

2012 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.”

2012 was a textbook growing season with ideal weather. In the spring, our vines set a large crop and over the next few months we thinned clusters in many blocks more than once. During the summer, we had an abundance of California coastal "sweater" weather, fog in the morning, and warm sunshine in the afternoon, often sending temperatures into the mid 90s and then quickly cooling off after sunset.

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. After fermentation the lots spend 18 months aging in a combination of French and American oak barrels.

This wine always impresses red wine lovers. There are spicy, earthy aromas of red cherry, vanilla, oak, cedar, plum and cassis in the glass. This wine has broad mouthfeel with flavors of cherry, cassis, blackberry, plum, dark fruits 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:**
- 2012: 94 points - Gold Medal:** *LA International Wine Competition*
 - 2012: 92 points - Best Buy -** *Wine & Spirits Magazine*
 - 2012: Gold Medal:** *Sonoma Harvest Fair*
 - 2012: Gold Medal:** *Seattle Food and Wine Experience*
 - 2012: 87 points -** *Wine Advocate* “attractive, easygoing, straightforward”

- Profile:**
- **Serious Merlot**
 - **Juicy, 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: 89% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1.4% Petit Verdot, 1.3% Malbec, 0.3% Cabernet Franc

Harvest Dates: 9/15 – 10/19/2012

Barrel Aging: 18 months in French & American oak, 25% new

First Vintage: 1984

Alcohol: 14.0% **ph:** 3.63 **TA:** 6.3 g/L

UPC: 0-85798 08862-1 750ml-cork **SRP:** \$20
 0-8579808861-4 375ml-Stelvin **SRP:** \$10

