



# Diamond Wine Club

## YOUNT RIDGE CELLARS

*Napa Valley*

Its vineyard is situated in one of Napa Valley's prized locations, in the southern end of the Oakville AVA. It is surrounded by wonderfully prestigious neighbors, Cardinale Estate (one of the Jackson Family of wines) to the south and Opus One (the Mondavi-Rothschild vision) to the north. By the way, the iconic vineyards of Far Niente lie just across Highway 29 in case one is interested.

Such noble surroundings could easily portend the success of Yount Ridge Cellars and such is the case with this smallish winery. It all began in 2015 with the release of around 250 cases that have been met with almost immediate critical acclaim. This current *Diamond Wine Club* selection is from the company's inaugural release. In keeping with the wishes of its founders, the winery has remained in the boutique category and will produce around 1,000 cases after this year's harvest.

"The key to our winery's success is our vineyards," stated Laura Madonna, Vice President of Marketing for the still youthful entity. "We are situated in the exact center of Napa Valley that is arguably the best bench land in the entire Valley. And, our estate vineyards are certified organic, a factor that is vitally important to our owners. We have twenty acres under vine and grow Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec and Petite Verdot, almost the entire range of Bordeaux varietals."

Yount Ridge Cellars is a tribute to the early California historical figure, George C. Yount. Formerly named Sebastopol, the city was renamed Yountville after Yount's death in 1867. It seems the Sonoma County town of Sebastopol has already claimed the name more than a decade before and Yount was the obvious namesake and was also the first person to plant grapes in Napa Valley. The entire area was part of an 11,887-acre land grant from the Mexican Government that is famous for its home-grown Cabernet Sauvignons.



"Our company has some future plans and intends to build a winery on Yountville Hill," related Laura Madonna. "There's a great deal of planning necessary before we can start construction and our permit is currently before the Napa Valley Planning Commission for review. We are hopeful that we can gain its approval and start on the winery. If we get approval, we intend to erect a truly meaningful structure that will complement the entire valley."

Until that happens, the Yount Ridge Cellars wines are being made at Laird Family Estate that is located almost midway between Yountville and Napa City on Highway 29.

The wines are the product of Winemaker Celia Welch, who is originally from Medford, Oregon and whose father was an amateur winemaker. Welch is a UC Davis graduate (1982, B.S. in Fermentation Science) and a preeminent California winemaker.

Welch formerly worked for a number of wineries including Silverado Vineyards and Staglin Family Vineyard, the ultra-premium producer of heralded Cabernet Sauvignons. She served as Assistant Winemaker at Robert Peppi Winery until she resigned in 1995 and began offering her services as a consulting winemaker. Her storied career now includes the likes of Hollywood & Vine Cellars, Keever Vineyards (Yountville), Barbour Vineyards (Napa), Nicali Vineyard (Stag's Leap) and Scarecrow Wine (Rutherford).

In 2008, she was honored as **Winemaker of the Year** by *Food & Wine magazine* and was also selected as one of *Forbes.com's Top Ten Tastemakers of 2006* some two years earlier. In 2009, she was nominated for a **James Beard** award. Her own winery, Corra Wines, has also garnered numerous awards and high scores from the wine industry. Interestingly, Corra Wines offers wines from Napa Valley as well as Oregon's Rogue Valley.

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CELIA WELCH,  
WINEMAKER

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The label for Yount Ridge Cellars' wines is "a picture of what we would eventually like to build on our property," informed Laura Madonna. "We want to utilize the land that is available in the best possible way and still make a statement that will add to Napa Valley's unequivocal reputation. All we need is the planning commission's approval to start."

There is a definite place among California's upper echelon wineries for the likes of Yount Ridge Cellars. While its owners choose to remain completely private, their wines have spoken for themselves. Great soils and incredible fruit are the hallmarks of great wines and Yount Ridge Cellars' early releases are a harbinger of greatness to come.

It is our pleasure to share this inaugural release from Yount Ridge Cellars with our *Diamond Wine Club* members. We hope you will remember this great wine for many years to come.

## Yount Ridge 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

250 CASES PRODUCED

**94 POINTS** — *Antonio Galloni's Vinous magazine*

"The 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley) is gorgeous. Warm, resonant and inviting, the 2014 offers lovely depth and texture. Ripe red cherry, plum, cedar, espresso and sweet spice notes all fuse together. Sumptuous and racy, the 2014 is a super-expressive, delicious Cabernet Sauvignon. There is a lot to like."

**91 POINTS** — *Wine Spectator magazine*

"Just blossoming now, easing out of a taut, oaky, cedary core to reveal rich, juicy blackberry, currant, anise, graphite and cedar notes, ending with tannic grip that lets the flavors ride through."

### Winemaker's Notes - Celia Welch

"Very forward aromas of spice, earth, root beer and raspberry show the range of Cabernet dimensions in this bright, ripe rendition. Broad at entry, the mid palate shows black cherry notes, along with cola, warm baking spices, cassis and red currant flavors. The finish is long and structural, with a fresh natural acidity. Dense, supple and sinewy."



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

Pono 2014 "Mana" Cabernet  
Sauvignon, Napa Valley

94 Points + Gold Medal - *Tastings.com*  
(Beverage Testing Institute)

75 CASES PRODUCED



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