



ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS



2011 Estate Chardonnay

Our estate is bordered by the Russian River and since 1975 we have showcased this location with our Estate Chardonnay. The vines are planted on some of the coolest sites on our estate where daily fog is the norm. During the growing season the temperature drops between 40 to 50 degrees from day to nighttime.

Rain at bloom lowered the grape yields in 2011 dramatically. That lower yield combined with the long hang time of the cool growing season intensified the flavors and body in this wine. At harvest we were luckier than many, all of our Chardonnay was picked before the start of the annual rains.

To retain the natural acidity we harvest 70% of our Chardonnay at night when the grapes are coolest, 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 undergo malolactic fermentation and age on the lees for 8 months to develop roundness and body.

There are aromas of apple, pear, butterscotch, toasted oak and a little minerality in the glass. The 2011 is richer than prior vintages with a creamy mouth-feel. There are tropical notes and flavors of apple, pear and citrus in the glass with just a touch of acidity on the finish.

Food Pairing: Try this with shellfish - scallop, lobster, shrimp finished with a lemon beurre blanc.

Accolades:

2011: 88 points - California State Fair

2011: 87 points - Wine Advocate

2011: Double Gold Medal - Houston LSR International Wine Competition

2011: Gold Medal - San Diego International Wine Competition

Profile:

- Lush with citrus & tropical notes
- Lightly oaked



About Alexander Vineyards:

Is yield per acre an outdated reference? Over the last decade we have replanted our vineyards with reduced spacing resulting in more rows per acre and closer spacing per vine. On some sites we have more than doubled the plants in these high density vineyards. These tightly spaced vines produce around 10-12 pounds of grapes per vine. This low yield is one of the keys to the great complexity in the glass, while more vines per acre is one of the keys to great value in our bottles. So the next time you hear someone quoting tons per acre, be sure to ask them how many vines are producing that ton. For an accurate comparison do the math and look at pounds per vine.

Technical Data

Grapes: 100% Chardonnay

Harvest: September 20 - 30, 2011

Barrel Aging: 70% stainless steel, 30% barrel fermented in French Oak and aged on the lees for eight months

First Vintage: 1975

Alcohol: 14% **pH:** 3.73 **TA:** 4.8 g/L

Closure: 750ml cork 375ml stelvin

UPC: 750ml 0-85798 01872-7 **SRP:** \$18

375 ml 0-85798 01871-0 **SRP:** \$10



Healdsburg ~ Sonoma County ~ California

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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 well known for 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.

At about the same time 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*" ¹.

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*".² 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.



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.

Three 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.

(First vintage at AVV in 1975)

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