



# The Wine Press

Medal Winning Wines from California's Best Family-Owned Wineries.

Ballentine Vineyards  
Napa Valley





## Ballentine 2017 'Maple Station' Red Wine Estate Grown, Napa Valley, California

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Ballentine's 2017 'Maple Station' Red Wine is comprised of 74% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petite Sirah, 4.5% Lagrein, and 3.5% Malbec, all sourced from two estate locations: Betty's Vineyard in St. Helena and Pocai Vineyard in Calistoga. The wine is named for an old train station that was once located near Calistoga, where Betty (Pocai) Ballentine used to deliver grapes with her grandfather in the early 1900s. Although the station no longer stands, it is honored with this historical blend that represents the authentic flavors of Napa Valley. A floral bouquet is followed by fruit forward notes of raspberries, cherry liquor, red licorice, mocha and cassis. It finishes with vanilla and lush dark chocolate ganache. A fun, easy-to-enjoy, red wine! Aged in oak. Enjoy!

**Gold Medal Special Selection**

## Ballentine 2016 'Maple Station' White Wine Estate Grown, Napa Valley, California

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For years, the Ballentines have had four white varieties planted in their vineyards, and beginning in 2016, they decided to make a unique blend that combines the best qualities of each grape. The result was the Maple Station White Wine, comprised of 33% Malvasia Bianca, 28% Sauvignon Blanc, 23% Chenin Blanc, and 16% Chardonnay. A crisp, refreshing white blend, this wine is all about sophistication. On the nose, tantalizing notes of just-picked apples, honeysuckle, and nectarines enliven the senses, while the palate offers crisp flavors of lemon zest, rosemary and bright fruit notes. The fruit is sourced from two estate sites, Betty's Vineyard, which surrounds the winery, and Fig Tree Vineyard which is just four miles down the road. The variety of grapes and winemaking techniques used in fermenting the different varieties enhances the wonderful complexity of this wine. Enjoy!

**Gold Medal Special Selection**

## Ballentine 2017 'Maple Station' White Wine Estate Grown, Napa Valley, California

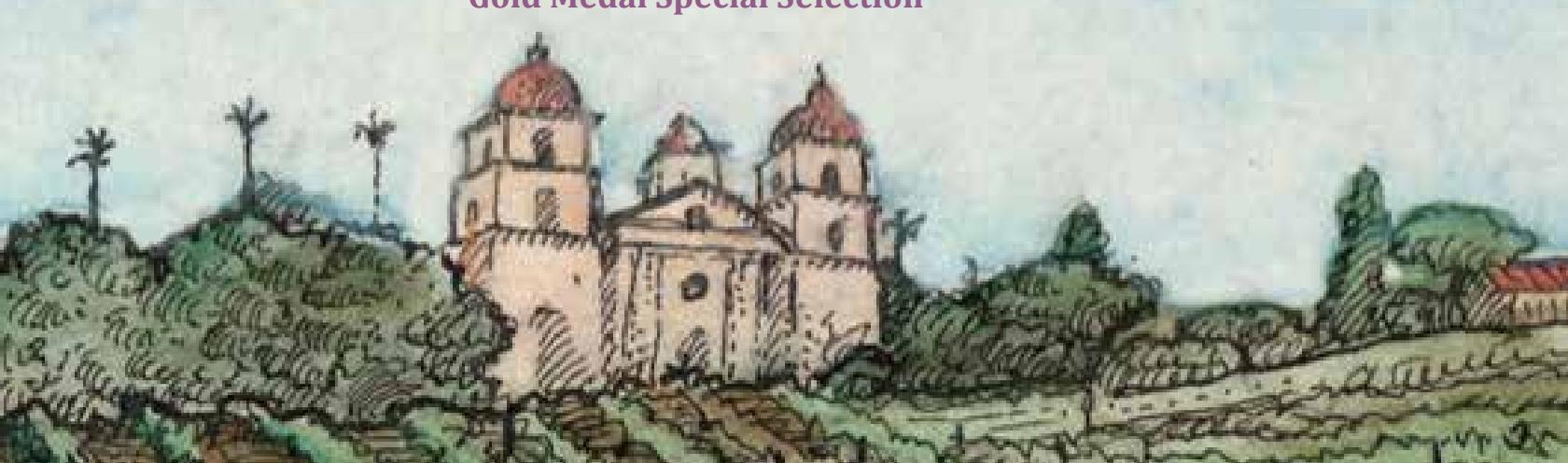
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The Ballentine 2017 'Maple Station' White Wine combines 35% Malvasia Bianca, 30% Chardonnay, 29% Sauvignon Blanc, and 6% Chenin Blanc. Each varietal was fermented separately and differently in order to capture the best qualities that would complement the blend as a whole. Each year, the exact blend changes, but the four varietals remain the same, representing the collection of white wine grapes grown on Ballentine's estate vineyards. The aromas are sweet, fresh, and invigorating, with floral notes of honeysuckle, and hints of apricot jam and vanilla. The palate is beautifully balanced with refreshing notes of stone fruit, herbs and a lovely perfume that marries it all together. Try pairing this wine with grilled chicken or seafood. Aged in a combination of oak and stainless steel tanks. Enjoy!

