

THE WINE PRESS

Gold Medal Wine Club Newsletter: Vol. 10 No. 2

Alderbrook Winery Edition

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*"With Gold Medal Wine Club,
The Road to Great Wine
Begins at Your Door."*

www.goldmedalwine.com

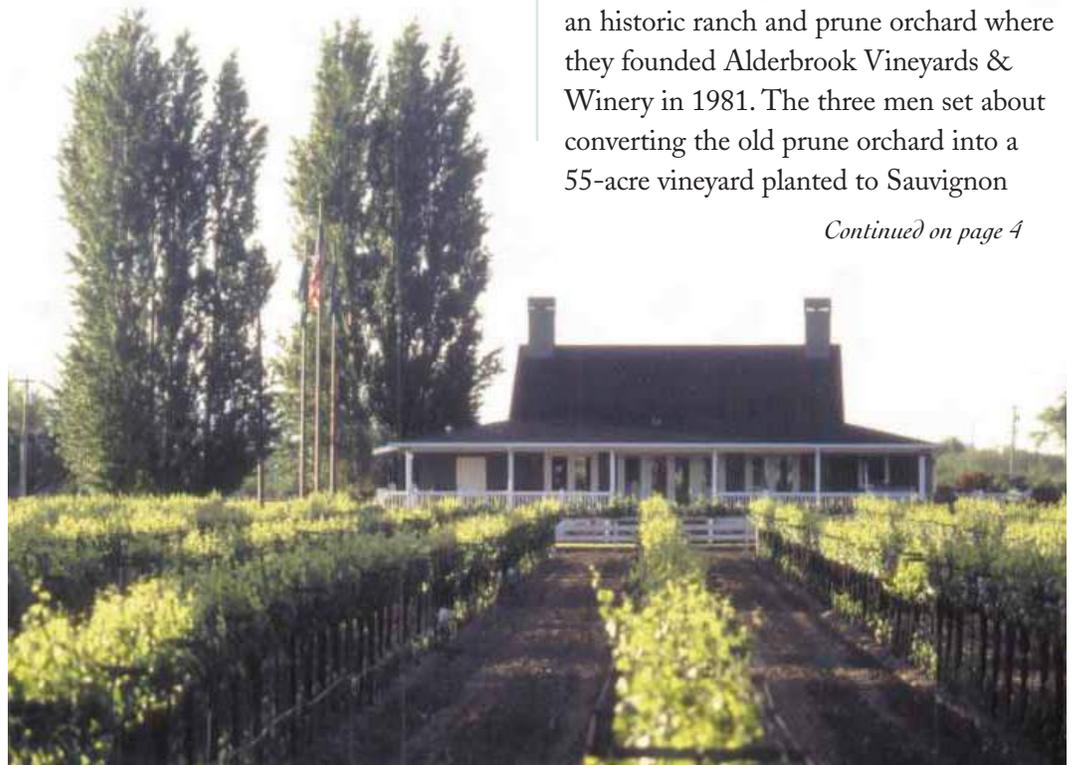
ALDERBROOK ENTERS NEW ERA, CONTINUES STREAM OF IMPRESSIVE WINES.

There are certain corners of the world where natural beauty seems to inspire greatness. One such enclave is the Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma County, California, home to award-winning Alderbrook Vineyard & Winery and 20+ other noteworthy wineries.

