



# AVALON

2012 Press Kit

## Avalon Winery: Our Background

Avalon Winery, located in the town of Graton in Sonoma County, California, produces top selling wines recognized for outstanding quality and extreme value. The Avalon portfolio includes three wines sourced from the Napa Valley AVA, including the Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley Merlot, and Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc, as well as the winery's flagship California Cabernet Sauvignon, sourced from prime vineyards in Paso Robles, Monterey, Santa Barbara and Lake County.

In addition to a commitment to making outstanding quality wines at a reasonable price point, Avalon Winery is committed to sustainability, and employs cutting edge energy and water efficient practices. World-class winemaking techniques combined with a culture of responsible resource conservation results in quality both inside and outside the bottle.

## Our Winemaker: Alex Cose

Alex Cose studied finance and worked for Wells Fargo for six years before a change of heart landed him a harvest internship at Monticello Cellars in Napa Valley. After a return to college, another couple of internships and a degree in Enology from Fresno State, at 27, he was cellar master at Peter Michael.

## Our Wines

### 2010 California Cabernet Sauvignon

Our 2010 vintage shows aromas of plums, cranberries, allspice and dried ginger with barrel notes of cedar cigar box. The blend of 88% Cabernet, 9% Merlot and a splash of Sangiovese and Zinfandel truly is reflected in its flavors. The dark, jammy core drinks of boysenberry pie, black cherry preserves and currants. Medium in weight, the wine shows silky tannins and just a touch of barrel spice.



### 2009 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

The deep crimson color is the first indication of the wine's depth. Our 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon exhibits aromas of blackberries, lingonberries, cassis and a hint of violets. Vanilla and freshly caramelized sugar notes from oak aging balance and frame the fruit flavors. Oak aging additionally adds breadth to the palate. Our 2009 displays a weight and depth unlike previous vintages. It is a direct reflection of the greatness of the vintage. Napa flavors show through with red raspberries and quintessential Oakville dark cherries. The tannins are sandy and fine. Alex reflects that the wine "has no holes" and has "critical length. It is a deep, brooding wine with weight fruity and style that opens up into a classic Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.



### **2010 Napa Valley Merlot**

Our 2010 Merlot shows its depth with a rich garnet color. Aromas of plum, peach compote, tobacco, rhubarb, and anise fill the glass. Caramelized sugar and vanilla notes from oak aging complement the ripe fruit aromas. Mountain fruit characteristics show in the intensity of the fruit flavors. The entry enjoys sweet berry notes of olalliberry followed by a finish of blackberry preserves. The oak imparted flavors of mocha and toasted brioche pair with and complement the rich fruit layers. Refined tannins support this balanced wine. As this medium/heavy weight Merlot develops in the glass, one may enjoy ongoing juicy, dark berry notes, a touch of cocoa spice evolving in the middle and a lingering finish.



### **2010 California Sauvignon Blanc**

On the nose the wine shows aromatics of a slightly grassy note with plenty of citrus and tropical notes and a hint of minerality. The wine shows bright, pure flavors and good balance, and tastes of fresh pineapple and crisp grapefruit with a clean, crisp finish. The addition of the Gewürztraminer contributes a subtle orange note to the wine on the back of the palate. This wine is perfect for pairing with seafood dishes, grilled chicken or oysters.



### **Current Acknowledgment:**

- 2005 Avalon, Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley 87 pts-*Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*
- 2005 Avalon, Cabernet Sauvignon, California 85 pts-*Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*
- 2009 Avalon, Merlot, Napa Valley 90pts-*Wine Enthusiast Magazine*
- 2010 Avalon, Cabernet Sauvignon, California 88pts-*Wine Enthusiast Magazine*
- 2009 Avalon Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon highlighted in an article entitled *Can California Rise Above Its Dumbed Down Wine?*
- Tim Fish Selected the 2009 Avalon Merlot Napa Valley as his Daily Wine Pick (February 28, 2012)
- The 2008 Avalon, Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and the 2008 Avalon, California Cabernet Sauvignon were included in the list of wines that were awarded 3-stars by Decanter. The Avalon, Napa Valley received 15.17 points and the Avalon, California received 15 points.
- "Restaurant Management" announces Avalon Wineries partnership with Chef Kelly Liken. (May 10, 2012)
- Avalon's California Cabernet Sauvignon is listed as a suggested wine at The

Capital Grille in Florida.

“The Independent” listed Avalon Cabernet Sauvignon as a featured wine in a contest to give the best food pairings for California wines. (July 29, 2011)



**Purple Wine Company** was founded in 2002 by Derek Benham and is based in Graton, California. Its mission is to create high-quality wines that offer outstanding value and are consistent in style from vintage to vintage. The wines produced via its sister production company, Sonoma Wine Company, are produced using water and energy conservation practices, while reducing Green House Gas emissions.

The Purple Wine Company portfolio includes Avalon, BEX, Four Vines and the newest addition to the PWC family, Cryptic. While distinctly different, all four brands maintain committed to producing the best possible wine in an environmentally conscious way.

Founder and CEO Derek Benham started Purple Wine Company with the Mark West Pinot Noir brand, which he launched in 2001. The family of wines grew with the addition of Avalon Winery, producer of delicious, affordable Cabernet Sauvignon from California and Napa Valley. Purple Wine Company continued to grow under Benham, including in late 2010 when he purchased Four Vines Winery, a producer of bold, powerful Zinfandels sourced from prime vineyards in the Central Coast and Sonoma County. Not long thereafter, Benham added BEX Riesling from Germany's Mosel region.

Just over two years later, the Purple Wine Company team is thrilled to introduce Cryptic, a unique red blend that satisfies consumers looking for an affordable luxury in the category.

