



## Rued Wines in Dry Creek Valley AVA, Sonoma County

By James Knight



Dry Creek Valley AVA in north Sonoma County is home to long-time family vineyard growers such as Rued Wines.

When I ask Dee Rued where the crisp, lightly fruity 2017 Sauvignon Blanc that she's just poured me comes from, she can point to a block of vines just over yonder, beside the crush pad.

That's not unusual in Dry Creek Valley, an enclave of almost exclusively family-owned wineries that, like Rued, have launched their own brands to show off the best of the vineyards they've farmed for generations, and are more likely than not the folks behind the bar, too.



To kick off summer, the [Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley](#) held a media event at [Rued Wines](#) in June 2018, called Dry Creek Valley: Generations. The highlight was a 22-minute video by the same name, created by videographer John Beck, featuring longtime winegrowing families talking about the history of the valley.





## TWO VALLEYS, TWO RUEDS

The Rued family's history in California goes back to 1876, when Swiss immigrant Henry Rued came to work at Beringer Vineyards. By 1882 he was able to plant his own vineyard in the Russian River Valley.

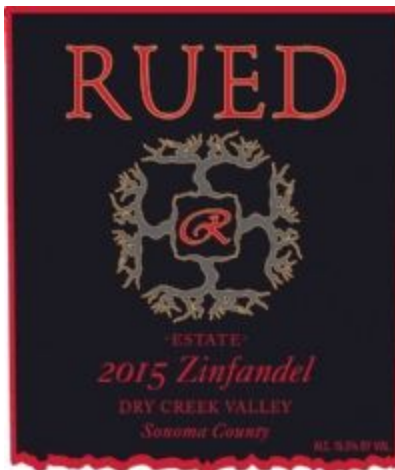


Today, although the Dry Creek Valley Rueds returned to the Russian River to grow Chardonnay in 1995, it's a cousin's Russian River Valley vineyard that gave rise to the "Rued clone" of Chardonnay that may be familiar to some of our geekier California wine fans.

So you see — it can be almost as complicated as old Burgundy around here.

#### FROM PRUNES TO PINOT—AND ZIN, AND CAB

The Rueds can tell you about a time when the sweet aroma of prunes could be smelled, drifting across the valley from the Sunsweet prune-drying plant in Healdsburg.



That's what Richard Rued's father had in mind when he purchased a plot in Dry Creek Valley in 1957 — prunes were the cash crop in those times. But the land included two acres of old grapes, and Richard took on grape growing as a Future Farmers of America project when he was in high school.

Well, the project took over to the tune of 160 acres, including bench land by the family's estate that's hidden just above Dry Creek Road, and valley floor land by the smartly designed little winery that they opened in 2006.

In the cellar, Richard and Dee's son Steve and his wife Sonia are the winemakers. Key varietals are Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, and Zinfandel from Dry Creek Valley, and Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from their Russian River Valley property.





From the hundreds of tons they grow for other wineries, they reserve about 40 for themselves. Are they the very best of the pick? Taste and see, and don't be fooled by the very reasonable prices — the grapes were grown just out back of the cellar door, after all.

Details: [Rued Wines](#), 3850 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, 707-433-3261. Open daily, 11am–4:30pm. Tasting fee, \$10; bring your own picnic, \$15, includes table, tasting and glass of wine; estate tours by reservation \$30.

<https://www.sonomacounty.com/blog/rued-wines-dry-creek-valley-ava-sonoma-county>