Located just west of Healdsburg, between Dry Creek and the Russian

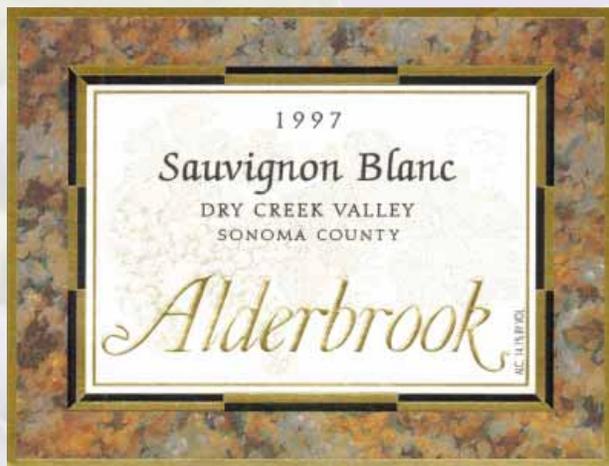
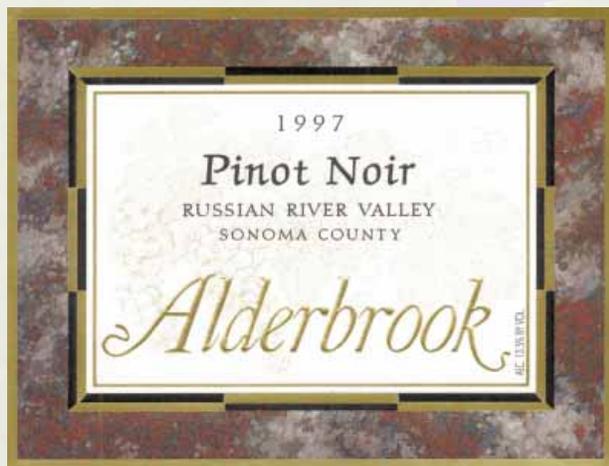
River, Alderbrook's vineyards meander over 63 acres of rolling hills in one of the world's most desirable viticultural areas. For more than a century, winemakers have recognized that the valley's deep alluvial soil, and outstanding growing climate were ideal for producing distinctive varietal grapes. This blend of rich land and cool moist climate attracted partners John Grace, Phil Staley, and Mark Rafanelli to an historic ranch and prune orchard where they founded Alderbrook Vineyards & Winery in 1981. The three men set about converting the old prune orchard into a 55-acre vineyard planted to Sauvignon

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Surrounded by beautiful vineyards, Alderbrook's Tasting Room is located just south of Healdsburg on Magnolia Drive.

Gold Medal Wine Club features two wines each month 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. On occasion we feature a wine which is of high medal-quality, but due to its very limited availability or by preference of the wine producer, may not be submitted to these venues for review. Each and every selection is a superb wine made in small quantities and with limited distribution. There are over 1,000 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



1997 PINOT NOIR

One of Alderbrook Winery’s fabulous small-production specialty wines. “Delicate with right-on black cherry fruit and smoky oak, this Pinot Noir is an easy-to-drink, on-point version,” says Norm Roby of the *Wine Spectator*. “Bright raspberry aroma, elegant fruit flavors, toasted oak, hint of roasted coffee, easy drinking, ripe fruit, good length,” the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports. “This is a classic Pinot Noir,” say the winery’s tasting notes. “Cherry, roasted mushroom, strawberry, and violet scents phase gracefully into spicy plum flavors. It is full-bodied and supple, with a firm center.” Match with pork loin roast, grilled salmon, quiche, pastas with pesto or cream based sauces, and fall fruits and mild cheeses.

1997 SAUVIGNON BLANC

A classic, rich, intense, and full-bodied Sauvignon Blanc. “Wonderfully made with flavors of grapefruit, lemons, oranges and green apples; works well with spicy foods,” says *Beverage Dynamics*, giving this wine an almost perfect score. “Shows intriguing hints of fresh cut hay and melon up front, then fleshes out nicely, blending pretty mineral, herb lemon and grapefruit elements, finishing moderately. Good wine, good price,” reveals the *Wine Spectator*. “Bright kiwi, melon and herb with notes of citrus blend beautifully and with great elegance. Rich flavors of fig and vanilla lead into a refreshing and lengthy finish of grapefruit and flint,” the winery tasting notes report. Pair with citrusy seafood dishes, light salads or pasta in light sauces.

WINE CREDENTIAL HIGHLIGHTS

1997 VINTAGE: *Gold Medal and Best of Class*-Sonoma County Harvest Fair; *Gold Medal*-Taster’s Guild International Wine Judging; *Gold Medal*-Atlanta Wine Summit; *Silver Medal*-Riverside International Wine Competition; also *3 Bronze Medals*.

LEGACY: A small production specialty wine for Alderbrook that keeps getting better and better. This one may be their best yet.

1997 VINTAGE: ★★★★★(4 out of 5 stars)-*Beverage Dynamics* magazine; *Gold Medal*-Tennessee International Wine Competition; *87 Points*-*Wine Spectator* magazine; *Silver Medal*-Cloverdale Citrus Fair; *Silver Medal*-Indy International Wine Competition.

LEGACY: A perennial favorite at the winery tasting room. Classic style and always a best seller.

