



# Platinum Wine Club

90+ Rated, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers.

## Migration Wines | Sonoma County

The story of Dan Duckhorn and his Duckhorn portfolio of wines is well-documented as well it should be. Duckhorn is a master of wine innovation as well as the acknowledged ambassador for Napa Valley Merlot and its rise to fame some decades ago.

Among Duckhorn's crown jewels is this month's *Platinum Wine Club* selection, aptly named *Migration* for the annual trek for survival of a large number of duck species.

Migration saw life almost two decades ago with the release of 2,000 cases of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir that was instantly accepted by the consuming public as an excellent example of a wine that balanced vibrancy and finesse. That acclimation has not changed during the winery's nearly twenty years of existence and its intention of showcasing fruit and wine from across California's broad range of quality growing areas.

"Our intention was to bring together wines from different cold-climate growing areas beyond their original homes to show their different aspects and relationship to *terroirs*," offered Dana Epperson, Duckhorn Vice President for Sonoma-Mendocino operations and Winemaker for Migration. "By following this pattern of locating fruit outside its home comfort zone of growing, we are following the patterns set millions of years ago by waterfowl seeking their survival sites by their annual migration from colder to warmer surroundings."

Migration has a storied history to draw from and an incredible number of awards and high scores to boot. Migration is the embodiment of *terroir-driven* wines and this month's wine, the 2015 Pinot Noir, Drum Canyon Vineyard, is an excellent example of that philosophy.

"Drum Canyon Vineyard is one of my favorite sources," stated Epperson during a recent interview. "All of its vines are southwest facing and planted on sandy soils with outstanding drainage. You can see the coastline from the vineyard and that proximity tends to assure the wine's unique character. It could serve as a dictionary's definition of 'sense of place,' it's really that special."

Migration's incredible vineyard sources include the Running Creek Estate Vineyard in Sonoma County's heralded Russian River Valley, and Napa Valley's Charles Heintz Vineyard. Also included is the venerable Bien Nacido Vineyard of the Santa Maria

Valley and it's neighboring Dierberg Vineyard and Green Valley's (Sonoma) famed Dutton Ranch where Migration's wines are made.

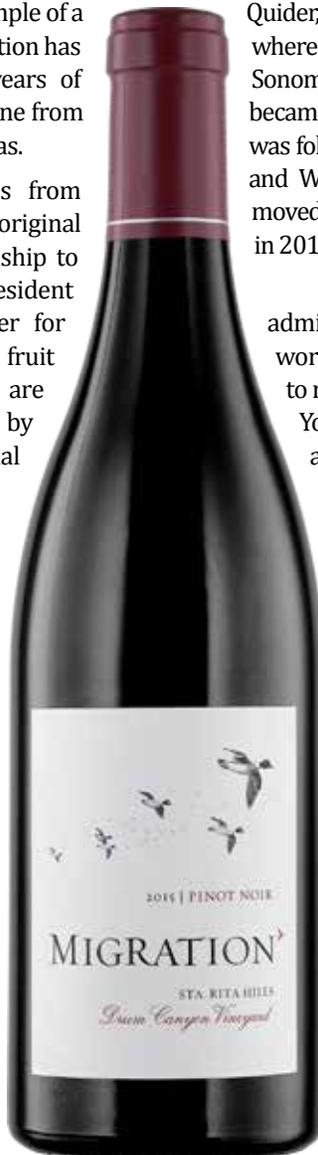
"We have bought fruit from Dutton Ranch for many, many years," injected Dana Epperson, "and have a wonderful relationship with them. It's just like being at home and that's what is so important during the winemaking process."

At the tender old age of 35, Dana Epperson just finished her fifteenth harvest this past fall. The Sebastopol native began her career as a teenager. With the help of family friend and winemaker Sarah Quider, Epperson matriculated to Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo where she studied food science and viticulture. She interned at Sonoma's Ferrari-Carrano Vineyards and Winery and later became the enologist for the famed Edna Valley Vineyard. That was followed by a stint at Napa Valley's Artesa Estate Vineyards and Winery where she oversaw 25 different properties. She moved to Napa's Jamieson Ranch Vineyard and joined Duckhorn in 2014 as associate winemaker for its Decoy Brand.

*Her favorite varietal to work with?* "The Pinot Noir," she admitted, somewhat hesitantly. "Because it is so tricky to work with. It all comes back to the vineyard source. In order to make a great Pinot Noir, you must have exceptional fruit. You can't do much in the winery if you don't have absolutely remarkable fruit to begin with. I know of no other varietal that gives you a sense of place like the Pinot Noir grape. It's usually unique and delicate, but it's not the winemaker's friend. You must pay attention to it from the minute the fruit is picked until the wine is finally bottled. So many little things can happen during its life, and it is why great Pinot Noir has become the darling of the California wine world. Some winemakers won't even touch Pinot Noir, but to me, that is the great challenge of my profession."

A new entity for the Duckhorn Portfolio is a project that is called Migration-Carneros that will be located in the Carneros area of lower Napa Valley. A tasting facility for the project is already under construction and is planned to open in early 2020.

"This is great for Migration in general," finalized Dana Epperson. "This will give us exposure to the hordes of wine enthusiasts who visit Napa Valley each year. It will allow so many more consumers the ability to appreciate what we are attempting to do here, our own sense of *terroir*."





**94 POINTS**

— *Wine Review Online*

**93 POINTS**

— *Wine Enthusiast magazine*

**93 POINTS**

— *PinotFile*

**92 POINTS**

— *Jeb Dunnuck*

**91+ POINTS**

— *Robert Parker's  
The Wine Advocate*

**225 cases produced**

A beautiful expression of cool-climate Pinot Noir, this wine highlights lush, layered flavors with bright acidity and impeccable balance, crafted with highly desirable fruit from the Drum Canyon Vineyard which is nestled on the eastern edge of the famed Sta. Rita Hills winegrowing region. On the nose, aromas of wildflowers, red berries and spice create immediate intensity, while the palate is poised and well-structured with layers of ripe cherry and blackberry that draw into a long, mineral driven finish. Nuances of earth and mushroom add further complexity and nicely balance the fruit-driven core. Aged months in oak. 100% Pinot Noir. Enjoy!

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**This month's Platinum *Plus!*  
Featured Wine:**

**Donelan 2014 Syrah  
Kobler Family Vineyard,  
Russian River Valley**

96 Points - *Antonio Galloni*  
95 Points - *Jeb Dunnuck*



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