my grandparents, Frank and Annie, still live in Rutherford – where they sit on their porch keeping an eye on the vines.

Production and Style
Merlot is a variety that requires hands-on manipulation in the vineyard – including crop thinning throughout the growing season – to make a rich, concentrated wine. My goal is to create a well-balanced Merlot with superbly rich fruit and soft tannins. I’m passionate about Merlot’s potential, and nothing makes me happier than when people tell me that Emmolo helped them see Merlot in a new light.

Grapes for this wine are sourced from Oak Knoll, which includes two family vineyards, one of which my grandfather Frank Emmolo purchased in 1972. On an average summer day, Oak Knoll is about 7 degrees cooler than Rutherford, allowing for a longer “hang time” than in warmer areas, which means that we can push the grapes to full ripeness. The 2016 growing season featured near-perfect conditions, with mild, steady temperatures and no heat spikes – a low yield at harvest lent itself to growing high-quality fruit. This vintage achieved the ideal ripeness levels to produce a rich, distinctive Merlot.

2016 Emmolo Merlot Tasting Notes
A dark rustic red, the 2016 vintage features rich, fragrant scents of blueberries, coffee beans, leather and a hint of pomace, enhanced by notes of violet, anise and wildflowers. Entry on the palate is silky, then builds with flavors of dark berry crumble and shaved chocolate. Tannins start off soft, holding onto their softness and fine texture even as they become more pronounced. This is a wine that fills and coats the mouth, leading into an extremely long finish marked by flavors of coffee beans and dark cocoa.

“My goal is to make a unique wine that’s different from what people typically expect from a California Merlot. I strive to make a concentrated, rich, ripe style. Merlot can have a wonderfully earthy quality, with lush fruit flavors and a supple texture.”

-Jenny Wagner, Owner & Winemaker