Just the facts:

pH	3.70
Total Acid58 g/100 mls
Alcohol	13.5%
Cases Produced	3,360
Aged in French Oak	10 Months
Drink Now or Up to Year	2010+

Just the facts:

pH	3.38
Total Acid62 g/100 mls
Alcohol	14.2%
Cases Produced	4,265
Drink Now or Up to Year	2002+

GOLD MEDAL SPOTLIGHT

Kristi Koford

“It’s all about the fruit,” says winemaker Kristi Koford when asked to comment on this month’s featured Gold Medal-winning 1997 Pinot Noir. “If you start with high quality Pinot Noir fruit, it really doesn’t need much help along the way—it virtually makes itself,” she adds. We’re not entirely sure how true that statement is, but what we do know for sure is that Kristi’s first-ever Pinot Noir is a true gem.

“I was pleasantly surprised by the great reviews on the 1997 Sauvignon Blanc too,” reveals Kristi, acknowledging that Sauvignon Blanc is tough to get noticed because there are many different producers and many styles.

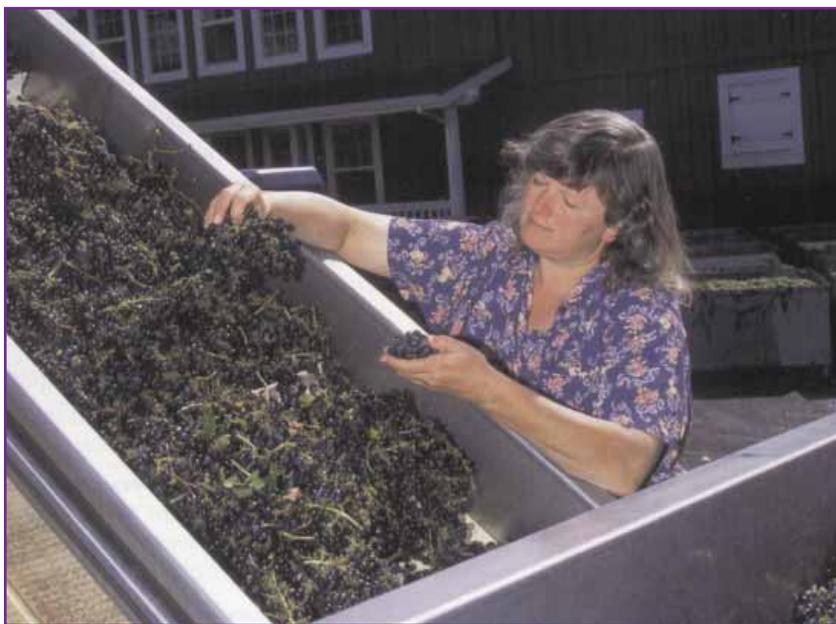
Good fruit, good equipment and solid winemaking skills—these are the ingredients that fuel the success of Alderbrook wines. Kristi is quick to point out though that the term *winemaker* means everyone whose collective job is to preserve the essence of the fruit from the vine to the bottle. And while there is definitely technique involved, more importantly there is attitude, caring about each other and the wines, creating an environment where good

things happen and positive energy is imparted. That too, is an ingredient in every bottle of Alderbrook wine.

Perhaps all that positive thinking is a direct result of Kristi’s diverse childhood experiences. As a child she lived in a half-dozen different countries throughout the world. Her father was a well-respected field zoologist who was hired by various governments and universities in a number of different countries. By the time Kristi was 14

formative years that she learned a valuable life lesson—*attitude is everything*.

“It was a great way to grow up,” Kristi recalls. In fact, she was set to follow in her father’s footsteps and enrolled in college at Santa Cruz to study biology and zoology. But she soon realized that a career in field zoology was drastically changing from, *being out there* in the field, to more of a lab and academic environment.



Kristi Koford is Managing Director of Winemaking for Alderbrook.

years old she and her family had lived in Peru, Panama, Puerto Rico, East Africa, Japan & Australia. In each locale Kristi found a different set of challenges to conquer, not only fitting into school and learning different languages but also leaving friends behind and starting new friendships. It was during these

Interested in studying micro-organisms, her path turned to a University sponsored program that was pioneering a process to cultivate shitake mushrooms for domestic consumption. The mushroom-growing facility for the project happened to be located on a nearby 200-acre vineyard property.

“I ended up working at the vineyard for a while, originally just for fun,” Kristi says. “But the whole environment struck a chord with me so I stayed with it,” she says smiling.

