

PLATINUM SERIES

Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

The term *pioneer* is rarely applied to many modern day circumstances, with good reason. When *pioneer* relates specifically to the wine industry, the idiom infrequently appears. Such is not the case with Robert Ashley Young, founder of Robert Young Estate Winery, this month's *Platinum Series* selection.

To adequately describe the Robert Young Estate Winery, it is necessary to go back four generations, to the time when Peter Young left upstate New York to seek his fortune in California's gold fields of the 1840s. Young liked what he saw and decided to remain in California, settling around Healdsburg in Sonoma County. Peter's son, Silas Henry Young, also became a farmer and later fathered Robert Ashley Young, who eventually presided over a large and productive prune operation on the family's rich lands in Sonoma County.

Sometime in 1963, Robert Young decided to make the jump into premium varietal wine grapes, and in particular, Cabernet Sauvignon. Young turned out to be a most innovative farmer and his grapes soon became the premier fruit grown in the area. In 1975, another outstanding young winemaker talent named Richard Arrowood at Chateau St. Jean made Young's grapes famous by making Robert Young's Chardonnay the first vineyard-designated wine produced in the United States.

The story then fast-forwards to the present time, 1997 to be exact, when Robert Young's sons and daughters take the advice of their peers and decide to open their own winery.

"It was our family's way of expanding our operation without having to buy any more additional property to grow grapes," explained Susan Young, who now serves as the winery's hospitality coordinator and unofficial historian. "We had been growing grapes for over 40 years and just decided to head in a slightly different direction."

In order to do that, the Young Family had to secure permission from Chateau St. Jean to use the Robert Young name since the name's exclusivity had been established nearly three decades before. Once attained, plans were set in motion to build a modern underground winery on the family's 500 acres near Geyserville.

Robert Young Estate Winery's first release of

443 cases came in 1997, and was aptly called *Scion* in honor of the descendants of Robert Young. That was soon followed by another nearly 1,000 cases of 1999 Chardonnay that positioned the new winery at a specific level.

In addition to Susan, her sister JoAnn, and brothers Jim and Fred, occupy various positions of responsibility at the winery. JoAnn and Susan handle the hospitality and tasting room duties, while Jim manages Robert Young Vineyards and Fred serves as the driving force behind the winery's development and oversees its operation and growth.

"Starting up the winery allowed all of us to get involved," related Susan Young. "We have always been of the mind that the Alexander Valley had great potential among the finest wine producing areas in California. Now we have a hand in seeing our fruit reach fruition through our wines."

Susan Young also said the Robert Young Estate Winery capacity is around 6,000 cases,

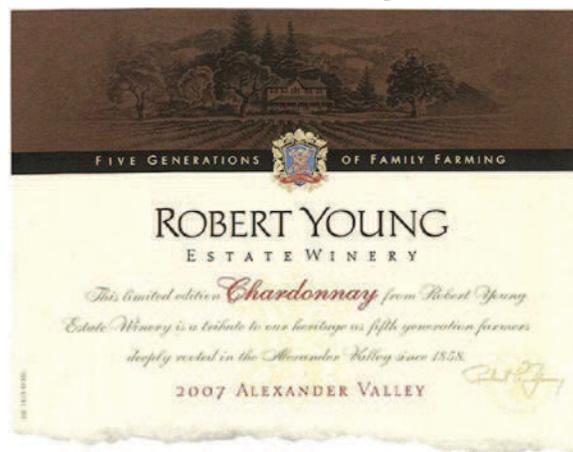
and that the company's present production is holding steady to that level.

"We don't really intend to get much bigger," Susan Young recently stated. "Around here, it's all about showcasing our wines, making them the very best they can be. It is all very much a community effort, and everyone has their own part in it."

The "everyone" also included founder Robert Ashley Young, who remained actively involved in many of the winery's ongoing projects until he passed away in 2009 at the age of 90.

Robert Young was considered one of Sonoma's premier community leaders and was given the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award by the California State Fair in 2004. This latest award is but one in a number that has been given to this most active leader of a most lively and vibrant family. Robert Young was instrumental in changing the way growers and vintners work together, and will be remembered among the world's premier grape growers.

It is fitting that the Robert Young Estate Winery bears his name and that his wines are finally available on a commercial basis. It is the final jewel in a career that has spanned more than four decades and brought both prestige and credit to the California wine industry.



The road to great wine begins at your door.

TASTING NOTES





Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

Year after year, we watched the accolades come in for wines made from our father's grapes. As a family we decided to create our own wines from what have now become world famous vineyards from the property our family has been blessed to live on and work since 1858. In 1997, with winemaker and friend Richard Arrowood, we made our flagship wine and called it Scion to pay homage to the Young family heritage. Today, our winemaker is Kevin Warren, whose meticulous and elegant style showcases the fruit from our property in small batch, premium wines.

In 2007, we were blessed with an amazing harvest; it has become known as the perfect winegrowing year in Sonoma County – wine after wine released, that has been proven to be true. We have the luxury of watching the vines mature and each harvest we look forward to the time we can try the wine that Kevin has created with the crop. We are very fortunate to have Kevin as our winemaker – he's incredibly talented and this wine is a true testimony to that. 2007 Alexander Valley Chardonnay perfectly portrays the luscious, tropical characteristics of the Chardonnay clone our father became famous for, with the clean, well balanced, and lingering finish from Kevin's magic touch.

It is our pleasure to offer the 2007 Alexander Valley Chardonnay to the members of the Platinum Series of the Gold Medal Wine Club. This is a very special wine from what will become known as a historical vintage of Sonoma County, and we hope you share and enjoy it with your family and friends.

Cheers!

Fred Young
Winery Founder & Owner

4960 RED WINERY ROAD, GEYSERVILLE, CA 95441
PHONE (707) 451-4811 FAX (707) 451-4812. WWW.FYCW.COM



TASTING NOTES

Robert Young Estate Winery was among the first to plant French Chardonnay clones in America, and a derivative of those original clones are now named after him and represent a spectacular and distinctive Chardonnay vine that you will find put to excellent use in this beautiful featured wine. Winemaker Kevin Warren says, "This 2007 is 'spot on' Robert Young Estate Chardonnay. The intense, tropical aromas of guava, nectarine, melon and spice really show off the Robert Young clone character. It has a supple mouth feel and bright flavors backed by a big French oak barrel component giving it a soft finish that lasts forever." This superior 2007 vintage was awarded **93 Points** by *Wine Spectator*, which calls the Alexander Valley Chardonnay "Rich and opulent, with layers of fig, melon and honeysuckle flavors that are full-bodied, silk-textured, long and persistent, unveiling the vineyard's purity of flavor." With a stockpile of 90+ ratings since the 2000 vintage, the Robert Young Chardonnay has built a reputation for premium quality and consistency. Aged 14 months in oak. 100% Estate Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2013.



REORDERS

Robert Young Estate Winery's 130 acres of Chardonnay were developed by Robert Young with cuttings from Burgundy, France. The fruit from these vines is regarded by many to be the very best domestic Chardonnay, and its wines are among the most esteemed in the state. It is an honor to offer a wine of such prestige and history to our *Platinum Series* members – we hope you enjoy it.

The **Robert Young 2007 Chardonnay** retails winery-direct for \$40.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

2-Bottle Members..... \$32.00 /bottle*
4-Bottle Members &
Multi-Series Members.....\$30.00 /bottle*
*2 bottle min. order [Plus shipping]

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