

2010 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 recently described our style as “... a fine old-school Merlot that shows good structure.”

Overall, 2010 was a cool growing year with fewer heat spikes than in the past few years. Diligent vineyard management was the key to achieving great fruit development and uniform ripening. The grapes had good structure, balance and complexity at harvest. The 2010 has that classic AVV structure, but it shows a touch more restraint than prior vintages.

So what makes our Merlot so different than others? It’s the warm days and cool nights of the valley, combined with the gravelly loam soil, along with vineyard management and handcrafting the wine. We prune our Merlot vines heavily to minimize vegetal flavors and drop fruit several times during the growing season to give more concentration to the remaining bunches. Winemaker Kevin Hall has found that fermenting the Merlot at a little cooler temperature than some of our other Bordeaux grapes reduces the Merlot’s inherent herbaceous as well. After fermentation the lots spend 18 months aging in a combination of French and American oak barrels.

This wine has great color in the glass with a red/purple hue. There are aromas of black cherry, blackberry, plum and a touch of oak with vanilla and eucalyptus. This is a mouth-filling wine with good balance and flavors of red fruits, cassis, plum, a little mint and vanilla. The finish is long and lasting, so pour a glass and savor the flavors of real Merlot.



Food Pairing: Red meats are always a great match with this wine, but for something different try a slow roasted porcetta that has been filled with a herb mix of garlic, fennel, sage, rosemary, salt and pepper.

Accolades: 2010: Double Gold Medal - Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Wine Competition
 2010: 91 points - Highly Recommended: Ultimate Beverage Challenge
 2010: 91 points - Gold Medal: Beverage Testing Institute
 2010: 88 points - Top Value: Wine Spectator

Profile:

- Serious Merlot
- Long finish, good structure

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: 92% Merlot, 7.8% Cabernet Sauvignon, 0.2% Cabernet Franc

Harvest Dates: October 1 – November 4, 2010

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

First Vintage: 1984

Alcohol: 14% **ph:** 3.60 **TA:** 6.5 g/L

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