Looking for opportunities that would combine her biology and vineyard interest, she landed a job at

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WINE WIZARD

- 1) The French term for winemaker is:
a) vigeto b) vigneron
c) vignoble
- 2) The greatest amount of bitter tannins in a grape are contained in the:
a) skin b) stem c) seeds
- 3) Approximately how many pounds of pressure per square inch are in an unopened bottle of champagne?
a) 30 b) 50 c) 90

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Blanc, Semillon, Chardonnay and Muscat Blanc. Staley, a former dentist, took over the winemaking duties and cultivated a style that was recognized by its straightforward varietal fruit and subtle oak. For the next ten years, the emphasis was strictly on developing Alderbrook's line of estate white wines. The wines achieved a considerable following, won hundreds of awards, and consistently drew crowds to the winery's tasting room.

In 1991, Alderbrook came to the attention of George Gillemot, a private investor and founder of Communications Technology (an international telecommunications equipment company) based in Los Angeles. George had sold his telecommunications company seven years earlier and he and his wife Dorothy were considering various investment opportunities to liven up their retirement years. Seeing vineyard ownership as a promising long term investment and a relaxed lifestyle, George made Rafanelli an offer. He proposed to purchase the land and winery and then lease the winery back to Rafanelli and his partners. After some deliberation the trio accepted. The arrangement lasted until 1994 when economic and personal considerations led the original owners to relinquish the winery operation.

Gillemot found himself faced with a tough decision: take over the challenge and expense of running a winery or sell the entire operation to the highest bidder. He decided to take on the challenge. Realizing that he had no specific experience with winery operations, his first order of business was putting together a top-notch team of experienced vintners, managers and assistants to keep the winery on track.

George then turned his attention to the winery's equipment, facilities and vineyards. The tasting room, housed in a beautiful redwood barn (originally used for drying prunes), got a much-needed face-lift and new

storage and processing facilities were added. George's plan was to take annual production from 25,000 cases to eventually 150,000 cases and beyond. To do that, the winemaking team realized that they would need to expand their line of award winning white wines to include reds. In keeping with that goal, in 1995, George purchased an adjacent property that added 10 acres to the original 55-acre holdings. This new property was planted entirely to Zinfandel. Long term grape-buying contracts were also initiated, to bring in top quality Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Pinot Noir from nearby growers in Sonoma and Russian River areas.

The shift in strategy paid quick dividends. Almost immediately, Alderbrook red wines began earning top honors at the major wine industry competitions. Now, five years and literally hundreds of awards later, all four red varietals continue to play important roles in the winery's success.

In late 1999, Alderbrook Winery began a new chapter in its 20-year history, as George suddenly decided to sell the operation. "I've taken the winery to a nice level and now it's time to do some other things," George tells us. Recognizing the value inherent in the Alderbrook operation, a group of seven investors formed a partnership that purchased the winery in September of last year. The new partnership includes brothers Bruce and David Myers, brothers Tom and Perry Charter, Court King,

Clay Shannon and Alen Darr. Several partners already own vineyard land in northern California and others are involved in California Family Foods, a company that specializes in rice production.

“We were looking to diversify a bit,” reveals partner Bruce Myers. “And with Alderbrook we were simply in the right place at the right time,” he states. The new owners plan to gradually increase production over the next 3 to 5 years, concentrating primarily on four principal wines, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot

Noir and Zinfandel. Other important specialty wines but in smaller quantities include, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Viognier, a Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc, a Port, a Reserve Chardonnay and Reserve Zinfandel.

George Gillemot was still the owner. Robert Weinstock, is in charge of National Sales & Vineyard Operations; Catherine Eyler, heads up the Marketing & Public Relations; and Kristi Koford is responsible for all of the winemaking.



Alderbrook's quaint tasting room is open daily from 10am to 5pm.

Running the show on a day-to-day basis are three Managing Directors who were all brought in while

This should be an exciting phase for the *new* Alderbrook Winery. Already running on all cylinders with an impressive collection of award-winning wines and industry-savvy management, the leadership and resources the new

owners bring to the table will certainly help kick the operation into an even higher gear. 🍷

ANSWERS TO WINE WIZARD

1) The answer is b) vigneron. The term **vigneron** is now widely used outside France for a wide range of people engaged in wine production. **Vigneto** is an Italian term for vineyard; **vignoble** is French for vineyard.

2) Although all three parts of the grape are sources of tannins, the greatest amount is found in the seeds. Tannins are a group of chemicals that occur in the bark of many trees and in fruits, including the grape, imparting astringency to their taste. Tannins in wine come from both the grapes, and the wood in which it was aged. Tannins play an important role in the aging of wine and need careful mastery during winemaking to avoid a taste that is too bitter or astringent. Excessively high tannin levels can be adjusted by **fining** (a process that helps remove undesirable components such as tannins) the wine with gelatin or egg whites. Tannins are also removed naturally, given a sufficient amount of time in the bottle.

