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My, My, MALIBU

By Michael Cervin



"The only wine I grew up with was once a year – **Manischewitz**," Elliott Dolin tells me as we stand in his vineyard in, uh...Malibu. "Until I was about 36 all I knew was that there was red and white wine." Poor fellow. Today Dolin has Chardonnay planted in the Malibu hills and the Malibu area is slowly refining

their winemaking and skills. Dolin, a former studio musician whose weapon of choice was the electric bass, performed originally in **The Manhattan Transfer**.

He fell in with a group of friends who were wine collectors, where his education by experience took hold and at their routine gatherings they each would bring a bottle of wine to share, discuss and drink (I like this idea much better than a book club). "Any fool can go and buy the most expensive bottle," he says, and he learned from his friends about the subtleties of wine. Elliott Dolin grew up in northern **New Jersey**, and his music career of necessity brought him to L.A. He started taking wine appreciation classes at **UCLA**, and planted his vineyard, all to Chardonnay, in 2006 on a slope below his home, as I've mentioned before, in **Malibu**. I drive this point home because, though there are actually quite a few vineyard sites in Malibu, it's still such a novelty as to seem amusing. I tasted though a series of Malibu wines at a media function a while back and the overall quality was suspect. Nice people, but the wines were iffy. Then I stopped by Elliott Dolin's place in January, 2014. I was gleefully surprised by what he was accomplishing. "We would like to put Malibu on the map, but we can't plant anymore here, the land values are too great," he tells me, therefore they need to source grapes from other areas, and Dolin has done well for himself, having secured fruit from two top **Central Coast** sources; **Talley Vineyards** in Edna Valley and **Bien Nacido**, Santa Barbara's premier grower. Winemaker Kirby Anderson (formerly of Gainey Vineyards and who I learned much from before I started writing about wine) is turning out some terrific juice including a 2012 Pinot Noir Rose (\$22) with mild strawberry good acids a hint of lemon curd.



But it is the **Dolin Malibu Estate Vineyards 2011 Chardonnay**, that is the wine to ponder over as it clearly suggests that the area can indeed turn out some fine grapes.



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POINTS



2011 Dolin Malibu Estate Vineyards Chardonnay

Dijon clone 96 is the heart of this wine. Using 25% new French oak, this wine has terrific focused lemon citrus, a slight tang, and an earthy, wood quality - not oak but roasted wood – and bright acidity, all harmoniously balanced. An unforeseen delight – go get some.