

# PLATINUM SERIES

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

Steve Simi's role as the owner of this month's *Platinum Series* selection, Anselmo Vigne, is traditional in his approach to making truly superior wines in Napa Valley. His patience and respect for long-established methods and morays could serve as a beacon for many young winery owners.

Simi, now an energetic 73, was the first son born to his parents who had immigrated to Northern California from their native Tuscany early last century. His father, Luigi, had worked for several years as a laborer to allow his family to join him in the United States.

As a youth, Steve Simi can recall that his father would buy a truckload of grapes and gather all his friends for a festive celebration at their family home. His father and friends would go down to the basement and stomp the grapes themselves and then proceed to make wines from the pressed juice. "It was almost like a holiday," he remembered, "it would take a couple of days and those memories are among the happiest of my young life."

By 1954, Simi was enrolled in a junior college not far from his Alameda home, when he decided to join the army as the Korean War was nearing its conclusion. When he returned home after the army stint, he immediately went to work. All the time, wine was a constant companion in his tightly knit Italian family and heritage.

Forty-six years ago, he met and married his beloved wife, Cecilia, who today is one of Napa's better know artists. The couple enjoyed wine together and visited the Napa Valley frequently since it was only 40 miles from their home in Alameda.

About twenty years ago, Steve became interested in the business aspect of wine, and started looking for property in or around the valley he knew so well. For six years he searched, until, in late 1997, he happened upon a piece of land that was formerly part of the noted Altamura Vineyards and Winery. He struck a deal for some 16 acres, of which 5 1/2 were planted in vine.

"Even though the vineyards were close to the Silverado Trail, the reality was that my property was located off the Trail proper, with a 13-degree grade,"

Simi recounted. "It was incredibly rocky and required some extensive work on a back hoe to clear." 1700 man hours on the back hoe later, Simi was successful in making his property consistent with most other quality vineyards in the area.

At first, almost all of the grapes Simi produced were sold to outsiders, with a small fraction of the grapes remaining with Simi. "My friend, the late Mike Seitz, helped me with my work and contracted for nearly half of my production," he added. "Our consultant, Craig MacLean took the other half and I put aside a little for myself."

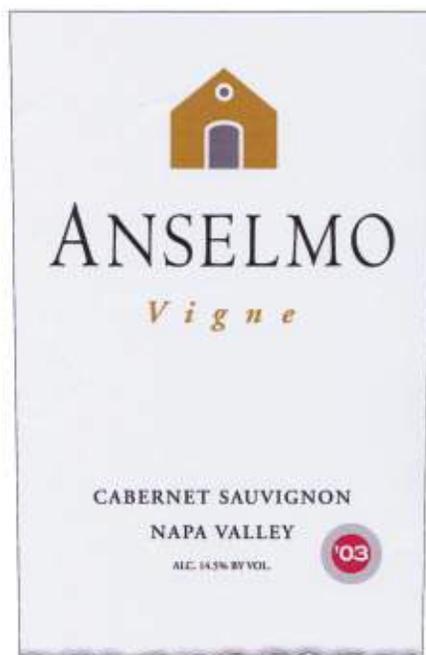
In 2001, Seitz helped Steve Simi make a modest 60 cases, mostly for self consumption and the delight of Simi's close friends. "The next year, Craig became our consultant and we produced 360 cases for our first real release. This year we will hit a little over 500 cases, but I don't intend to get much larger. I only use the grapes from my original vines" (he planted 3 additional acres several years ago) "and I still sell the same amount of my production to Steve's widow, Kristi, for her (Brookdale Vineyards) wines. I am thinking of starting to use my newer grapes next year, but that will probably be under a second label.

My customers are quite excited about our Anselmo Vigne, and I wouldn't do anything to change something that is doing so well," he added.

Simi, whose first name is Anselmo, chose his first name for Anselmo Vigne because of the similarities of the Sonoma giant Simi Winery, a move he figured would draw someone's ire if he used his surname for his winery. "At 73, no one would believe I was out to make a fortune," Simi concluded. "I was only really interested in having some fun and being able to leave something for my children."

So far, Anselmo Vigne has accomplished more than expected. After excellent initial reviews, Anselmo Vigne has continued to raise its stature and has become one of the darlings of the wine press and a favorite of consumers that are intrigued by low production wineries.

Kudos to Steve Simi and his Anselmo Vigne, a precious gem among Napa wineries.





## TASTING NOTES

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### 290 Cases Produced

The 2003 Anselmo Vigne Cabernet Sauvignon garnered **92 Points** [Exceptional Rating] and was chosen as a **Cellar Selection** by the *Beverage Tasting Institute*. This wonderful Cab also won a **Gold Medal** at the *World Wine Championships*. "Deep garnet purple color. Bright ripe blackberry and cassis aromas with a touch of mocha and vanilla. A round, lightly tannic entry leads to a dry-yet-fruity full body of vibrant berry fruit and brown spice flavors with crisp, juicy tartness and supple tannins on the long finish. This has plenty of stuffing for a long haul in the cellar and well balanced acidity and tannins to excel with prime rib tonight. Superb." *The Connoisseurs' Guide* posts a very solid **91 Points**, "From its handsomely oaked aromas to its deep and impressively filled flavors, this noteworthy young Cabernet delivers lots and lots of very pure curranty fruit as its primary theme." The wine's extraordinary balance will allow aging for 12-15 years while offering immediate enjoyment. Aged in French oak 22 months. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy now until 2015.



Dear *Platinum Series* members,

It is with great pleasure that we introduce Anselmo Vigne to you! Our winery is a product of a life long passion for wine which began for Steve as a young boy when his dad would invite his friends to make wine in the basement. It was quite an affair and a very happy day for all!

After many years of business in Oakland, we purchased 16 acres of land in the Eastern foothills of Napa Valley with an existing vineyard planted in Cabernet Sauvignon. Our dream was to make the property in Napa our home and to produce a wine that could compete in the world market.

Many hours on the backhoe, developing the property, designing and building our "barn" and tasting many wines brought us to the release of our first vintage of Anselmo Vigne in 2002. Anselmo Vigne is a product of our creative spirit. In this project, we look for beauty in everything that's around us — the grapes, the dirt, the sky. We're honoring the land by producing this beautiful wine. And we're honored to be sharing Anselmo Vigne with you.

Warm regards,

Anselmo "Steve" and Cecilia Simi

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## REORDERS

The Anselmo Vigne 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley showcases veteran winemaker, Craig MacLean's proficiency, and the illustrious fruit from the five-acre estate vineyard located in the rocky hillsides above the Silverado Trail. This graceful and powerful Cabernet is the flagship wine of one of smallest production wineries in Napa. With just 250 cases produced it is extremely hard-to-find even in California.

The Anselmo Vigne 2003 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-\$53.00 /bottle (\$318.00)**  
**Full-Case-\$48.00 /bottle (\$576.00)**  
 [Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888  
 Fax: 1-800-266-8889  
 E-mail: [orders@goldmedalwine.com](mailto:orders@goldmedalwine.com)

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