

# Diamond Series



## Ehlers Estate

The story that surrounds Napa Valley's Ehlers Estate Winery can arguably be thought of as among the most compelling in the entire valley if not all of the California wine business.

Ehlers Estate begins with Jean and Sylviane Leducq, a pair of transplanted Parisians who had an endearing love for wine and the romance of the vine. The Leducqs were owners of commercial laundry businesses in France with ties to the United States. During World War II, Leducq's laundry business was responsible for cleaning many of the allied armies' uniforms and also providing surgical linens to military hospitals and facilities. After the war, the couple settled in the United States and ended up living in the bucolic setting of Leon, just outside Culpeper, Virginia, where their US cleaning business was located.

When historical records showed that none other than Thomas Jefferson had once grown grapes on their property, Jean Leducq planted his own vineyards and formed the highly respected Prince Michel Vineyard, one of the first wineries in the area. With the help of French enologist Jacques Boissenot, who suggested Leducq look west if he really intended to excel in the wine business, Leducq began acquiring small parcels of vineyard land around St. Helena in Napa Valley during 1985.

Just after the turn of the century, Leducq succeeded in joining his property with a wonderful old stone winery that was originally built by Bernard Ehlers in 1886. This acquisition formed the heart of the new Ehlers Estate where great red wines in the Bordeaux style of Leducq's beloved France were soon to follow.

The winery's first release of only 409 cases was in 2002, and was marvelously received by both the wine press and consumers who quickly grabbed up the small number of cases.

According to General Manager Kelly Duckworth McElearney, the initial Ehlers Estate offering was "a

real eye opening experience. We had certainly hoped for good public acceptance, but we were humbled by what everyone thought of our wines."

The joy of the opening reaction to the Ehlers Estate wines was saddened when founder Jean Leducq passed away later that same year. But his marvelous wife Sylviane, who is warmly referred to as Madame Leducq, was determined to ensure that the Ehlers Estate legacy her husband had started would continue unabated.

To explain the Ehlers Estate's current status requires some elucidation.

Since Jean Leducq had suffered with heart problems for a number of years, he was in the care of the famed Mayo Clinic who made most medical decisions that affected Leducq's life. He loved the clinic and at one point was determined to fund a similar operation to the Mayo Clinic in a suburb of Paris. The French quasi-Socialist government wanted no part in the project and Leducq finally renounced his French nationality in favor of Portuguese citizenship.

A committed philanthropist, Jean left Ehlers Estate in trust to the non-profit Leducq Foundation that he and Sylviane had founded in 1996. This visionary union of estate winery and philanthropic foundation has defined Ehlers Estate ever since, giving the winery a unique sense of purpose and mission that combines the pursuit of excellence with a sense of social responsibility. This mission has also brought together and inspired an exceptional team of experienced professionals who take pride in their work—making great wines while making a difference.

All the profits from Ehlers Estate Winery are put back into the foundation that supports cardiovascular research projects on an international scale.



Diamond Series

Continued on page 2



The Leducq Foundation

Ehlers Estate's viticulture program embraced organic farming in 2004, and adopted biodynamic farming practices in early 2005. These hands-on methods help to preserve the purity and character of the estate's mosaic of 32 vineyard blocks, each of which are customarily individually fermented and aged.

This year the winery will produce around 2,000 cases, the acknowledged ceiling for the tiny winery.

"Our small annual production is due to the fact that we are entirely an estate operation," explained Kelly McElearney. "Our seventeen acres under vine only allows so much fruit to work with. We are all of the same opinion that you must start with great fruit to produce great wines, and it is really as simple as that."

Bravo to everyone at Ehlers Estate Winery for the great wines they are making and the wonderful uses their operation's profits are put towards. Would that more of California's upper echelon wineries were so disposed and that their profits were put to grander use.

## Accolades and Tasting Notes

### Ehlers Estate 2005 "1886" Cabernet Sauvignon

**94-Points**, *Wine Review Online* — "This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon represents Ehlers Estate's superduper cuvée... Its grandeur is immediately apparent in the layers of aromas that rise from the glass and reinforced by an incredible finish. In between, the ripe black fruit flavors are beautifully entwined with nuances of toasty oak, herbs and smoky elements. Polished tannins give it a glossy texture. With a stated alcohol only 0.2 percent less (14.7%) than their other wines, it is clear that the absolute level of alcohol should not be sole criteria for judging wines. It's the overall balance, which in this case is impeccable, that makes a great wine."

**91-Points**, *Wine Spectator* — "A ripe, zesty expression of Cabernet, with ripe cherry, plum and raspberry fruit that's clean, focused and refreshing, ending with an elegant mouthfeel and fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2014."

## Reorder

The "1886" Cabernet Sauvignon represents the pinnacle of Ehlers Estate winemaking, and their tradition of power, grace, and sophistication continues with the 2005 vintage. Crafted from a selection of the winery's finest estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon, this is a dense, powerful wine with a fanatical cult-like following. A renowned wine from a winery with a remarkable cause, Ehlers Estate is setting a new standard for industry success.

Winery Direct: \$95.00

**Diamond Series Price:**

3 to 6 bottles-\$85.50 / bottle

12 bottles-\$80.75 / bottle

(Plus shipping)

Call: 1-800-266-8888 • Fax: 1-800-266-8889

Reorder Web Site: [www.goldmedalwine.com/member](http://www.goldmedalwine.com/member)

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