

# RODNEY STRONG

## VINEYARDS

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### WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE NAMES RODNEY STRONG VINEYARDS AMERICAN WINERY OF THE YEAR

*Tom Klein and Family Gratefully Acknowledge Honor as They Look to 25th Year of Winery Ownership*

**HEALDSBURG, California (November 2013)** – On November 13, 2013, Wine Enthusiast Magazine announced the winners of their annual Wine Star Awards. Rodney Strong Vineyards was named their American Winery of the Year for the winery's outstanding achievements in the wine world. As the first major U.S. winery to install solar panels in 2001, the first Sonoma County winery to become carbon neutral in 2009 as well as all the early contributions by Rod Strong; first to release a single vineyard cabernet from Sonoma County, from Alexander Valley; first to produce and release a wine from the Chalk Hill region and one of the pioneers of pinot noir in Russian River Valley, Tom Klein and family are happy and proud to carry on the Rodney Strong name on behalf of their employees and the region where they all call home, Sonoma County, California.

Rodney Strong was founded in 1959 by former ballet dancer and wine pioneer, Rod Strong. Rod was instrumental in putting Sonoma County on the world map of wine as the first to produce and release a single vineyard cabernet from Sonoma County, Alexander's Crown from Alexander Valley in 1974, the first to plant (1962), produce and release a Chalk Hill appellation chardonnay in 1977 and one of the first to plant pinot noir in Russian River Valley in the late 1960s.

In 1989 Tom Klein and his family purchased Rodney Strong Vineyards. A few years earlier, with a keen eye for agriculture from farming in California for three generations, the family recognized Rod's contributions and foresaw the additional potential of the winery and the possible realization of Sonoma County's true and inherent world-class wine quality.

Along with their purchase, investments in land, winemaking facility upgrades and human resources came immediately. Existing vineyards were either sold or upgraded within a few short years and new vineyards were acquired along the way. The renowned cabernet sauvignon vineyard, Alexander's Crown was replanted. Rockaway vineyard, located in the middle of Alexander Valley was purchased in 2003. Brothers vineyard, acquired by Klein in 1999, located in northern Alexander Valley and named in honor of Tom Klein's grandfather Sol and great uncles Jack and George Klein, was recognized for its quality immediately following the 2005 creation of the winery's Artisan Cellar, where boutique sized fermenters allow the winegrowing and winemaking teams to keep vineyard lots separate to evaluate and craft inot world-class wines.

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With the winery since 1979, winemaker Rick Sayre has been stalwart and instrumental in the winery's consistent level of wine quality. In recent years, Klein, Sayre and veteran director of winegrowing, Douglas McIlroy brought on winemaking consultant, David Ramey and two additional Rodney Strong winemakers, Greg Morthole and Justin Seidenfeld. Rick and the Klein family now believe Rodney Strong Vineyards is making some of the best wines in winery history.

Receiving this award as the family prepares to mark the 25th anniversary of their ownership is a remarkable coincident, one that confirms their early thoughts about Sonoma County and the treasure they discovered over a quarter century ago.

Look to Rodney Strong throughout 2014 for special signs of celebration. Visit [rodneystrong.com](http://rodneystrong.com) to learn if they'll be coming to a city near you as they host dinners and events to commemorate 25 years of family ownership.

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Rodney Strong Vineyards is dedicated to crafting world-class wines that capture the essence of Sonoma County. Rodney Strong sustainably farms 13 estate vineyards and produces wines from Sonoma County's finest appellations – Alexander Valley, Russian River Valley, Chalk Hill and Sonoma Coast. The winery was founded in 1959 by Sonoma County wine pioneer Rodney D. Strong as the 13th bonded winery in the county. It was purchased by the Klein family, a third generation California farming family, in 1989. The company aspires to conserve and protect the environment in all its operations.

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