

# ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS

## 2016 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.

Overall, 2016 was a more normal growing season than the last few years. While the drought was far from over, we received much needed rain over the winter and early spring. The good weather continued through the summer with no damaging heat spikes. Harvest started and ended early, yields were reduced a little, but the quality and flavor of the grapes were stellar.

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 2016 is rich and creamy with slight citrus notes along with crisp flavors of pear, apple, tropical fruits and nectarines. The Viognier adds a slight floral component and a rich mouth-feel. This vintage has bright acidity, nice balance and a very long aftertaste.

**Food Pairing:** Roast chicken, seafood with lemon/citrus sauces and creamy pastas.

**Awards:**

- 2016: 90 points - Wine Advocate**
- 2016: 91 points & Gold Medal - Orange County (CA) Fair Commercial Wine Competition**
- 2016: Double Gold Medal & Best of Class - 2018 East Meets West Wine Challenge**
- 2016: Gold Medal - Houston Livestock & Rodeo International 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:** August 30 - September 16, 2016  
**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:** 3.68   **TA:** 6.4 g/L  
**Closure:** 750ml cork   375ml stelvin  
**UPC:** 750ml 0-85798 01872-7   **SRP:** \$18  
375 ml 0-85798 01871-0   **SRP:** \$10



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## ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS

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"* <sup>1</sup>.

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".<sup>2</sup> 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.



(First vintage at AVV in 1975)

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.

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