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## **Cowboys, Cabernet and Quality**

The heart of Ladera's 2001 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Lone Canyon Vineyard

You've heard of a Hollywood ending. Napa Valley's Ladera Winery had a Hollywood beginning.

It started with a visit from Robert Redford. The famed director and actor came calling on Pat and Anne Stotesbery in the spring (?) of 19XX. Struck by the beauty of the land, he wanted to lease their Montana log home and shoot scenes for his new movie "The Horse Whisperer" on their XX-acre cattle ranch. They packed up and spent the summer in Napa Valley – and soon Ladera was born.

Pat and Anne met while attending Stanford and the University of San Francisco. After college they moved back to Pat's native Minnesota, then to Montana, where Anne grew up. But they had always dreamed of returning to Napa Valley to stay. That summer, they made their decision. In January 1997, they purchased the 480-acre Lone Canyon Vineyard, hiring winemaker Karen Culler to produce their Cabernet Sauvignon.

Under Karen's winemaking expertise, Ladera has prospered. In 2000, the Stotesberys bought the three-story Brun & Chaix Winery. Carved into the side of Howell Mountain in 1886, the winery was built by an Italian stonemason with 30-inch-thick walls from a nearby quarry. Pat and Anne have since restored the facility to its former glory, including almost 18,000 square feet of caves dug into the rock, connecting two portals (one built during the winery's original construction) on the bottom floor of the winery. And true to its original design, Ladera is a gravity-flow winery, allowing for gentler handling of the grapes than pumps. Though listed in the official book "Ghost Wineries of the Napa Valley," Ladera is now anything but.

Ladera's 2001 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Lone Canyon Vineyard reflects the rugged cowboy spirit required to create it. The Lone Canyon vineyard is located in Napa Valley's western hills near Mt. Veeder. Most of the vineyards are too steep to farm; in many places it's difficult to even stand upright. But this 75-acres vineyard produces rich, intense mountain Cabernet, the result of the vines' struggle to inhabit the difficult terrain. Lone Canyon is tough land, but like the cowboys who settled here and farmed these same vineyards in the 1800s, it rewards those who are committed to quality. It is also reminiscent of the Stotesberys cattle-ranching days back in Montana. To honor the land's rich history, we nicknamed this wine "The Cowboy."

The 2001 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Lone Canyon Vineyard (\$65) is filled with concentrated flavors of blackberry and dark cherry, the result of the intense character of

the mountain fruit. It is powerful yet velvety on the finish, with a hint of spice with herbal notes. It is aged more than two years in French oak barrels in caves beneath the winery. Only 1,618 cases were produced.

For more information on Ladera Vineyards, visit [www.laderavineyards.com](http://www.laderavineyards.com).

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