

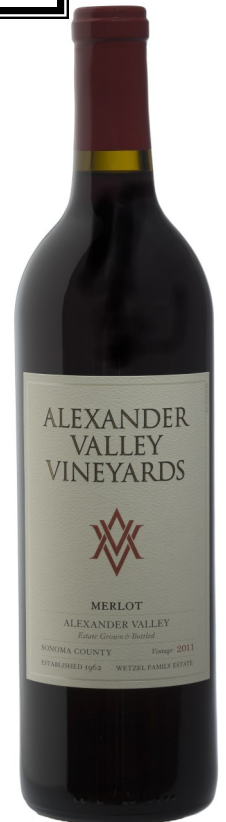
2011 Estate Merlot

Merlot from The Wetzel Family Estate has a reputation for being a big, structured wine. First produced in 1984, this has never been one of those fruit bombs or thin and wimpy wines. Wine Spectator described our style as “... a fine old-school Merlot that shows good structure.”

Light and late are the two words most often used to describe the 2011 vintage. A wet winter and spring delayed bloom, then heavy rain at bloom hindered the fruit set decreasing the grape yields dramatically. A cool summer prolonged the growing season and harvest started later than usual. The overall effect was great flavor development and well balanced wines.

What makes our Merlot so different than others? It's the warm days and cool nights of the valley, combined with the alluvial clay soil, along with vineyard management, and handcrafting the wine. We prune our Merlot vines heavily and drop fruit several times during the growing season so that each cluster of grapes has rich concentration and good structure. Winemaker Kevin Hall has found that fermenting the Merlot at a little cooler temperature than some of our other Bordeaux grapes maintains the lush flavors and structure as well. The 2011 included 4 barrels of Malbec, adding deeper color, additional plum favors and a touch of tannin. After fermentation the lots spend 16 months aging in a combination of French and American oak barrels.

This wine always impresses red wine lovers. There are aromas of cherry, dusty plum, cassis, cola, eucalyptus and cocoa powder in the glass. This is a fruit forward wine with nice balance and flavors of red cherry, cassis, blackberry, plum, dark fruits and dark chocolate. The finish is juicy and structured with a long finish.



Food Pairing: Rich wines pair well with rich foods—try lamb chops, prime rib, steaks and veal chops.

Accolades: 2011: 94 points Platinum Medal: *Sommelier Challenge*
 2011: 90 points - Gold Medal: *Beverage Testing Institute*
 2011: Gold Medal - *Monterey Wine Festival*
 2011: 90 points - Highly Recommended - Finalist: *Ultimate Wine Challenge*
 2011: 87 points - *Wine Spectator*

Profile:

- Serious Merlot
- Juicy and structured

About Alexander Valley Vineyards:

AVV was recognized as a “Sonoma Green Business” in June 2010 and is one of only 14 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: 98.8% Merlot, 0.7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 0.4% Cabernet Franc, 0.1 % Malbec
Harvest Dates: October 1 – October 25, 2011
Barrel Aging: 16 months in French & American oak, 25% new
First Vintage: 1984
Alcohol: 13.9% **ph:** 3.54 **TA:** 6.3 g/L
UPC: 0-85798 08862-1 750ml-cork **SRP:** \$20
 0-8579808861-4 375ml-Stelvin **SRP:** \$10

