

ESTATE  GROWN

GARNET

Alison Crowe, Garnet Winemaker

Garnet Winemaker Alison Crowe is a California native who credits much of her decision to become a winemaker to growing up on the Santa Barbara coast, just next door to wine country. Blessed with a family that loves to cook and celebrate with the food and wines of the Central Coast, Alison has always had an appreciation for the produce of California's farms and fields.

A lover of science as well as the arts, applying to the world-famous winemaking program at UC Davis was a natural decision. Two years into her studies she worked her first harvest season at Chalone Vineyard in Monterey County. Another harvest spent in Santa Barbara's Santa Ynez Valley, as well as a year as a Cabernet Sauvignon researcher further brought home to her the lesson that great wines begin with great vineyards.

After graduating from UC Davis with a double major in winemaking and Spanish, Alison made wine at Byington Winery and Vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains, specializing in estate Pinot Noir and spent almost five years at Bonny Doon Vineyard making wines with Randall Graham.

Alison and her husband, a professional photographer, then traveled south to Argentina's Mendoza region, home to that country's best wineries. At Bodegas Salentein she worked alongside winemaking legend Michel Rolland, called by some the most influential consulting winemaker of all time. Working at the winery while her husband shot the dramatic surrounding scenery, she brought a California winemaker's perspective to the table and helped Salentein create wines reflective of their rocky soil and unique high-altitude Andean vineyards.

In recent years Alison has crafted wines from the premiere appellations of Russian River, Alexander Valley, Napa Valley and Santa Barbara County. Because of the long-term grower relationships she has developed, she is fond of saying she "makes wine literally from the ground up." "I believe in respecting the fruit and letting the vineyards speak their own particular truths. Sometimes all you have to do is get out of the way."

Today as the winemaker for Garnet, Alison believes Garnet is a true expression of its appellation. "When blending Garnet, I get to choose from the ripe, black cherries of Stanly Ranch on the eastern edge of Carneros, the red fruit and acid backbone of Diamond Ranch and Champlin Creek and finally, the dark, mysterious spiciness of Rodger's Creek on the appellation's western border. These vineyards offer a winemaker an abundance of gifts."

In addition to crafting award-winning wine, Alison is also a frequent contributor to *Wine Business Monthly* magazine, pens the popular "Wine Wizard" column for *WineMaker Magazine*, and is the author of [The Wine Maker's Answer Book](#). An enthusiast for the business side of the industry as well, she completed her MBA at UC Davis in June 2010.

When not making wine, writing about wine or studying about the business of wine, Alison can be found on her bike in the Napa Valley, casting a fly in California's back country or cooking for family and friends at the home she shares with her husband and baby son.