**Gold Medal Special Selection**

### HOW WE CHOOSE OUR WINES:

Gold Medal Wine Club showcases exceptional wines from only the best small wineries of California. Featured wines include those which have earned medals in the top wine-industry competitions or have been highly rated by a respected national wine publication (see [goldmedalwineclub.com/resources/wine-ratings](http://goldmedalwineclub.com/resources/wine-ratings)). On occasion, we feature wines which are newly released by the winery and which medals and reviews are forthcoming. Each and every selection is a superb wine made in small quantities and with very limited distribution. There are over 4,000 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



# Ballentine Vineyards



One of the few old, small family wineries in Napa Valley, Ballentine Vineyards' historic estate offers authentic, award-winning wines and a story that dates back to the early foundation of this world-renowned wine region.



Located just north of St. Helena in Napa Valley, Ballentine Vineyards' history dates back to 1906. Now operated by both third and fourth generations of the Ballentine family, the winery offers a boutique collection of award-winning wines that are authentic, high in quality, and rooted in Napa Valley history.

While Ballentine Vineyards only dates back to 1992, it can be reasonably argued that the winery's roots can be traced back more than a hundred years. Ballentine's founders, Betty and Van Ballentine, are both descendants of Napa Valley pioneering wine families that had a hand in carving the reputation that Napa Valley has enjoyed for centuries.

Betty's grandfather, Libero Poci, emigrated from Italy and found his way to Napa Valley in 1906, when he purchased a sixty-acre tract that eventually became the State's 115th bonded winery. Under the *L. Poci & Sons* label, the winery reached its heyday during the 1940s and 50s. Van Ballentine's father, John Ballentine, was one of the first vintners to apply for a new winery bond after Prohibition was repealed in 1933. He called his new winery *Deer Park* and became commercially successful selling a large number of varietals that were popular at the time.

Van Ballentine started working for his family's winery as a youth and continued as a grower after *Deer Park* ceased operations around 1960. Through it all, he maintained a desire to return to the winery side of the wine business.

In 1992, Ballentine finally decided to revive his family winery and had a portion of his harvest custom crushed. In 1995, Van and Betty built a winery behind their 100 year-old farmhouse in Napa Valley. They also revived the original bonded winery number #3595 that was issued to Van's father in 1933.

Today's Ballentine Vineyards is still a hidden gem winery that produces excellent estate Napa Valley wines that are only sold in select, premium shops outside the winery. Ballentine Vineyards has won numerous medals and awards in competitions and is considered one of the rock-solid small wineries that are the true bases of the Napa Valley.

Van Ballentine always had the desire to get back into the winery business, and he believes wine was in his veins since he was a little boy (when he used to clean the inside of the fermentation tanks for his father).

For many years, Van and Betty Ballentine sold their grapes to the likes of Caymus, Ravenswood, Rosenblum and Robert Mondavi, but the couple always felt there was more to the business than just growing grapes and tending vines.



Betty Poci Ballentine is the granddaughter of Libero Poci, a first generation wine grape grower, pictured here during a harvest in the 1930s. Libero Poci started the *L. Poci & Sons* label, the state's 115th bonded winery, and owned 60 acres of prime vineyard land in Napa Valley - part of which is still farmed by the Ballentine family today!

They also shared a true passion for the winery side of the business, but knew they had better be prepared to work hard if they wanted to be successful.

Today, Ballentine Vineyards consists of eighty acres of prime Napa Valley vineyards. The land is divided into three separate vineyard tracts. The long-standing Poci Vineyard reaches between the Napa River and Silverado

*Continued on Page 4*





## Bruce Devlin, Winemaker

Bruce Devlin may have started out wanting to be a brew master, but he is now an award-winning winemaker in Napa Valley. In fact, after a brief stint studying forestry at Humboldt State and photography at San Jose State, he ultimately earned his degree in Fermentation Science at UC Davis. It was here that he turned an interest in fermentation into a passion for science and winemaking.

