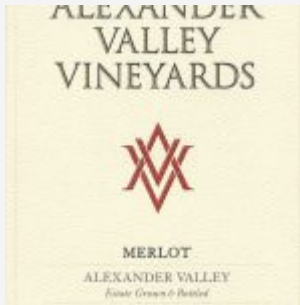


Alexander Valley Vineyards Merlot 2018

Selected by: Master Sommelier Evan Goldstein, Master Sommelier Jeremy Shanker, and Master Sommelier Vincent Morrow



Final Deductions

VINTAGE 2018

GRAPE Merlot/Blend

GEOGRAPHY Not Europe

COUNTRY USA

LARGER REGION California

SMALLER REGION Sonoma County

SUB REGION Alexander Valley

Rationale

A narrow valley extending from Healdsburg to Cloverdale, Alexander Valley (officially established as an AVA in 1984) is Sonoma County's warmest appellation— which is the most significant reason why Cabernet Sauvignon thrives. Most of the Merlot vines in Alexander Valley are planted at higher elevations (up to roughly 2,500 ft.) on the region's benchlands, rolling hillsides, and Mayacamas mountain range. Pacific breezes coming from the Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast add a unique cooling element that gives Alexander Valley Merlot its signature acidity. This cooling effect also emphasizes the more herbal elements of the grape's DNA that make the Alexander Valley versions so appealing to lovers of red Bordeaux. Herbs (marjoram, thyme, tarragon), black olives, damson plums, and dark berries are signature local aromas and flavors coupled with ample, plush tannin. As with its Cabernet Sauvignon, elegance, rather than power, rules with Alexander Valley Merlot.

After purchasing the historic Cyrus Alexander homestead, Harry and Maggie Wetzel worked diligently to create a thriving agricultural lifestyle on the property. They raised their children along with their vines in Alexander Valley, providing inspiration and encouragement as they developed the estate together. Decades later, the fourth generation of their family is growing up amongst vineyards and next door to the working winery that is known around the world as "AVV." Early converts to the AVA since early-1960s, the Wetzels were among the earlier Alexander Valley wineries to trellis grapes (1965), graft new varieties (1966), and bottle Cabernet Sauvignon (1968). First produced in 1984, Merlot from the Wetzel Family Estate has a reputation for being a big, fuller interpretation than many of their neighbors and is known in-house as 'Merlot for Cabernet lovers.'

Sight

BRIGHTNESS Day Bright

CLARITY Clear

COLOR DEPTH Medium

COLOR Ruby

RIM VARIATION Ruby
Stained Tears: Medium

Structure

RESIDUAL SUGAR Dry

ACID Medium

ALCOHOL Med+

TANNIN Med+

TEXTURE Round / Smooth

FINISH Med+

COMPLEXITY Med+

Aroma & Taste

RED FRUIT Red Currant • Red Plum • Red Raspberry • Red / Sour Cherry
Condition: Fresh, Jammy / Candied, Ripe

BLUE FRUIT Blueberry • Boysenberry *Condition: Jammy / Candied, Fresh, Ripe*

BLACK FRUIT Black Cherry • Black Raspberry • Blackberry • Black Currant / Cassis • Black Plum
Condition: Jammy / Candied, Fresh, Ripe

FLORAL Lavender • Rose • Violet *Condition: Fresh*

GREEN VEGETABLE Arugula • Dark Leafy Greens • Jalapeño

OTHER VEGETABLE Mushrooms (Brown) • Peppers (Red/Yellow) • Fennel / Anise • Tomatoes / Sun-Dried • Cola Nut

HERBAL Pine / Sap • Tea Leaf / Bergamot • Mint / Eucalyptus • Sage • Tobacco Leaf

OTHER SPICES Black Pepper • Licorice (Black) • Paprika / Pimenton • Chinese Five Spice • Green Peppercorn

ORGANIC EARTH Turned Dirt / Potting Soil • Dust

INORGANIC EARTH Mineral / Rock • Graphite

OAK AGING Yes *Oak Intensity: Medium*

OAK INFLUENCE Allspice • Baking Spice • Cinnamon • Smoke • Toast

OXIDATION/NUTTINESS Walnut