

KALIN CELLARS

 CUVÉE LE WILLY 

The Seventh of the Stealth Cuvées!

Yes...we have been hiding more things from you!

The seventh release of the secret stealth cuvées is now available.

A special Cuvée Rare bottling of 1994 Livermore Valley Chardonnay has been designated "Cuvée Le Willy".

Cuvée Le Willy received "Stealth Cuvee" methods (including two years of sur lies aging and additional bottle development) and is substantially different from the 1994 Livermore Valley Chardonnay which was released several years ago.

Less than eighty cases of this very special and limited wine were produced.

Cuvée Le Willy was produced from the original 47 acre Wente estate vineyard established in 1883 in the Livermore Valley.

Following the discovery of gold in California in 1848 the population of San Francisco exploded from a small settlement of about 200 residents in 1846 to a population of 36,000 by 1852. Livermore Valley was one of the most proximate wine growing areas with direct access to San Francisco Bay. Grape growing and winemaking rapidly expanded to meet the needs of the growing population.

We have written previously about the efforts of Charles Wetmore and his wife to import elite grape clones of Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon from Bordeaux to the Livermore Valley during the Gold Rush era.

It was realized by the Wente family that there was an unmet need for similar high quality clones of Chardonnay. In 1912, Ernest Wente obtained permission to import Chardonnay clones from the viticultural research station in Montpellier. Over the next forty years, Ernest continuously selected vines with superior traits, and propagated them to establish the Wente Clone of Chardonnay, which now accounts for a major fraction of California Chardonnay production.

In 1960 approximately 150 acres of Chardonnay existed in California. By 2000 104,000 acres of Chardonnay were planted. Willy Joslin joined Wente as viticulturist and winemaker in 1977. He played a pivotal role in guiding the viticultural development of the Livermore Valley and the modern Wente Clone of Chardonnay. Willy knew every nuance of the Livermore terroir, the locations of ghost wineries that did not survive Prohibition, the optimal sites for individual varieties and the perfect moment to harvest. His passion for Livermore's distinctive gravelly soil, its development of elite clonal grape varieties and enological potential were a driving force for continuing these rich historical traditions into the future.

This Le Willy Stealth Cuvée is the seventh in a series of bottlings dedicated to the "Stealthy Society of Kalinites."