Bruce's start in the wine industry began in Germany while on a student work exchange program. He spent months working in the Pfalz at Weingut Reichsrat Van Buhl, a region known for their famous German Rieslings, and he developed a real appreciation for wine - winegrowing and winemaking. Bruce has also spent time in South Africa and Australia, with each destination helping him hone in on his unique style.

Twenty years ago, Bruce became the winemaker for Ballentine Vineyards, and he has crafted several high-scoring wines for the entity over the years. He also co-owns Three Clicks Wines and makes wine for Napa's Glenwood Cellars. When not making wine or collaboratively managing the vineyards with Frank Ballentine, Bruce and his wife can be found cooking for friends, exploring Napa Valley, kayaking, or skiing the best slopes around the world.

## Ballentine Vineyards

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Trail and was part of Betty's family's original vineyard land bought by her grandfather more than a century ago in 1906. The Fig Tree Vineyard, which was purchased in 1949, is located at the northeastern edge of the St. Helena appellation and is characterized by two fig trees that stand guard over the prized grapes (which produce some of Ballentine's rarest estate wines). It is also a sentimental site, as one of the fig trees was a precious gift to Van Ballentine from a dear friend who brought it from her home town in Italy. The well known Betty's Vineyard surrounds the present Ballentine Vineyards Winery, as well as the Ballentines' residence that are both located on the property.

In 2012, Van and Betty's son, Frank Ballentine, began a partnership with his aging parents to manage the Ballentine Family Estate Vineyards. Frank had always been passionate about food and wine, and now as he works shoulder to shoulder with

winemaker Bruce Devlin, he enjoys exploring the incredible potential of his family's vineyards and winery. He and Bruce have refreshed the family vineyards with strong science and employ innovative winemaking techniques to continuously provide their customers with new and different taste experiences in Napa Valley.

It is also important to note Ballentine Vineyards' dedication to sustainable farming. The family's focus has always been on producing the highest quality grapes possible and sustaining their traditions for generations to come. Ballentine Vineyards' Winery was designed with sustainability in mind - to collect the rainwater from the rooftop, to then be used for frost protection and irrigation; the winery has been solar powered for over a decade; and the latest addition is a treatment plant that allows them to recycle every drop of water used in the winery.

We are proud to share Ballentine Vineyards with our Gold Wine Club members and celebrate the incredible legacy this pioneering family has built. Cheers!





# Food pairings from Ballentine Vineyards



## Cast Iron Pizza with Fennel and Sausage

Pair with the Ballentine 2017 'Maple Station' Red Wine, Estate Grown, Napa Valley

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 12 oz. store-bought pizza dough, room temperature | 1/2 small fennel bulb, very thinly sliced                     |
| 5 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil, divided             | 3 garlic cloves, very thinly sliced                           |
| 8 oz. sweet Italian sausage, casings removed      | Crushed red pepper flakes and torn basil leaves (for serving) |
| Kosher salt                                       |   |
| 1/3 cup prepared marinara                         |   |
| 3/4 cup coarsely grated low-moisture mozzarella   |   |

Place a rack in the top-most position of the oven; preheat to 475 degrees. Place dough on a work surface; drizzle with 1 Tbs of oil, turning to coat. Stretch out to a 10 inch round and cover loosely with plastic wrap.

Heat 1 Tbs of oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Cook the sausage, breaking up into small pieces with a wooden spoon, until browned in spots and cooked through, 5-8 minutes. Transfer the sausage to a small bowl.

Remove the skillet from the heat and carefully lay dough inside (use spoon to help you extend dough all the way to the edges). Season with salt, then spread marinara over the entire surface of dough. Top with mozzarella, then fennel, garlic, and cooked sausage. Drizzle with another 2 Tbs of oil. Peek underneath the crust - the bottom should be golden brown and crisp from residual heat in the skillet. If it's not, set over medium-low heat and cook until crust is golden brown, about 3 minutes.

Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake pizza on top rack until crust is golden brown around the edges and the cheese is browned in spots and bubbling all over, 10-14 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes, then top with red pepper flakes and basil. Sprinkle with more salt and drizzle with remaining 1 Tbs oil. *Recipe sourced from www.BonAppetit.com.*



## Seared Scallops with Brown Butter & Lemon Pan Sauce

Pair with the Ballentine 2016/2017 'Maple Station' White Blend, Estate Grown, Napa Valley

- 3 lemons
- Small handful of chives
- 12 large dry sea scallops
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil or vegetable oil
- 3 Tbs unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 2 tsp drained capers

Cut two lemons in half and squeeze the juice into a measuring glass or small bowl; you should have 1/4 cup juice. Set aside. Using a paring knife, cut ends off remaining lemon to expose flesh. Upend lemon on a cut end and remove peel and white pith from lemons; discard. Cut between membranes to release segments into bowl with juice; squeeze membranes to get any last drops of juice. Fish out any seeds; set aside. Thinly slice chives and place in a small bowl; set aside.

