



NAPA VALLEY'S FAMED DUCKHORN VINEYARDS CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY THROUGHOUT 2026

ST. HELENA, Calif. — February 2, 2026 — This year, [Duckhorn Vineyards](#) celebrates its 50th anniversary, marking a half-century of extraordinary winemaking, hospitality, and leadership that have helped shape Napa Valley and the landscape of modern American wine. Founded in 1976 by Dan and Margaret Duckhorn, Duckhorn Vineyards emerged at a pivotal moment, when California wine was just beginning to find its voice and Napa Valley was still defining its future. From the outset, the Duckhorns believed that Napa Valley could stand confidently among the world's great wine regions—not through imitation, but through integrity, thoughtful farming, and a deep sense of generosity at the table. Over the past fifty years, Duckhorn Vineyards has come to exemplify these ideals, helping define what luxury Napa Valley wine looks like today: refined yet welcoming, rooted in place, and guided by a long-term vision shaped by the values that have guided the winery for fifty years.

FOUNDERS WHO HELPED SHAPE AN INDUSTRY

The legacy of cofounders Dan and Margaret Duckhorn extends far beyond Duckhorn Vineyards. Together, they were central figures in shaping Napa Valley's collaborative culture and the institutions that underpin today's wine industry. Both served in leadership roles with Napa Valley Vintners and the Wine Institute, helping establish standards for quality, advocacy, and stewardship that continue to guide the industry. Dan brought a rigorous, vineyard-driven mindset to Napa Valley at a formative time, advancing modern viticulture through site-specific planting, improved trellising systems, and a belief that quality would define the future of California wine. Margaret brought an equally influential perspective rooted in hospitality, community, and cultural leadership, championing wine's role in connecting people, food, and place.

CONTINUITY AND LEADERSHIP — WINEMAKER RENÉE ARY

Since 1976, only four winemakers have guided Duckhorn Vineyards. Renée Ary joined the winery in 2003 and has spent more than two decades immersed in the culture and vineyards. Since being named winemaker in 2014 she has emerged as one of the most acclaimed winemakers of her generation. Under Ary's leadership, Duckhorn Vineyards has earned two **Wine of the Year** honors, with the 2014 Duckhorn Vineyards Three Palms Merlot selected as *Wine Spectator's* **"2017 Wine of the Year"** and the 2019 Monitor Ledge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon named *Wine Enthusiast's* **"2023 Wine of the Year"**—distinctions that underscore the breadth of Ary's talent across different varieties.

In 2025, Duckhorn Vineyards' status as a global leader was further affirmed when it became one of only three U.S. wineries honored as one of the **“World’s 50 Best Wineries”** by *Forbes/Virgin Wines*, which ranked wineries based on categories that include heritage, longevity, mentorship, sustainability, and viticultural innovation.

“Duckhorn’s rich history is something you feel every day when you work here,” said Ary. “The standards that were set decades ago—respect for the land, attention to detail, and a belief in elegance and balance—are the reason our wines continue to resonate today. I take great pride in building on that foundation as we help to shape the next era at Duckhorn Vineyards.”

THE MERLOT THAT CHANGED AMERICAN WINE

No chapter of Duckhorn Vineyards’ story is more influential than its role in elevating Merlot in North America. At a time when the grape was largely overlooked as a standalone varietal, Dan and Margaret saw its potential to express elegance, structure, and longevity in Napa Valley. “I liked the softness, the seductiveness, the color, the fact that it went with a lot of different foods,” said Dan Duckhorn. “It seemed to me to be a wonderful wine to just enjoy. I became enchanted with Merlot.” Since its inaugural 1978 vintage, Duckhorn Vineyards has helped transform Merlot into one of the most respected luxury wines in the United States. Central to this legacy is Three Palms Vineyard. Hailed as Napa Valley’s equivalent of a first growth and the benchmark for New World Merlot, the 2014 Duckhorn Vineyards Three Palms Merlot was named *Wine Spectator’s* **“2017 Wine of the Year.”** Today, the name Duckhorn is almost synonymous with Merlot, and the winery’s Merlot program remains unrivaled in both its scope and its indelible influence on the American palate.

