

MAXENTI

Our Story

It all started with an earthquake.

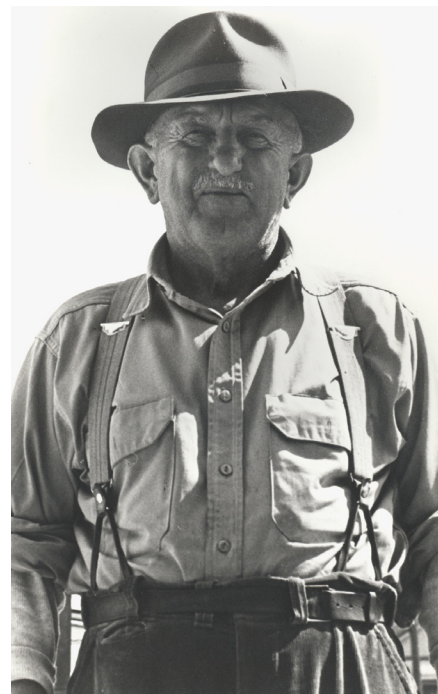
The year was 1906. San Francisco had been decimated by Mother Nature. A massive rebuilding effort was underway, and the city was in desperate need of skilled workers. Steve Tonella's great uncle, Joseph Ponti, emigrated from northern Italy to answer the call, making the voyage to the Golden State to seize the opportunity for a new beginning.

Soon after his arrival, Ponti crossed paths with George de Latour, the founder of the now iconic Beaulieu Vineyard in Rutherford, CA. Impressed with Ponti, Latour hired him on the spot, launching his remarkable 43-year career in winemaking.

Over the decades, Ponti rose through the ranks at Beaulieu, eventually overseeing the vineyards, winemaking operations, and everything in between. In 1939, his work culminated in winemaking history when the 1936 Beaulieu Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon won a gold medal at the Golden Gate International Exposition. This vintage became Napa Valley's first internationally recognized Cabernet Sauvignon, establishing it as the signature varietal of Rutherford and a symbol of Napa Valley's excellence that persists to this day.

Ponti's achievement cemented him in winemaking history, but his legacy doesn't end there.

His nephew - Steve's grandfather, Louis Tonella - later joined him at Beaulieu Vineyard at the ripe age of 17, further establishing the family's growing influence in Napa Valley. Ponti eventually acquired vineyard land in Rutherford where he planted premium Cabernet Sauvignon and other varietals. That same land, later inherited by Louis, remains central to the Tonella family's historic winemaking legacy, producing wine that stretches through history to sit on your table today.



Rutherford Bench Vineyard 1938



The Maxenti Vision

Grape growing and winemaking have been a part of our family heritage for over a century. With *Maxenti*, we honor that legacy while forging a bold, new chapter—uniting tradition and discovery.

Our purpose is simple: to make history by crafting exceptional, small-lot wines—Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux-style blends, and Italian varietals—that express the best of Rutherford, Napa Valley, and Sonoma County. Rooted in tradition, driven by passion, and made to be remembered—Maxenti is more than a wine; it's a legacy in the making.

Steve Tonella

Founder & Vintner

Born in Napa Valley and raised between Sonoma and Rutherford, Steve Tonella grew up immersed in the world of winegrowing. From a young age, he worked alongside his grandfather, family members, and their vineyard team managing the vines canopy, tying and training shoots, pruning and helping manage irrigation. These formative years instilled in him a deep respect for the land and a hands-on understanding of viticulture.

At the turn of the century, while earning his degree in Business Administration at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Steve continued to nurture his passion for winemaking by planting his own small lots of Cabernet Sauvignon. His professional



journey, however, took him away from wine and into high tech, where he quickly rose into global leadership roles that brought him across Europe and Asia. Fluent in both Italian & Spanish, Steve has lived and worked for extended periods in Rome, Barcelona, London and Kobe.

Throughout his global travels, however, Steve's dream of returning to his roots in winemaking never faded. After living and working across three continents, Steve fulfilled his lifelong dream by founding his own winery that honors the four generations of his family's winegrowing, crafting exceptional, small-production wines from Napa Valley and Sonoma County. Like his great uncle Joseph Ponti before him, Steve leads every aspect of the winery—from vine to glass—with a commitment to quality, craftsmanship, and tradition. After all, there really is no place like home.

Winemaking Regime and Philosophy

Winemaker Philip Titus and Steve Tonella work synergistically to make decisions in every step of the harvesting and winemaking process, from tasting the grapes in the vineyard, to juicing, to fermenting and aging. The vineyard sites provide plenty of expressive fruit with slower and natural extraction of flavors, allowing for tannins, rich color, and complex aromas. Titus and Tonella make picking decisions that are specific to each site by block and row, always seeking to balance ripe fruit flavors, tannin structures and natural acidity. Crush and fermentation are transitioned naturally and gently to coax out the true, terroir-driven expression of each vineyard and varietal, and the winemaking focuses on the complexity of fruit, depth of texture and length of structure on the palate.