

## 2013 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.”

The 2013 growing season was almost identical to 2012. The year began with another dry winter and spring, then throughout the summer we experienced a warm growing season with abundant sunshine and even growing temperatures. Our grapes ripened evenly, harvest started earlier than in 2012 and proceeded at a fairly quick pace ending on October 3rd. While news of the lack of rain dominated conversations, there was an upside to the drought; the grapes had more concentrated flavors than in 2012.

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 black cherry, cassis, chocolate, vanilla, oak, black plum and raspberry in the glass. This wine has broad mouthfeel with flavors of cherry, cassis, licorice, plum, chocolate along with a floral note. This is a big, nicely balanced wine with grippy tannins on the long finish.

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

**Accolades:** **2013: Gold Medal:** *International Wine Competition HLSR*  
**2013: 92 points:** *Natalie Maclean*  
**2012: 92 points - Best Buy - Top 100 Wine:** *Wine & Spirits Magazine*

**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:** 97% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon  
**Harvest Dates:** 9/17 – 10/3/2013  
**Barrel Aging:** 18 months in French & American oak, 25% new  
**First Vintage:** 1984  
**Alcohol:** 14.0% **ph:** 3.64 **TA:** 6.6 g/L  
**UPC:** 0-85798 08862-1 750ml-cork **SRP:** \$20  
 0-8579808861-4 375ml-Stelvin **SRP:** \$10