A WINERY BUILT ON PEOPLE

That same long-term commitment extends beyond the vineyards and winery to the people behind the wines. Reflecting a culture built on collaboration, mentorship, and deep institutional knowledge, Duckhorn Vineyards was proudly certified as a **Great Place to Work®** last year. This spirit was further reinforced by a broad-based employee ownership program unveiled in 2025, giving employees a meaningful stake in the winery’s success.

DUCKHORN TODAY — LEADERSHIP AND MOMENTUM

Today, Duckhorn Vineyards stands as one of the world’s most successful and trusted wineries. Commercially strong and critically admired, its wines consistently rank among category leaders nationwide, anchor fine-dining wine lists, and enjoy enduring loyalty from consumers.

“Fifty years is an extraordinary milestone, but what makes it truly meaningful is how Duckhorn Vineyards has sustained its values while continuing to grow and lead,” said Robert Hanson, Chief Executive Officer. “Our 50th anniversary is an important reminder that we are stewards of something truly exceptional. Duckhorn Vineyards helped define luxury Napa Valley wine, and it

continues to be a leader. At the same time, because we have spent fifty years building relationships and sharing Napa Valley with the world, we have earned the trust of consumers. As we look to our next fifty years, Duckhorn Vineyards has never been stronger, and we remain exceptionally well positioned for future success. We're excited not just to celebrate this anniversary, but to build on it in the decades to come."

A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF WINEMAKING EXCELLENCE

Over five decades, Duckhorn Vineyards has come to represent Napa Valley on both the national and international stage. Its wines have been poured at historic state dinners, inaugural celebrations, and significant cultural moments where the United States gathers to mark diplomacy, leadership, and shared values. These occasions reflect not only the quality of Duckhorn Vineyards' wines, but the role they play culturally and at the table.

FIFTY YEARS, FIFTY STORIES

As part of its yearlong anniversary celebration, Duckhorn Vineyards is launching **50 Stories**, a digital storytelling initiative that will live on its own [50 Stories website](#) beginning February 2. Throughout 2026, a series of original videos and written stories will be released, offering a deeper look at the people, places, vineyards, wines, and values that have shaped Duckhorn Vineyards over five decades. Designed as a living record, capturing voices, moments, and perspectives that reflect the continuity and collaboration at the heart of the winery, the series will explore the many hands and shared beliefs behind its enduring success. As Duckhorn Vineyards celebrates fifty years, **50 Stories** extends an invitation to experience the winery's history as it is lived today: rooted in Napa Valley, shaped by people, and still being written.

For those who wish to experience the wines of Duckhorn Vineyards firsthand, the winery will be offering special 50th anniversary tastings at Duckhorn Vineyards, as well as at The Duckhorn Collection at Paraduxx.

ABOUT THE DUCKHORN PORTFOLIO

[The Duckhorn Portfolio](#) is North America's premier luxury wine company, with eleven wineries, nine state-of-the-art winemaking facilities, five tasting rooms and over 2,200 coveted acres of vineyards spanning 38 Estate properties. Established in 1976, when vintners Dan and Margaret Duckhorn founded Napa Valley's Duckhorn Vineyards, today, our portfolio features some of North America's most revered wineries, including Duckhorn Vineyards, Decoy, Kosta Browne, Sonoma-Cutrer, Goldeneye, Calera, Greenwing, Paraduxx, Migration, Canvasback and Postmark. Sourcing grapes from our own Estate vineyards and fine growers in Napa Valley, Sonoma County, Anderson Valley, California's North and Central coasts, Oregon and Washington State, we offer a curated and comprehensive portfolio of acclaimed luxury wines with price points ranging from \$20 to \$230 across more than 15 varietals. Our wines are available throughout the United States, on five continents, and in more than 50 countries around the world.