

ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS

2017 Estate Chardonnay

Our estate is bordered by the Russian River and since 1975 our Estate Chardonnay has highlighted the gravelly river banks where it is grown. The vines are planted on some of the coolest sites on our estate where morning fog is the norm, and the temperature might drop between 40 to 50 degrees from day to night.

The 2017 vintage will be talked about for a long time. Drought ending rainfall in January and February brought floods to many regions, heatwaves began in April and continued on and off throughout the summer, then Northern California wildfires made national news in October!

We harvest 70% of our Chardonnay at night when the grapes are cool to retain the natural acidity, then cold ferment those lots in stainless steel, without malolactic fermentation or barrel aging, to highlight the citrus and green apple flavors. To add balance to the wine, we whole-cluster press 30% of the best fruit and barrel ferment that portion in French oak barrels. The barrel fermented lots underwent also underwent secondary malolactic fermentation and aged on the lees for six to eight months to develop roundness and body.

There are fresh fruit aromas of apple, pear, pineapple, and vanilla mixed with floral notes and slight oak in the glass. The 2017 is rich and full bodied with slight citrus notes along with fresh fruit flavors of pear, apple, tropical fruits and peaches. The Viognier adds a slight floral component and contributes to the rich mouth-feel. This vintage is well balanced and has a very long finish.

Food Pairing: Perfect with halibut, cod, shellfish, poultry and pork. Compliments creamy or citrus based sauces.

Awards:

- 2017: 91 points & Great Value - *Ultimate Wine Challenge*
- 2017: 91 points - *Beverage Dynamics*
- 2017: 90 points & Gold Medal - *Sunset International Wine Competition*
- 2017: 90 points & Gold Medal - *World Wine Championships*
- 2017: 90 points & Gold Medal - *Toast of the Coast Wine Competition*
- 2017: Gold Medal - *San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition & S.A.L.E. International Wine*



Profile:

- Rich, yet well balanced with stone fruit flavors
- Lightly oaked

About Alexander Vineyards:

Whole-cluster pressing is a technique used to extract juice from ripe grapes. Rather than sending grape clusters first through the destemmer, where stems are removed leaving behind individual berries, the whole clusters go directly into the press. Pressing the whole clusters prevents oxidation by keeping juice exposure to oxygen to an absolute minimum, thus virtually eliminating extraction of bitter tannins from stems and seeds, and producing juice with uncommonly pure varietal aromas and flavors. Whole cluster pressing takes longer than the traditional “destem and press” process for white grapes because fewer whole clusters will fit in each press cycle compared to destemmed fruit; juice yields also are slightly lower.

Technical Data:

Grapes: 99% Chardonnay, 1% Viognier
Harvest Dates: August 30 - September 18, 2017
Barrel Aging: 70% stainless steel, 30% barrel fermented in French Oak and aged on the lees for 6-8 months
First Vintage: 1975
Alcohol: 14% **pH:** 3.71 **TA:** 6.2 g/L
Closure: 750ml cork 375ml stelvin
UPC: 750ml 0-85798 01872-7
375ml 0-85798 01871-0



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Alexander Valley Vineyards is well known for top Cabernet Sauvignon, but, one trip to the 600 acre Wetzel Family Estate and you'll quickly see why we are also equally proud of our Chardonnay. Our property is bordered by the Mayacamas Mountains to the east and the Russian River to the west. The river runs the length of the valley and provides a conduit pulling cooling fog through Healdsburg and into the Alexander Valley each day.

In 1966 we started planting Chardonnay on the estate's coolest sites by the river and we, like neighboring growers, sold our fruit to other wineries. From the beginning Alexander Valley Chardonnay was known for great balance and good acidity.

In the early '70s, California wines started getting attention outside of the state. In 1976 a tasting in Paris was featured in Time Magazine after two Napa based wineries took top honors with their California wines. But a Sonoma newspaper revealed the rest of the story with this headline: "Napa didn't grow the famed grapes"¹.

Wine Spectator wrote about the winning Chardonnay: " the famous tasting where its 1973 Alexander Valley Chardonnay won a blind tasting, vanquishing competition that included white Burgundies and other California Chardonnays".² Incredibly, one tasting in France brought worldwide attention to California Chardonnay and the Alexander Valley just as Hank Wetzel was getting ready to release his first wines.



Prior to starting the winery, Hank apprenticed at top Chardonnay producers including Freemark Abbey, Stony Hill and Hanzell.

In 1975 he crushed our estate Chardonnay grapes for the first vintage at AVV's newly bonded winery.

Decades later, our Estate Chardonnay continues to showcase the unique place we call home and receives accolades from wine drinkers and critics across the country.

(First vintage at AVV in 1975)

So do you still think Alexander Valley Vineyards is only about red wine?