



# Diamond Wine Club

## PURLIEU WINES

### *Napa Valley*

When a winery moves to the top tier of Napa Valley wine producers, there's usually a solid reason behind the winery's rise to such elevated success. In the case of Napa Valley's Purlieu Wines, the finger of attainment can be pointed at a single person, General Manager and Winemaker Julien Fayard.

Fayard's pedigree in the wine arena bears noting. A native of wine-loving and bucolic Provence in France, a setting where his family produced the wonderfully aromatic Rose de Provence, Fayard began his career as a student at Bordeaux's famed Lycee agricole a Bordeaux and then matriculated to Toulouse's Ecole nationale superieure de formation de l'enseignement Agricole for his winemaking degree. He then proceeded to Angers' School of Agriculture for his masters in enology. After graduation, Julien Fayard worked in such luminary Bordeaux chateaux as Chateau Lafite Rothschild and Chateau Smith Haut Lafite, each one a world-class entity. When Fayard ultimately decided to relocate to California, he obtained his MBA from the hallowed University of California Davis.

Purlieu Winery is unique in the California wine industry in that it is owned by foreign investors who have little involvement with the winery's daily operation.

That's perfectly okay with Julien Fayard. He makes all important decisions and has crafted an incredible entity whose awards and scores has vaulted Purlieu Winery into Napa Valley's revered stratosphere.

Fayard explained recently that there are different levels of fruit available and the very best are obtainable if the customer is knowledgeable and is willing to pay the price. For the past decade, he has sifted through numerous Napa Valley growers and has arrived at a grouping of five or six growers whose grapes are continuously consistent from year to year.

"These vineyards are the core of our operation," he explained. "The rest is up to us and what we do in the cellar. Our wines benefit from slow aging in the barrel and generally have a lifespan of between ten and fifteen years or even longer. We do this intentionally since our wines are designed for collectors and extremely high-end consumers. You will never see one of our bottles in a super market, but you might easily find one on the wine list of a world-class restaurant."

Fayard also pointed out that the name 'Purlieu' means 'edge of the forest' or 'royal hunting ground' in French, a reference to the winery's initial vineyard site. "Our first vineyard was in Coombsville, just outside Napa city. It was located just before the large forest in the area that is thoroughly inhabited by giant oak trees that are native to the area. We thought it a fitting acknowledgment of the terroir of the area to name it 'Purlieu' and the name seems to have stuck."

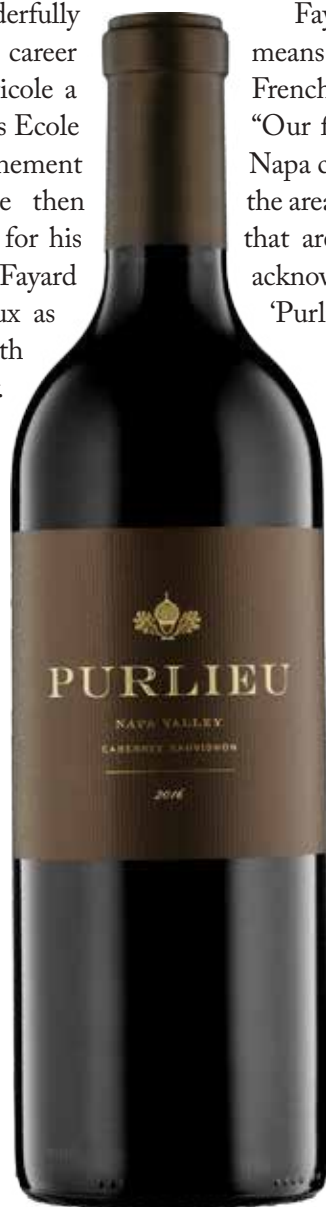
Purlieu Wines has since sold off that vineyard, but continues to buy the fruit for its wines. "We have a great relationship with the present owners and the fruit they produce is still first-class."

Julien Fayard added that Purlieu's label prominently features an acorn, another reference to the oaks that dominate the nearby forest.

As for his wines, Fayard said that he is most interested in balance and that balance provides consistency over a period of time. "Our customers have come to expect a certain level of quality and I intend to see they get that level with each succeeding vintage. Depending on the year and the attributes of the vintage, extremely high quality is not always that easy to achieve."

Purlieu Wines was first introduced in 2009 with a myopic release of around 200 cases. That number has steadily risen over

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JULIEN FAYARD,  
WINEMAKER

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the past decade-plus, and now rests at around 850 cases. Of that number, around 150 cases are single vineyard designated that allows Fayard to showcase specific aspects of the Napa Valley growing area. As market conditions allow, some increase in production could be expected from Purlieu Wines.

“We are not on a mission to conquer the world,” commented a relaxed and confident Julien Fayard. “We simply want to produce the finest wine possible and compete at the highest levels of the international wine industry. Our program seems to have worked for us and our wines, and you can’t argue with success.”

Julien Fayard is the epitome of a contented winery executive and winemaker. His decision to leave France for California some decades ago has proven to be appropriate and well thought out.

It is a distinct pleasure to introduce Purlieu Winery and Julien Fayard to our Diamond club members. We trust this will be a rewarding experience for you.

## Purlieu 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

1,584 CASES PRODUCED

**95 POINTS** — *Robert Parker’s The Wine Advocate*

“Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon gives up exuberant notions of blackcurrant pastilles, blackberry compote and stewed red plums with touches of kirsch, potpourri, fragrant earth and cigar box. Full-bodied and opulently fruited in the mouth, the powerful flavors are well framed by firm, ripe tannins and just enough freshness, finishing long and spicy.”

**93 POINTS** — *Wine Spectator*

“Solid, featuring a direct beam of cassis and raspberry reduction flavors, flanked by anise, applewood and bramble notes. A loamy echo chimes through the rich, polished finish.”



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**This month’s Diamond Plus!  
Featured Wine:**

Sojourn 2018 Pinot Noir,  
Gap’s Crown Vineyard,  
Sonoma Coast

97 Points – *Jeb Dunnuck*

1,025 CASES PRODUCED

