

Porter Creek – Viognier, Hayley's Vineyard, RRV

- Rich and fresh like Viogniers from the northern Rhône but rare for the new world
- Classic notes of white flowers, pear, nectar and almond skin, with a round mouthfeel and long finish
 - Porter Creek's first Viognier entirely sourced from its estate vineyard

The Producer

With a focus on organic, hillside-grown, vineyard-designated wines primarily from its Russian River estate, Porter Creek produces some of the most balanced, elegant, and refined wines in America. Since the first vintage in 1982, the small family-owned winery has gone beyond its flagship Pinot Noir to produce Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Carignane, Syrah and other varietals that have attracted cult-like followings among experts and consumers alike. Porter Creek's small production and consistent high quality keep the wines high in demand, and many sell out just months after release.

Located in the most prestigious part of the Russian River appellation, Porter Creek was established by George Davis in 1979—before Russian River Valley was an appellation. The estate features 20 acres planted—all hillside vineyards (averaging 20 degree grade), reminiscent of grand cru vineyards in the Côte d'Or, Burgundy.

Following the European vigneron model, George Davis groomed his eldest son, Alex, to become proprietor and winemaker. Before taking the helm in 1997, Alex learned how to operate every aspect of the winery—from welding tractors, to running the books; he also studied enology and viticulture at Fresno State and Dijon, and trained in Dijon (with Christophe Roumier and Bernard Michelot), and in the Rhône Valley (Marcel Guigal).

With his years of apprenticeship, Alex developed a strong vision for balanced, vineyard-driven wines—a vision that he has successfully realized vintage after vintage, through rare dedication, passion and attention to detail. While trends favored riper, more fruit-driven wine, Alex stayed true to his vision, even converting the estate to organic and then biodynamic farming at considerable expense, to coax the best from the soils.

During harvest, sorting is done in the vineyard to minimize handling. While common in Burgundy but less so in California, Alex uses whole cluster press on whites and about 1/3 on Pinot Noirs, rendering more flavor in wine.

Fermentation is natural: native yeasts are rarely supplemented; ideal temperatures are attained through harvesting at night when grapes are cold and warming tanks with blankets.

Winemaking is gravitationally oriented. Alex achieves a fine tannin structure through extended aging in limited use of new oak. Wines age in bottle for 3-6 months prior to release.

The Wine

After making Viognier from Timbervine Ranch for two decades, Porter Creek started transitioning to its estate vineyard with the 2014 vintage. The 2016 is the first made entirely from Hayley's. In the spirit of its northern Rhone counterparts in Condrieu, this wine possesses a weight and richness, yet restraint rarely found in New World Viognier. Balanced, round and capable of aging.



Appellation: Russian River Valley

Varietal Blend: 100% viognier

Vineyards: Hayley's Vineyard, Porter Creek estate; planted with cuttings from Timbervine Ranch

Farming: Biodynamic

Vinification: Primary fermentation in neutral French oak barrels; long slow malolactic

Aging: 11 months in neutral oak

Tasting Notes: Subtle nuances of mango, pear and nectar. Balanced, round and capable of aging.