

2014 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 unprecedented drought in California was national news, a mild winter and spring caused early bud break, but the overall length of the growing season was similar to past years. The lack of rain did not impact our fruit due to moderate temperatures throughout the growing season and the grapes had terrific concentration and superb fruit flavors at harvest.

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 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 15 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, earthy aromas of cassis, black cherry, plum, vanilla, oak and cedar in the glass along with a floral note. This wine has broad mouthfeel with flavors of cherry, cassis, blackberry, 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: 2014: 97 points and Five Stars - *Beverage Dynamics / Cheers*
2014: Gold Medal - *San Francisco 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 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: 100% Merlot

Harvest Dates: September 4– 23, 2014

Barrel Aging: 15 months in French & American oak, 25% new

First Vintage: 1984

Alcohol: 14.0% **ph:** 3.55 **TA:** 6.8 g/L

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

