

ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS

2018 Estate Chardonnay - 375ml

The Russian River defines the Alexander Valley with foggy mornings, warm days and diurnal temperature swings of 40 to 50 degrees. Estate vineyards, combined with classic winemaking techniques maximize the balance of fruit and acidity creating a classic California Chardonnay.

The 2018 growing season began a bit cooler than the past few vintages, but we had a near perfect fruit set with moderate summer temperatures and relatively few heat spikes. The mild weather led to a longer hang time, allowing the grapes to ripen slowly. Harvest began on September 15 and the fruit had excellent flavors and balanced natural acidity.

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

Fresh fruit dominates the nose with aromas of apple, pear, pineapple, and vanilla mixed with floral notes and a kiss of oak in the glass. The 2018 is rich and full bodied with hints of citrus and bright flavors of pear, apple, tropical fruits and peaches. The Viognier adds a floral component and contributes to the rich mouth-feel. This 2018 has nice acid balance, a little minerality and a very long finish.



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

Accolades: 2018: 90 points & Gold Medal - *World Wine Championship Tastings.com*
2017: 90 points & Gold Medal - *London Wine Competition*

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: September 15 - 29, 2018
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:** 3.77 **TA:** 5.8 g/L
Closure: 375ml stelvin **Case Pack:** 12 bottles
UPC: 375ml 0-85798 01871-0



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Alexander Valley Vineyards is well known for top Cabernet Sauvignon, but, one trip to the 720 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?