3) The answer is c) 90. Most sparkling wines have a little pressure during disgorgement (one of the final stages of champagne production prior to corking) and are ultimately sold with a pressure of between five and six atmospheres, about three times that of a car tire. The cork maintains the pressure in the bottle so that there is equilibrium between the dissolved carbon dioxide in the wine and the carbon dioxide above the wine. A champagne will show bubbles when opened because the dissolved carbon dioxide comes out of solution once the pressure is reduced.





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

These two delicious recipes are hand picked favorites from Alderbrook's Resident Chef, Jim May. Jim has extensive culinary experience and has been with Alderbrook since 1995.

CORNISH GAME HENS WITH PINOT NOIR-CHERRY SAUCE

- 1 1/4 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup Pinot Noir
- 1/4 cup Marsala
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 game hens
- 1/3 cup pitted dried cherries
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- 1/8 teaspoon each: nutmeg, allspice and thyme
- zest of 1 orange, (1 teaspoon minced)
- 1/2 cup fresh orange juice
- 2 tablespoons red currant jelly (or wine jelly)
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch in 1/2 cup cold water



Combine chicken broth, Pinot Noir, Madeira, garlic, cherries, spices orange rind and juice and cook until reduced by half, about 20-25 minutes. While simmering stir in jelly and cook until dissolved. Pour in cornstarch mixture a little at a time, adding slowly to simmering stock stirring constantly over medium heat until thickened slightly. Season Game hens with salt and pepper and put in roasting pan. Pour melted butter over each and place in 425 degree oven for 10 minutes or until starting to brown. Reduce oven to 350 and baste with sauce every 5-7 minutes for the next 30 minutes. Place game hens on heated platter with a ladle of sauce and serve remaining sauce on side and serve with the 1997 Alderbrook Pinot Noir. Rice pilaf and braised fennel root would be a nice accompaniment.

Alderbrook Culinary Director, Chef Jim May.

SALMON BURGERS WITH GINGER MAYONNAISE

- 1 1/4 lbs. Salmon fillet, skinned
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 teaspoons ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- MAYONNAISE**
- 4 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 4 hamburger buns, toasted
- 4 purple onion, thinly sliced
- 4 slices ripe tomato

Discard bone in salmon and finely hand chop. In a bowl, stir together salmon, mustard, ginger, soy sauce, and olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste and form into four 3-inch patties. In a small bowl, whisk together all mayonnaise ingredients and let sit for at least 1/2 hour. In a nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot and sauté salmon patties 4 minutes on each side, or until cooked through. Transfer burgers to buns and top with mayonnaise, onions and tomato. Pair this with the Alderbrook 1997 Sauvignon Blanc. Serves 4.

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Mondavi as a microbiologist, working in the lab. There she became interested in enology and worked her way up to a Senior Enologist position. In 1984, after 10 years at Mondavi, Kristi took time off to start a family, then re-entered the workplace 4 years later.

Kristi easily landed a job at a start-up winery St Supery in Napa. Over-qualified but anxious to restart

her wine industry career, she was hired initially as a lab technician. Within two months she was promoted to Assistant Winemaker and remained with St. Supery for 9 years. "I learned the technical side of the business at Mondavi," Kristi says. "At St. Supery it was learning the management of winemaking, the people, time, and equipment side of things." After almost a decade in the same role and aspiring to become a

full-fledged winemaker, Kristi was ready to move on.

In 1997, Kristi was hired by Alderbrook Winery as an interim consultant while they looked for someone to fill the recently vacated Winemaker position. Impressed by her knowledge and skills, Kristi was hired as full-time winemaker after just 1 month's on the job.

JUDGE-THE-WINES RESULTS

In this section we publish the cumulative, on-going tallies of the Judge-the-Wines Scoresheets which are provided in each delivery of wine and mailed back in by Club members. We believe it is fun as well as educational to think about and record the different characteristics of the wines you sample. No matter how acute you think your palate is, the person next to you will probably have a different thought or opinion about a certain characteristic of the wine you are sampling. It can also prove beneficial to record your impressions of the wine for reference at a later date.

Below are the most recent tallies of the Scoresheets returned. Gold Medal Wine Club specializes in featuring small-sized wineries and small-production wines. Depending on availability from the winery, all members may not receive every wine that is listed below. The Scoresheet results which are printed in green indicate the wine selections that as of press time are still available for reorder.

