

ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS

2016 Estate Merlot

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.

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 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 12 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, cherry, plum, vanilla, oak and slight chocolate in the glass. This wine has broad mouth-feel with flavors of cherry, blackberry, cassis, plum and chocolate. This is a big, nicely balanced wine with chewy tannins on the long finish.

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

Accolades: 2016: 94 points, Best in Class & Double Gold Medal - North of the Gate Wine Competition
2016: 94 points & Gold Medal - Los Angeles International Wine Competition
2016: 91 points & Gold Medal - Critics Challenge
2016: Double Gold Medal & Top of Class - SALE International 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 9 – October 6, 2016
Barrel Aging: 12 months in French & American oak, 25% new
First Vintage: 1984
Alcohol: 14.0% **ph:** 3.64 **TA:** 6.5 g/L
UPC: 0-85798 08862-1 750ml cork finish
0-8579808861-4 375ml Stelvin