Pull side muscle off scallops, if needed; pat dry. Season lightly on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet, preferably stainless steel, over medium-high heat. Pour in oil to lightly coat surface (2-3 Tbs); heat until it shimmers and you see first wisps of smoke. Swiftly place scallops into skillet, flat side down, and cook without touching, tossing or fussing until underside is deep golden brown, 3-4 minutes. Use a thin spatula or tongs to gently turn over; if they resist, cook another 30 seconds and try again. Cook on second side until flesh at top and bottom looks opaque but there is still a faintly translucent strip in the middle, 1-2 minutes, depending on size. Transfer scallops to a plate.

Pour off any oil in skillet and set over medium heat. Add butter and cook, swirling, until butter foams, then browns, about 2 minutes. Add reserved lemon juice and segments; energetically stir and swirl pan to emulsify sauce. Mix in capers and reserved chives and spoon pan sauce around and over scallops. *Recipe sourced from www.BonAppetit.com.*





Betty and Van Ballentine, Founders

# Van and Betty Ballentine, In The Spotlight

Van and Betty Ballentine’s story is what Hollywood movies are made of. It follows the story of wine in Napa Valley, as both Van and Betty are descendants of pioneering families that helped shape Napa Valley into what it is today. They are the driving force behind Ballentine Vineyards’ award-winning wines and the winery’s ever-promising future and have continued to be an integral part of winery activities, lending their wisdom to their son, Frank Ballentine, General Manager of the winery, and longtime winemaker, Bruce Devlin. They also never tire of delighting guests with their amazing stories of good times and bad times while enjoying a glass of their estate grown Napa Valley wine.

Before reviving his family business, Van’s career included a stint as the vineyard manager for the huge Christian Brothers facility, located just north of the town of St. Helena - a period that Van once described as “eye opening to see wines made on such a large scale.” It made him appreciate the fact that as a small winemaker, one tends to have a great deal more flexibility in making decisions about their wines.

Over the years, Van has remained true to his no-nonsense approach to wines, putting a good deal of emphasis on the fruit content and having stayed away from over-oaking the finished products. He has also impressively completed over sixty wine grape harvests, a number that puts him in rarefied air amongst Napa Valley growers and vintners.

Van’s wife of many decades, Betty Ballentine, herself a descendant of the Pocai winery family, also has roots that run deep in Napa Valley. Betty is the granddaughter of Libero Pocai, an Italian immigrant who bought 60 acres of prime Napa Valley vineyards with gold coins in 1906 and made wine before Prohibition. He won some of the first wine awards in California and established the L. Pocai & Sons winery label.

Today, Van and Betty Ballentine, along with their son Frank Ballentine and winemaker Bruce Devlin, continue to produce delicious award-winning wines from their estate Napa Valley vineyards and they strive to provide their guests with an authentic experience of a working boutique family winery. Ballentine Vineyards is one of the few old small family wineries in Napa Valley, that is rooted in both its history and its future.

The wines of Ballentine Vineyards reflect a period of times past in Northern California and of an era that allowed Napa Valley to emerge as one of the great wine producing regions in the entire world. We hope you enjoy these special selections from a very special Napa Valley winery. Cheers!



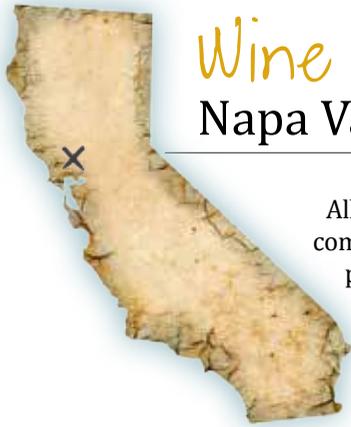
Van and Betty Ballentine, visiting the Tasting Room at Ballentine Vineyards.

Both Van and Betty were born on Napa Valley wine land - close to the same land they continue to farm today. They met in grade school and were high school sweethearts.

Van Ballentine is the son of John Ballentine, an Irish immigrant who purchased an old stone winery in Napa Valley in 1920 when it was actually illegal to even

produce wine. Van recalls that he was either seven or eight when he began helping his father around the family winery, and he even made wine as part of his father’s crew. Van’s small statue was also put to good use when it was discovered that he could fit through the small opening that allowed him to clean the inside of the empty fermentation tanks.





