

LADERA

Napa Valley

2004 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Blend

89% Cabernet Sauvignon
8% Petite Verdot
3% Merlot

Vineyards

The Ladera Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is a blend of the two excellent estate vineyards of Ladera. Lone Canyon Vineyard is located in mid Napa Valley in the western hills on the flank of Mt Veeder. It totals 480 acres with only 75 acres planted to vineyard. The site is moderate in slope to very steep with elevations up to 1,100 feet above sea level. This vineyard is relatively cool, primarily because of its elevation, but also due to its southerly location in Napa Valley. The soils are very well drained, moderately deep, clay loam. The vines range in age from 25 years old to first crop vines.

Ladera Howell Mountain vineyard is a perfect compliment to Ladera Lone Canyon. The Howell Mountain vineyard is located at an elevation of 1600 to 1800 feet, with gently rolling terrain. The soils are iron-rich, red, clay loam soils with an abundance of gravel for excellent drainage. Because of the elevation, the climate is very different from the valley floor of Napa. It tends to be above the fog line in the summer and so receives sun for a longer duration during the day. Also because of the higher elevation, the temperatures are cooler in the day and warmer at night than the valley floor.

Winemaking and Tasting Notes

The 2004 Ladera Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon was fermented with a number of different wine yeasts, finishing in 10-12 days. The wine received 0 to 7 days of skin contact after fermentation depending on the wine. The wine was barrel aged for 17 months in new (38%) and used French oak barrels, and was bottled February 23, 2006.

This wine is distinct from the Ladera vineyard designated Cabernets in that it is a blend of both estate vineyards, and it is a blend of Bordeaux varietals. Each of the Bordeaux varieties adds something different to the wine's complexity. Cabernet Sauvignon provides the varietal character, depth and structure of the wine. Petite Verdot give the wine richness on the mid palate, along with added juicy flavors to the finish. Merlot contributes the fruit flavors of raspberry and strawberry, and freshness to the aromas.

The wines from the Lone Canyon vineyard have bold tannins and are softened by the lush tannins of Howell Mountain vineyard. The wines are blended in a synergistic way to produce a premium Cabernet that does not dominate in any one character but is very well balanced. The Ladera Napa Valley is from wines that are complex and rich, but yet soft enough for earlier drinking.

The 2004 vintage was an early vintage, with temperatures on the warmer side of normal. The low crop size contributed to the wine's superb richness, structure, depth and varietal character. The wine has aromas of blackberry and raspberry fruit; anise with toasty and vanilla highlights. The tannin structure is full and highly extracted, but soft and lush. This makes the wine enjoyable now, and should also age well for another 8-10 years.