



# Diamond Wine Club

## EHLERS ESTATE

*Napa Valley*

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 U.S. 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 and Anne 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.

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

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.

Ehlers Estate's viticultural 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 4,000 cases, the acknowledged ceiling for the tiny winery.



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LAURA DÍAZ MUÑOZ,  
WINEMAKER

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The small annual production is due to the fact that the winery is entirely an estate operation. The seventeen acres under vine only allow so much fruit to work with, and the entire Ehlers Estate team is of the opinion that you must start with great fruit to produce great wines, and it is really as simple as that.

Winemaker for Ehlers Estate is Laura Díaz Muñoz, who was born and raised in Spain and developed her winemaking career throughout her home country, New Zealand and Chile. For over a decade now, Laura has been making wine in the Napa Valley working for such luminary wineries as Cardinale, Lokoya, Mt Brave, La Jota and Galerie. She joined Ehlers Estate in July of 2018 and is excited to be a part of this special property.

The team at Ehlers Estate strives to be responsible stewards of their land while continuing the legacy of Bernard and Anne Ehlers, and Jean and Sylviane Leducq, who saw the potential that today you can taste in every bottle of Ehlers Estate wine.

## Ehlers Estate 2015 “1886” Cabernet Sauvignon

600 CASES PRODUCED

**93 POINTS** —*Wine Spectator*

“Beautifully crafted and slow to unfold, but does so with wonderful grace and finesse, offering a mix of cherry, dark berry, cedar, anise and crushed rock flavors.”

**92 POINTS** —*Wine Enthusiast magazine*

“Touches of Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot figure into the mix of this impressive wine, a study in reductive oak and cherry vanilla. Substantial concentration belies an underlying foundation of acidity, that lingers and supports flashes of cinnamon and black cherry.”

### Winemaker’s Notes

“Dark black and scarlet color, rich and complex, this is a classic Napa Valley Cabernet with an underlying earthiness and soft fat tannins woven around a black plum and red fruit melody, and built on a firm acidic framework. Long finish, lingering impressions of cinnamon, coffee and dark chocolate. A classic Ehlers Estate “1886” that will continue to improve for decades.”



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**This month’s Diamond *Plus!*  
Featured Wine:**

Pono 2014 “Mana” Cabernet  
Sauvignon, Napa Valley

94 Points + Gold Medal - *Tastings.com*  
(Beverage Testing Institute)

75 CASES PRODUCED



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