## Wine Region: Napa Valley



Pioneer and settler George C. Yount is credited with being the first to grow wine grapes in Napa Valley back in the mid 1800's, and by the end of the nineteenth century, there were more than 140 wineries in the area.

While the region grew, it also had a number of setbacks (Phylloxera infestation that killed many vines, Prohibition, and the Great Depression), but despite the downturns, growers and winemakers persevered. In the mid 1970's, the region took a big step onto the world stage when Napa Valley Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon beat several famous French wine labels in a blind tasting at the prestigious Paris Wine Tasting in France.

Today, there are over 450 wineries that grow grapes in Napa Valley and there are currently 16 distinct viticultural areas considered sub-appellations of the Valley. Each is home to beautiful countryside scenery and legendary award-winning wines that make Napa Valley one of the world's greatest destinations - especially for lovers of great wine, fantastic food, and beautiful views.

All of Ballentine's estate grown grapes come from two of Napa Valley's most prestigious appellations, St. Helena and Calistoga. Both are located in what is considered the upper valley, at Napa's northern end. The three separate vineyards that comprise Ballentine's estates provide an excellent cross section of micro-climatization that is important to the style of wines that Ballentine Vineyards continues to produce.

The two sub regions (St. Helena and Calistoga) contain both mountainous and flat (valley) vineyards and are considered among the elite growing areas in Northern California. They occupy the eastern slopes of the Mayacamus Ridge and are subject to the same cool nights and sun-filled days that the rest of Napa Valley enjoys. Red varietals dominate the plantings, but an occasional white vineyard can be found in selected spots. Many of Napa Valley's finest wines originate in this region that is held in the highest worldwide regard.

Napa Valley is not a large appellation, and is approximately just thirty miles long and five miles wide, yet it has a reputation as one of the world's premier wine regions.

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This month's *Gold Club* featured *Plus!* wine:  
**Benessere 2015 Collins Holystone Vineyard Zinfandel,  
St. Helena, Napa Valley**

**GOLD MEDAL SPECIAL SELECTION**

*240 Cases Produced*

Retail Price at the Winery: \$38.00



# Wine Winyard: Test Your Wine IQ!



## What are the flavor profiles of Old World and New World wines?

Even when the same grape varieties are used and the wines are made in roughly the same manner, Old World and New World wines tend to differ in several ways, including in body, acidity, flavor intensity, and level of oak flavor. In general, Old World wines tend to be lower in alcohol than New World wines. They are also usually higher in acidity and favor the lean, earthy end of the flavor spectrum. Old World wines usually have moderate flavor intensity and a subtle oak flavor. New World wines are often fuller-bodied than Old World wines, since they tend to be higher in alcohol. They are usually lower in acidity and favor the lush, fruity, ripe end of the flavor spectrum. New World wines that are aged in oak barrels tend to shower bolder oak flavors as well.

## When tasting wine, what does the 'body' refer to?

'Body' is the thickness, or texture of wine and it can be felt in the mouth or observed in the "legs" that slide down the inside of the glass after swirling. Since alcohol is wine's main source of thickness, 'body' is directly connected to a wine's alcohol content (alcohol is thicker than water, and the stronger the wine, the more viscous and mouth-coating it will feel). Light-bodied wines have a delicate, sheer mouthfeel, and tend to be lower in alcohol; medium-bodied wines have a bit more alcohol and leave a moderate coating on the palate; and full-bodied wines tend to have the highest alcohol content and offer a thick, rich mouthfeel. 'Body' does not refer to quality, color, or flavor intensity, although it often fluctuates along with them.

## The Gold Medal Wine Store

 Instant! Membership Rewards saves you 20% to 35% off Ballentine Vineyards wines!

BALLENTINE VINEYARDS	Retail Price at Winery		Gold Medal Membership Rewards Pricing*		
			2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2017 'Maple Station' Red Wine Napa Valley, California	<del>\$35.00/btl.</del>	2-Bottle Members:	\$28.00	\$26.33	\$25.50
		4-Bottle Members:	\$28.00	\$25.50	\$24.25
2016/2017 'Maple Station' White Wine, Napa Valley, California	<del>\$28.00/btl.</del>	2-Bottle Members:	\$22.00	\$20.33	\$19.50
		4-Bottle Members:	\$22.00	\$19.50	\$18.25

\*Effective per bottle prices after Membership Rewards discount is applied at checkout.

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