Dante – 1997 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	93%	6%	1%

Dante – 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	96%	4%	0%

Perry Creek – 1997 Sangiovese

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	88%	8%	4%

Perry Creek – 1997 Zinfandel

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	91%	5%	4%

Perry Creek – 1997 Chardonnay

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	89%	6%	5%

Hanna – 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	94%	6%	0%

Thornton – 1992 Brut Reserve

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	92%	7%	1%

Thornton – 1997 Cote Red

MEDALS:	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
RESULTS:	89%	5%	6%

The above wines were recently featured. Due to space limitations the entire list of available wines is not listed—please call to inquire about other previous favorites.

■ Indicates wine is still available

In the span of three short years, Kristi has made quite a splash as Alderbrook's winemaker. She has overall responsibility for crafting the winery's dozen different wines, and has done so in an impressive fashion. Her wines have literally earned hundreds of awards and high ratings from competitions and critics throughout the country. Her goal is simple, yet precise—"I want to make the best wines I can, wines that are complex, balanced and layered," she states. When you taste her 1997 Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc, you'll agree that she is doing just that. 🍷



THE GRAPEVINE

Comments from us and Club members

“*Life is a Cabernet . . .*” It seems everyone is in a Cabernet mood these days. The recently featured 1997 Dante Cabernet Sauvignon has been an incredibly popular wine. Unfortunately, with only 900 cases produced, it didn’t last long and we’re sorry to report that it has sold out. Several months ago, the equally fabulous 1996 Hanna Cabernet Sauvignon went just as quickly. And before that, the 1994 Mazzocco Cabernet Sauvignon blew out the door too. OK, we get the message—you want more Cabernets! It’s fun to explore other varietals, which we will continue to do, but we’ll always swing around to a great Cabernet on a regular basis. Several more are on the way this year! (P.S. If you enjoyed the ‘96 Hanna Cab, wait till you try their 1997 Reserve Cabernet being featured in the *Platinum Series!*)

[The Hanna 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon was] A bit at my dinner party. We loved it! Very smooth with delightful mild, berry, oak taste!
—Sue Coffey, Score 50

Served with hearty appetizers at a pre-New Year’s get together. [The Dante 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon] Was a great hit with our red wine friends!
—James Pearce, Score 52

[The Dante 1997 Chardonnay had] Butter-scotch, pear and melon flavors not usually found in California Chardonnays-loved it!
—Tammara Butler, Score 44

[The Perry Creek 1997 Chardonnay was] A great Chardonnay—normally I like really full, dry Chards, but this one was light, yet dry—and very good!
—Sara Ann Vaughan, Score 40

[The Perry Creek 1997 Zinfandel was] Smooth and very rich flavor. Nice Zin!
—Dave Merchant, Score 48

[The Perry Creek 1997 Zinfandel was a] Lively jewel color, delightful, slightly fruity taste and excellent character!
—Marilyn Gale, Score 54

Maximum score is 55. Members who send in their wine ratings on the provided Scoresheets are eligible to receive a bonus half-case of any Gold Medal Series wine that is in stock if your name is drawn. Drawings are held 4 times a year at the end of each quarter. (Maximum of one Scoresheet per wine per membership)...GMWC

R E O R D E R

We’re very picky about the Pinot Noirs we feature, which is why we haven’t showcased this varietal for quite awhile. The Alderbrook 1997 Pinot Noir is a beautiful wine that is priced remarkably well. The same is true for their Sauvignon Blanc—a wonderful wine at a great price. These wines are a big reason why Alderbrook Winery won over 100 medals in the wine competitions last year.

ALDERBROOK WINERY	Retail Price Winery-Direct	Club Price 2-Bottle Members	Club Price 4-Bottle Members
1997 Pinot Noir*	Half Case-6 \$113	\$89 (21% Off)	\$82 (27% Off)
Russian River Valley	Full Case-12 \$225	\$165 (27% Off)	\$153 (32% Off)
1997 Sauvignon Blanc*	Half Case-6 \$72	\$57 (21% Off)	\$53 (28% Off)
Dry Creek Valley	Full Case-12 \$144	\$106 (26% Off)	\$99 (31% Off)

Reorder Hotline: 1-800-266-8888

Reorder Faxline: 1-800-266-8889

*Availability is very limited.

Note: Tax & shipping are not included in the above prices. Call for details.