



Platinum Wine Club

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

North Vineyards | Edna Valley, San Luis Obispo County

Anyone who knows John Alban well can attest to the fact that he is a person dedicated to specific ideals and also an individual who has developed a keen interest and passion for his chosen profession.

Alban recently turned 60 and the California (Long Beach) native celebrated the fact by working on his birthday. The story of his success in the wine industry is most certainly worth relating.

Alban is another of the celebrated UC Davis enology graduates who has ascended the agronomical stairs of his profession. He did it the hard way.

"When we began our project," Alban related in a recent interview, "we began with a dental floss budget, much smaller than a shoestring one if you get my gist. I also had the notion of developing a winery dedicated solely to Rhône varieties, a wild idea in the early 1980's."

An opportunity presented itself around that time and Alban was able to purchase some property in the smallish Edna Valley that had just become its own AVA (1982) and was home to a number of iconic wineries (Edna Valley Vineyard, Chamisal Vineyards, etc.) as well as providing fruit for a number of high-quality wineries throughout the state.

John Alban went about establishing his winery under the aegis of Alban Vineyards. The brand grew and prospered and Alban was delighted with the consuming public's acceptance of his Rhône varieties. John Alban was at the forefront of all this attention and eventually ascended to the position of organizer and mentor to young winemakers interested in the pursuit of Rhône greatness. Wine guru *Robert Parker* even called Alban "the spiritual and qualitative leader of the Rhône movement."

Only one thing didn't go according to plan. It seems that one small block of his land was planted in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes, the Burgundian cousins to the Rhône standouts.

"This small block was on a north-facing slope and produced some excellent fruit. My wife, Lorraine, became attached to the site because it was close by her horse rescue operation and she passed it each day. She felt the vineyards produced such high quality fruit and wanted to take advantage of the popularity spike that Pinot Noir offered. We reached an agreement and that's how North Vineyards came to

be," informed Alban.

North Vineyards first saw the light of day in 2011 with a tiny release of around 250 cases of Pinot Noir and 100 cases of Chardonnay.

"We still bottle around that number to this day," John Alban added. "The block is only five acres and that's all we can produce. The wine has done quite well in scores and we have no trouble selling all of it."

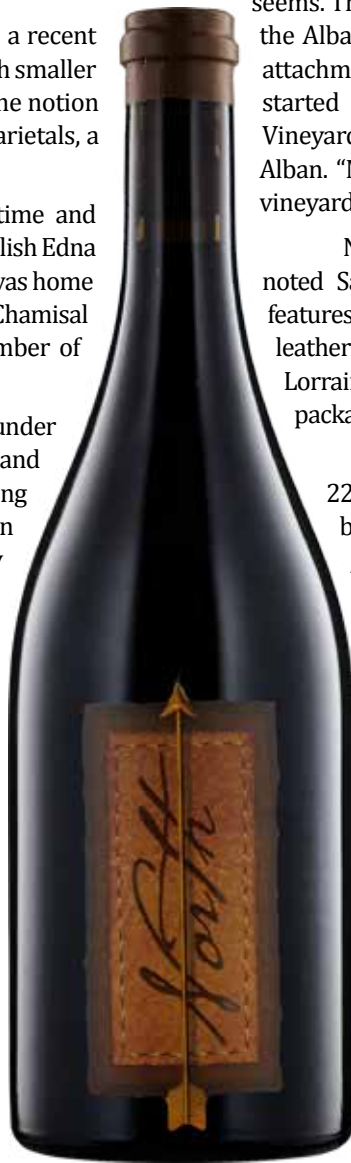
That last statement is a bit more complicated than it seems. The North Vineyards plot was planted in 1997, the year the Albans were married. Lorraine developed an immediate attachment to the block and its production. Eventually, she started a wine distribution company and sells North Vineyards' entire production. "It's a win-win situation," added Alban. "My wife gets to keep her favorite wines and her pet vineyard and everyone is happy."

North Vineyards' imposing label was developed by noted Santa Barbara artist, Rick Garcia. The striking label features a compass pointing north (where else?) and is set on leather that brings in the equestrian rescue operation run by Lorraine Alban. The net effect of all this is a spectacular package that contains award-winning wines.

But that's not all. The Albans' two sons, Jared, 22, and Keenan, 20, are headed for careers in the wine business as well. Jared is about to graduate from San Jose State and has an inclination toward the actual wine company and its operation. His younger brother attends the University of Oregon and seems headed toward his mother's wine distribution segment of the family's business. John Alban is delighted with both prospects who have worked in various capacities around the winery since their youth.

North Vineyards is an excellent example of a tiny production winery that has succeeded on the huge commercial stage that is the California Wine Industry. It is truly a niche winery and should be a valuable addition to any consumer's cellar. For John and Lorraine Alban, North Vineyards is a fine example of a couple working harmonically in a situation that benefits both partners.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce our members to North Vineyards and the story that makes this Pinot Noir so special. Enjoy!



North | 2017 Pinot Noir, Edna Valley, San Luis Obispo County



94 POINTS

—*Vinous*

93 POINTS

—*Jeb Dunnuck*

170 cases produced

Crafted from John and Lorraine Alban's beloved 5-acre North Vineyard in San Luis Obispo's Edna Valley, the North 2017 Pinot Noir is a beautifully structured and balanced wine with concentrated fruit, polish and elegance. Deep ruby in color, this wine opens with lavender-accented aromas with hints of raspberry, forest floor and exotic herbs. On the palate, flavors of blackberries, white pepper, wild strawberries, and freshly cut wood notes are supported by soft, round tannins that lead into a remarkably long and savory finish. This wine is drinking beautifully now, but it will continue to evolve for a decade. Aged 22 months in oak. 100% Pinot Noir. Enjoy!

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

**Paradise Ridge 2015
'The Convict' Zinfandel,
Sonoma County**

93 Points - *Wine Enthusiast* magazine
470 Cases Produced



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