

# WASHINGTON W I N E B L O G



SEATTLE, WA 98121

## Duckhorn Vineyards

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*Renee Ary crafts some beautiful wine for Duckhorn Vineyards.*

It is hard to believe that more than forty years ago Dan and Margaret Duckhorn founded Duckhorn Vineyards. What began with a mere 800 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon and 800 cases of Merlot in 1978, Duckhorn Vineyards now has many arms of their dynasty including a winery in Washington (Canvasback Winery) as well as Goldeneye Winery out of the Anderson Valley, who is steadily producing a gorgeous lineup of Pinot Noirs.

Duckhorn Vineyards relies on seven estate vineyards for their wines and makes some of the most consistent Merlot in Napa Valley.

In early 2014, Renée Ary became the fourth head winemaker for Duckhorn Vineyards winemakers that began with Tom Rinaldi in 1978. Her promotion came after 11 years after serving as both assistant and associate winemaker. Born and raised on the East Coast, Renée moved to California to attend Saint Mary's College, where she earned a degree in chemistry and art. Fascinated by the intersection between science and an art, winemaking quickly became Renée's passion, career and way of life. Her first job was working in the lab at Robert Mondavi Winery in Oakville, as she trained under famed winemakers Genevieve Janssens, Steve Leveque and Richard Sowalsky. During that time, she took classes in winemaking and viticulture at UC Davis and Napa Valley College.

Renée is a top notch winemaker that has a consistently great lineup of wines. I was really impressed with her new lineup including her dazzling new 2018 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc (WWB, 91) which has great texture and poise. One of the great wines of its kind, the 2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Merlot Three Palms Vineyard (WWB, 94) is dense and complex, with seriously good range. Learn more about this famed winery at [duckhorn.com](http://duckhorn.com) Here are the great new releases by Duckhorn.

### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Merlot Three Palms Vineyard**

The Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Merlot Three Palms Vineyard by Duckhorn has been consistently one of the great wines of its kind out of Napa and it is hard to fathom that this particular wine has been made now for nearly forty vintages. The fantastic new 2017 edition was aged in 75% new French oak before bottling. Ripe dark fruits combine with shades of cocoa powder and anise that meld in the glass. The palate is fresh and vibrant with layers of leather that combine with Black Forest Cake, mocha and tar tones that all impress. The combination of weight, freshness and texture here really entices. Sensational to enjoy right now in its youth, this great new wine will have a long life in the cellar. Drink 2020-2040- 94

### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Carneros Napa Valley Merlot**

The 2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Carneros Napa Valley Merlot (100%) was aged for sixteen months in 50% new French oak before bottling. Sour kirsch notes combine with shades of pipe tobacco and leather on the nose. The palate is plush and beautifully textured with saline drenched Bing cherry and cola tones that combine with sandalwood and a light cocoa powder. This is nuanced and seriously good stuff that will cellar well for the next fifteen years. Drink 2020-2035- 93

### **2016 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Three Palms Vineyard**

This 2016 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Three Palms Vineyard leads with its black tea, Asian spice, black plum and dusty terroir aromatics that all sing together in the glass. The palate has wonderful power and balance, showing good

purity of fruit. Cassis, anise, sandalwood, graphite and mocha flavors all marvelously combine — leading to the long and generous finish. Fantastic in its youth, enjoy this great Cabernet Sauvignon over the next two decades. Drink 2019-2038- 93

#### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Atlas Peak Napa Valley Merlot**

Entirely Merlot based, this beautiful new wine was aged in 50% new French oak for sixteen months before bottling. Ripe blackberry aromatic tones mingle with shades of dark chocolate shavings and tar that all come together in the glass. The palate shows a wonderful sense of mouthfeel and weight, with great acidity that runs through the core of dark fruits, dark chocolate shavings and creosote flavors. Fresh, vibrant and full of life in its youth, this outstanding wine will have a long life ahead of it. 2020-2038- 93

#### **2016 Duckhorn Vineyards Rutherford Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon**

The 2016 Duckhorn Vineyards Rutherford Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon was sourced from a host of great estate vineyards in the Rutherford AVA. Toasty oak wraps around roasted figs with black currants on this expressive nose. The palate shows a good combination of weight and texture, with a seamless quality that glides across the mid-palate. Ripe blackberry pie and mocha flavors parade with shades of tar and sandalwood on the palate. Expressive now, this beautiful wine will continue to evolve well for the next fifteen plus years. Drink 2019-2035- 93



#### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Chardonnay Huichica Hills Vineyard**

Sourced from the Carneros AVA the 'Huichica Vineyard' is set on clay loam soils. The freshness imparted here is really lovely as lemon zest, vanilla cream and minerals mingle

with shades of nutmeg infused Gravenstein apple. Fantastic in its youth, this beautiful wine is showing great now but will continue to evolve well for a decade or more. Drink 2019-2029- 93

#### **2016 Duckhorn Vineyards Howell Mountain Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon**

The 2016 Duckhorn Vineyards Howell Mountain Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is another fantastic release from this storied Napa house. On the nose this takes on dark chocolate shavings that combine with anise, damp earth and shades of blackberry pie that all mingle together. The palate has good weight and structure, showing off its boysenberry puree, Turkish coffee, and sweet pipe tobacco flavors. The combination of minerality and viscosity really impresses, as this beautiful wine will cellar well for the next fifteen years. Drink 2019-2035- 93

#### **2018 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc**

The invigorating combination of lemon zest and gooseberry brilliantly mingle with wet stone and shades of cardamom on the nose. The palate is fresh and beautifully textured, showing a good sense of weight. Layers of Meyer lemon cream and mulberry combine with green apple tones on the palate. The length accentuates this great new release. Drink 2020-2030- 91

#### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Chardonnay**

The 2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Chardonnay opens with aromas of bright pear and lemon zest with vanilla cream that build in the glass. The palate shows a silky mouthfeel delivering bright orchard fruits with lemon cream and hints of butterscotch. Delightful now, this will cellar well over the next seven plus years. Drink 2019-2025- 91

#### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Merlot**

A blend of 80% Merlot with 16% Cabernet Sauvignon and small portions Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec, the 2017 Duckhorn Vineyards Napa Valley Merlot was aged for fifteen months in 40% new French oak before bottling. This 2017 Merlot shows sandalwood tones that meld with cocoa powder and espresso bean aromatics that all take shape in the glass. The palate shows good weight and freshness with medium to full bodied dark fruit flavors with coffee ground and tar undertones. Drink 2020-2030- 91

#### **2017 Duckhorn Vineyard Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon**

The 2017 Duckhorn Vineyard Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is a great new wine that blends 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, with 12% Merlot, and just a touch of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Aged for sixteen months in 50% new French oak, this shows herbal undertones that collide with bright red fruits and shades of milk chocolate that all meld in the glass. The palate has a nice sense of texture and balance, with ripe dark kirsch and wild blackberry flavors that combine with the herbal and coffee ground flavors. The soft texture really adds to the enjoyment as this beautiful wine will be best enjoyed over the next decade. Drink 2020-2030- 91

<http://www.washingtonwineblog.com/blog/2020/6/18/duckhorn-vineyards>