

## 2017 Estate Merlot - 375ml

Merlot from the Wetzel Family Estate has a reputation for being a big, structured wine. First produced in 1984, this has been a classically structured wine each year, often showing as much tannin as our Cabernet Sauvignon.

2017 was a vintage of contrasts. Our ample rainfall in January and February allayed any discussion of drought, but winter rains were followed by a warm spring and many heat spikes throughout the summer until we began picking the first lot of Merlot on September 9.

We prune our Merlot vines heavily and drop fruit several times during the growing season so the remaining clusters ripen evenly. Winemaker Kevin Hall has found that fermenting Merlot at a slightly lower temperature than some of our other Bordeaux varieties maintains the lush flavors and structure. After fermentation the lots spend 14 months aging in a combination of French and American oak barrels.

This wine always impresses red wine lovers, and we refer to it as a Merlot for Cabernet lovers. There are spicy aromas of dark fruits, cassis, black/red cherry, plum, vanilla, oak and slight chocolate in the glass. This wine has broad mouth-feel with flavors of cherry, cassis, blackberry, plum and chocolate. This is a big, nicely balanced wine with chewy tannins on the long, structured finish.

**Food Pairing:** Big wines pair well with big foods - try lamb chops, prime rib & steaks.

**Accolades:** 2017: 91 points & Best of Class of Appellation - California State Fair  
2017: 90 points & Gold Medal - Critics Challenge  
2017: 87 points - Wine Advocate  
2017: Gold Medal & Reserve Class Champion - Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Intl Wine Competition

**Profile:**

- Serious Merlot
- Juicy, aromatic, structured

### About Alexander Valley Vineyards:

AVV was recognized as a "Sonoma Green Business" in June 2010 and is one of only 17 wineries to achieve the certification. The certification recognizes AVV as an environmental leader that conserves resources, minimizes waste and prevents pollution, according to environmental officials with Sonoma County who reviewed the winery's achievements for two years before awarding the certification. Alexander Valley Vineyard's many "green" initiatives have been in use for over the past three decades.

### Technical Data:

**Grapes:** 100% Merlot  
**Harvest Dates:** September 12 – October 17, 2017  
**Barrel Aging:** 14 months in French & American oak, 25% new  
**First Vintage:** 1984  
**Alcohol:** 14.0% **ph:** 3.47 **TA:** 6.1 g/L  
**UPC:** 0-8579808861-4 375ml Stelvin

