

NURSERYMAN

NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON



Nurseryman is named for my grandfather Frank Emmolo.

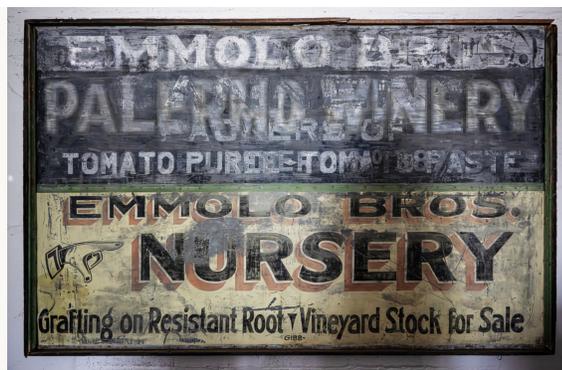
His Emmolo Nursery supplied farm owners with quality grapevines during Napa Valley's evolution in becoming a world-renowned wine region. Wineries that put Napa on the map sourced vines from Frank – Napa's key nurseryman.

“Nonno” (grandfather) is a second-generation farmer in Rutherford, Napa Valley. His dad Salvatore, along with his uncles, immigrated from Sicily in the early 1920s. At first, they started a business of what they knew best from their homeland – growing and canning tomato products.

With the end of prohibition in 1933, they built a winery called Palermo, named for their hometown. When the wine business proved unsuccessful, they went back to canning tomatoes, using the winery barn for processing. The large wooden sign that once read “Palermo Winery” was painted over with the words “Emmolo Bros. Cannery Packers of Tomato Purée - Tomato Paste.”

Meanwhile, Salvatore had started a small grapevine nursery. The sign was painted over again by the 1950s, this time reading “Emmolo Bros. Nursery” and hung along Hwy 29 in Napa Valley for four decades. This plywood sign lived many lives and today is a family heirloom.

When Frank was a boy he learned the ins and outs of how to grow and can tomatoes, along with grafting, planting and growing vines. He also loved to play the accordion, but gave up the dream after a hunting accident when he was 14 that left him without an index finger. In high school, he stepped up to run the family business when his dad was injured in a truck accident.



Scan to see more photos and explore the story

A year after graduating high school, Frank married my late grandmother, Annie Rossi. Together they had three daughters, my mom Cheryl being the oldest. As a girl, she recalls snacking on grapes in the field during summertime, despite being scolded for leaving bunches looking like a bird pecked them. As a teen she worked in the nursery office.

Frank recalls these early days being slow for business and hard work. But it was work he loved, especially when it came to tractor driving. His favorite tractor is his 1941 John Deere that he keeps in mint condition today. My grandmother, Annie, drove their 1955 flatbed Chevy truck to deliver bundles of rootstocks to clients once Frank had harvested and graded each vine. Today, the truck sits in the Emmolo barn, a reminder of the early days when vines were hand delivered and business was built on handshakes.

In 1996, with Napa Valley well-established and competition high, he sold his nursery business. He still lives at his lifelong home, once the site of the tomato cannery, winery and nursery.

I'm proud to honor Frank by naming this wine after him. Today he still dreams at night of driving a tractor, and most of his property is planted to vineyard. Nonno loves his garden, full of tomatoes, "gagootz" (squash), chicoria and basil. He often sits under his fruit trees or the table grapes that are trellised overhead. I am lucky to enjoy lunch with him outside his summer kitchen, where his parents once cooked.

The Nurseryman 2020 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon: From grapes grown on some of Napa Valley's best Cabernet soils, expect a rich, layered and textured wine.



Frank Emmolo with his late wife, Annie, granddaughter Jenny Wagner, and daughter Cheryl Emmolo at Frank's lifelong home in Napa Valley.

TASTING NOTES

A dark black plum, this Cabernet features scents of wild sage, mocha, caramel, custard, wild berries and worn leather. A barrel bouquet of French oak adds dimension. Entry is plush, round, supple and mouth-filling. The texture of this wine is fine, rich and soft, helping to define the palate. Lasting on the finish, with hints of baking cocoa powder, espresso bean and ripe plum.

Winemaker

Emmolo