

# PLATINUM SERIES

*Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers*

If anything, owner Frank Altamura, 50, of Altamura Winery is a pragmatist. His entire career has been devoted to the why's and how's of grape growing, along with the practical application of everything he has been able to learn on a firsthand basis.

A fifth generation native of Napa Valley, Altamura's family originally came from the Puglia wine region on Italy's southeastern shore. It could easily be said that wine has been in his family in one way or another for hundreds of years. From the time he was seventeen or eighteen, Frank Altamura realized he was destined for the wine industry. Upon graduating from high school, he accompanied a cousin who managed a number of vineyards in and around Napa Valley and soon realized his future lay in the farming aspect of the grape business.

During the mid-1970s, Frank Altamura took an all-encompassing job with Sterling Vineyards where he stated, "I generally paid attention to first the growing side, and later, also the winery aspect of the business." After two years, Altamura moved to Trefethen and along the way started planting some vineyards of his own. He married his wife Karen and next joined the famous Camus Vineyards team of Chuck Wagner, which was just beginning its lofty ascent to Napa hierarchy. He toiled at Camus for the next five years and worked in practically every aspect of the wine business.

By 1985, Frank and Karen Altamura were ready to produce their own wine, a release of approximately 400-500 cases of cabernet sauvignon. The wines bore the Altamura label and Frank sold them from the back of his truck after sampling. If the customers liked what they tasted, they bought the wine; if they didn't, Frank simply went on to his next stop.

The national press loved the first Altamura releases, and the rest is history.

Today's Altamura Winery produces around 6,000 cases, a level that Frank Altamura expects to remain at for some time. He has moved the original winery from the Silverado Trail to a marvelous piece of property in an historic area known as Wooden Valley.

The original John Wooden was a member of the legendary and ill-fated Donner Party that crossed the Sierra Nevada's in 1846. Wooden originally settled in Oregon but later came to the beautiful foothills valley some eight miles east of Napa that today bears his name. "The original property was a cattle ranch," related Frank Altamura, "and my wife's family was involved with it. There were planed vines on it as late as

the turn of the 20th Century. I was taken by the place because of its incredible soils and elevations. I have identified eight different soils and the altitudes run from 750 to over a thousand feet. It is a miniature Napa Valley within itself, and you can just imagine what that involves." The new Altamura Winery is a meticulous edifice with numerous caves incorporated into its design and a wonderful residence located on a crest of the property.

For Frank Altamura, who started in the business right out of high school and who has had no formal academic training, the real challenge was in paying attention to what he had before him.

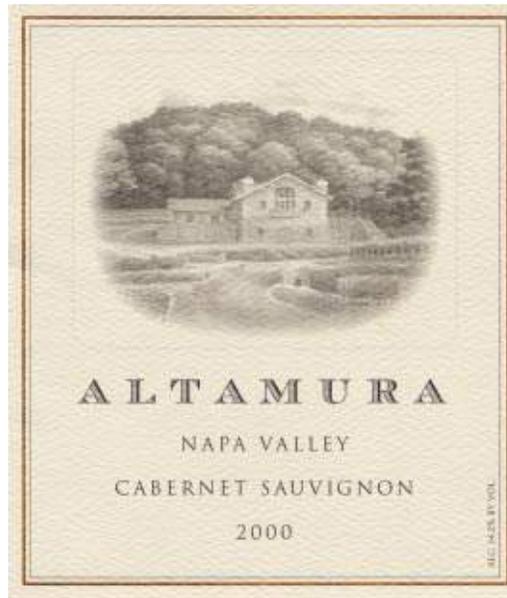
"I guess you can say I'm a member of the old school," he continued. "I have read a great deal and have listened to many of the old timers in this business. I also paid attention to what really worked when I had the great fortune to work for the wineries I did." Altamura also pays great consideration to details. He feels that he produces the same wines from the same grapes from the same soils by insuring that nothing happens to change the basics of his incredible wines. He employs a small winery staff.

In addition to Karen, who runs the winery office, the entire Altamura staff is under ten. Frank Altamura also has high hopes that sons Frankie (in college at Santa Clara), and Giancarlo (just finishing high school), will follow in his footsteps into the family's business.

"That would really be the icing," he concluded, "I couldn't really ask for more."

Altamura owns an old army jeep and also a 12-passenger command car that he uses for VIP tours around the winery.

Truly contented? You better believe.



## TASTING

## NOTES




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## ALTAMURA

VINEYARDS & WINERY

Dear *Platinum Series* Member,

It is my pleasure to be able to feature the 2000 Altamura Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon to Gold Medal Wine Club's *Platinum Series* members. The 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon is loaded with all of the complexity and elegance. The first impression is one of intense richness and depth of color, followed by the scent of blackberry, plum and roses. Upon tasting the wine, you will smile as if remembering an old friend. It's that familiar taste of my cabernet Sauvignon, the complex core of ripe black fruits... currant, black cherry, plum and blackberry... followed by rich cocoa, toasty oak and creamy mocha.

Perhaps the most amazing element of this wine is how seamlessly these flavors roll across the palate. They are held together with the structure of soft, integrated tannins, creating a wonderfully long and elegant finish.

I hope you enjoy this highly rated wine as much I enjoy making it.

Frank Altamura  
Owner/Winemaker

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## TASTING NOTES

This month's featured Altamura 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon is arguably the most consistent, highly-rated wine to emerge in the marketplace for years. It's a Cabernet aficionado's dream, having garnered 90+ ratings from no less than six national wine-industry publications. The *Beverage Testing Institute* applauds the wine with a **93-Point** rating, plus a **Cellar Selection & Exceptional** honors, —“Black cherry, black currant, cigar, sage and oak aromas. This is an intensely flavored wine with layers of ripe varietal fruit.” The *Wine Enthusiast* awarded **93-Points**—“A soft, lithe, fleshy wine oozing opulent flavors. Blackcurrants and cassis, with hints of minty chocolate, are absolutely delicious. It's the kind of wine you want to drink in the finest crystal you have.” *The Wine News*, **92-Points**. The *Connoisseurs' Guide* **91-Points**—“This plump and optimally ripened wine serves up lots of sweet, slightly juicy fruit and seasons it with liberal amounts of vanillin oak.” *Wine Spectator* chimed in with a **91-Point** rating, as-well-as a **91-Point** rating from *The California Grapevine* publication. 100% Cabernet. Drink now through 2011.

## REORDERS

Altamura Winery is highly regarded as one of *Wine Spectator* magazine's **Top 50 Napa Cabernet Sauvignon Producers**. This wine is what California Cabernet is all about—ripe, rich and loaded with layers of varietal fruit. Be forewarned, it's the kind of wine that is hard to stop sipping once you start. A Cab that flirts with perfection.

The **2000 Altamura Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley** retails winery-direct for \$60.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

**Half-Case-\$55.00 /bottle (\$330.00)**  
**Full-Case-\$50.00 /bottle (\$600.00)**  
 [Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888

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