### **Company Details**

- Founder: Derek Benham, CEO
- President: Dennis Carroll
- Winemaker: Alex Cose
- Location: 9119 Graton Road, Graton, CA 95444



## **SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AT PURPLE WINE COMPANY**

Purple Wine Company is committed to reducing its footprint on the local community and the environment through resource conservation, solid waste management and state of the art renewable energy technology technology.

Between 2005-2010 we have reduced our energy use and waste water generation per case:

- natural gas from .025 therms to .010 therms or 80%
- electricity from .75 kWh to .57 kWh or 24%
- wastewater generation from 3.81 to 2.08 gallons or 55%
- solid waste disposal by 35%

At the same time we increased our production and storage capacity by:

- Case Production 115%
- Stainless tank storage capacity 200%
- Barrel storage capacity 44%

How did we accomplish this?

- Wine tank and supply line insulation
- High efficiency water heating and refrigeration
- Closed loop water heating, saved ~ 1.5 million gallons
- High efficiency lighting
- Cool Roof™ reflective foam roofing
- Solar tubes
- Storage tanks to reduce energy spikes
- Controlling time of use energy rates
- Solid waste recycling of all packaging materials

- Water conservation through behavioral change
- Steam sterilization for bottling, saves ~ 3,500 gallons per week
- Automated, customized barrel washing system reduces water use by 30%
- Canopy for water diversion to salmon spawning stream = 300,000 additional cases of production per year
- Cogenra Sunbase™ cogeneration system producing hot water and electricity

Our sustainable business practices include membership in the Sonoma County Green Business program, Business Environmental Alliance, Bay Area Green Business Program and the Wine Institute's Sustainable Winegrowing Program. In 2005 we joined EPA Climate Leaders for voluntary greenhouse gas emissions baseline inventory and third party certification of our greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).



## **THE PERSONALITIES OF PURPLE WINE COMPANY**

### **DEREK BENHAM, CEO**

A second generation Californian, Derek Benham grew up in an agricultural environment in the great San Joaquin Valley. While working summers on his Dad's farm, he began to dream of building his own wine company.

After graduating from UC Berkeley in 1982, Derek went to work in sales for a small winery near Lodi. Eventually, he assumed the role of General Manager and learned all aspects of running a wine company, culminating in the sale of the winery to La Crema Winery.

In 1990, Derek founded the Codera Wine Group and created the Blackstone Merlot brand. After seven very successful years, he sold the brand in 2001 to Constellation Wines. No longer trapped by preconceived notions, and having a knack for knowing what the consumers wanted, Derek set off on his next project. He would cast off the misconception that wine was only for the privileged. And to prove his point, he would bring the most elusive of grapes — Pinot Noir— to the people.

Derek launched the Mark West brand in 2001 and built it into a wildly successful brand, which twice earned the company the Impact Hot Brand Award from M. Shanken Communications. In 2012 Derek sold Mark West to Constellation Brands for an undisclosed sum.

### **DENNIS CARROLL, PRESIDENT**



Dennis Carroll is president and chief operating officer of custom vintner Sonoma Wine Co. and president of sister organization Purple Wine Co., which produces the brands Avalon, BEX, Blue Jean, Mark West and Rock Rabbit. Sonoma Wine has seven North Coast facilities. Cartlidge & Brown in American Canyon was acquired last year, adding a Napa Valley base for production.

Mr. Carroll's history with the company dates back to the Associated Vintage Group, which brothers Derek and Courtney Benham purchased in 2000 as Codera Wine Co., the predecessor of Derek Benham's ventures Sonoma Wine and Purple Wine companies.

Mr. Carroll started as a financial consultant and CPA for Deloitte & Touche and eventually became a top executive for Illuminations, the Good Guys and Beverages & More.

#### **LISA EHRLICH, VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING**

Lisa's extensive background in developing, launching and managing brands caught the eye of Purple Wine Company Founder Derek Benham in 2005. He brought her on board to oversee brand-building efforts for the production wing of his wine enterprise, Sonoma Wine Company. Since then, she has developed over 30 brands including Lucky Star, Shiloh Road, Trailhead, Zynthesis and Kumbaya. In 2012, Sonoma Wine Company marketing and sales was consolidated within Purple Wine Company, and Lisa assumed overall marketing responsibility for the entire portfolio of brands. Lisa draws upon a lengthy career in the wine industry, first in Chicago as Co-Founder and Wine Program Director at Charlie Trotter's Restaurant. She then moved to wine sales for seven years in Southern California, first as a supplier with Seagram Classics Wine Company, then founding a boutique wine brokerage company, Grapevine Wine Company. Next, she moved into marketing, working in brand development and brand management at E&J Gallo Winery, Jim Beam/Peak Wines International, Hambrecht Vineyards, and Robert Mondavi Winery.

Lisa holds an MA in Law & Politics from Northwestern University and a BA in Behavioral Science & Law and French from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She currently resides in the West Sonoma County hamlet of Sebastopol with her husband and four children, and enjoys yoga, hiking, downhill skiing and cooking.

## **RON JANOWCZYK, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES**

A graduate of Notre Dame, Ron joined Purple Wine Company in 2000 as the first full time employee. As Senior Vice President of Sales, he is responsible for all aspects of distribution, sales, and sales management. Ron joined the purple team with an extensive background in the wine industry. He served as Central Regional Manager, National Programming and Pricing Manager, and President of Artisan & Estates for Kendall Jackson from 1991-2000. Previous to that, he was Central Region Manager at Louis M. Martini winery and Manager of Recruiting and Training with powerhouse E&J Gallo.

Ron is the proud father of three children. He's a hunting and Harley enthusiast, and college football fan. Ron is also an active member of the Williams Syndrome Association.