



**CASEY FLAT RANCH**

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# Casey Flat Ranch 2014 Press Kit

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## About Casey Flat Ranch

Nestled high in the Blue Ridge Range of the Vaca Mountains, Casey Flat Ranch borders the eastern side of Napa County (22 miles north east of St. Helena), with sweeping views over its Capay Valley AVA. The 6,000 acre working ranch is defined by its award-winning Rhone and Bordeaux-style blends, as well as its breathtaking vistas, the purebred Longhorn cattle that roam the property, and a rich homesteading heritage that dates back to California's 19<sup>th</sup> century Gold Rush era.

With its unique history and stunning high-elevation mountain vineyards, Casey Flat Ranch produces deep, concentrated wines that evoke the raw natural beauty of the land, aided by the earnest, discriminating and pioneering team behind each bottle.

Owned by philanthropists Robert and Maura Morey for over a quarter of a century, the property originally served primarily as a retreat, reflecting their family's long-held love of nature coupled with the heritage, values and frontier spirit of the American West. As stewards of the land, the Morey family has always prioritized the preservation of its wild beauty and resources for generations to come.

It wasn't until 2003 that famed viticulturist Tom Prentice, after much study and evaluation, discovered pockets of soil and climate combinations on the property that were ideally suited to produce world-class wines. With a steady focus on sustainable farming methods and business savvy daughter Alison at the helm, the Morey family went ahead with planting in 2004. Their success soon attracted the attention of brilliant up and coming winemaker Laura Barrett, who translates the family's intrepid frontier spirit and vision into the wines.

The vineyard blocks are uniquely situated in the undulating hills of Casey Flat (named for legendary local frontiersman, John Casey), 2,000 feet above sea level. Aided by well-draining silty-clay loam soils underlain by sandstone and shale, vines benefit from a climate that compares to that of St. Helena's. Such daily temperature fluctuations of up to 40 degrees create perfect conditions for both Bordeaux and Rhone varieties.

The elevation and subsequent diurnal temperature shifts help account for the vibrant acidity of the grapes, while the hillside aspect encourages just the right amount of sun-exposure for ideal ripening.

The family's commitment to the preservation of the property's ecosystem and natural beauty means that no more than 5% of the land will ever be developed. A pristine natural sanctuary, the Ranch is home to hundreds of species of native California wildlife, including quail, deer, black bears and untold varieties of flora and other fauna. The team thus ensures that their footprint in the vineyard remains minimal, guaranteeing that the estate wines more accurately reflect their unique high mountain origins.



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## **Alison Morey Garrett Managing Partner**

As Managing Partner of Casey Flat Ranch since 2002, Alison Morey Garrett is proud to fulfill her family's longtime dream to make wines as beautiful and unique as their ranch. Her parents, proprietors Robert and Maura Morey, had vines planted in 2004 on this pristine 6,000 acre property in the Capay Valley, and today Alison carries out their vision, overseeing the overall planning, development and management of the ranch.

Born and raised in the Bay Area, Alison holds a BA in Government and minor in Theology from Georgetown University and certification in Fine & Decorative Arts from Christie's Auction House in London. She later worked at AOL and several Silicon Valley startups, but eventually realized her love of the wine world combined with her business savvy would be best put to use in her own backyard.

With their respect and reverence for nature and its thoughtful preservation, the Morey family has always held a deep-rooted respect for the traditions of the American West. Enjoyed as a family retreat for over a quarter of a century, Alison is committed to the preservation of Casey Flat Ranch as a natural oasis for generations to come.

The vineyard program stems from Alison's love of the ranch. The wines represent her desire to share its rugged natural beauty with wine lovers near and far – and anyone who seeks a strong sense of place from their glass.

Alison finds her personal sense of place at home, with husband Mark Garrett and daughters Langan and Phoebe.



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## **Brenda Bullington** **Vice President, Sales & Marketing**

As Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Brenda personifies the pioneer spirit of the ranch with her trademark Western-style panache. She oversees the distribution network, consumer outreach programs, trade communications, strategic planning, and all other sales and marketing related areas, often while donning her trademark Stetson cowgirl hat and boots. Known for her trademark smile and diminutive stature, she exudes charm and business savvy in equal doses.

Brenda joined the Casey Flat Ranch team in 2013, inspired by the Morey Family's emphasis on sustainability and the integrity of the ranch's unique native wildlife and pristine resources. An avid ambassador of the brand, Brenda's passion for the estate has translated into Casey Flat Ranch's ever expanding reach and reputation around the country.

A marketing maven, Brenda's creative approach is the result of over twenty years of wine industry experience. Before joining Casey Flat Ranch, Brenda was the Western Region Vice President for Lake County's Shannon Ridge Vineyards. Prior to that, she was the proprietor of Dué Sales and Marketing, a national brokerage and consulting company. Brenda has also held high-level positions at Ladera Vineyards in Napa, E. & J. Gallo Winery, Empson USA, Lapham Sales and Marketing and Deinhard.

Brenda is known throughout the industry for her infectious enthusiasm and can do spirit. When she's not on the road, Brenda calls Healdsburg her home base where she lives with her husband Steve and their German Short Hair Pointer, Sadie.



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## **Laura Barrett Winemaker**

Laura Barrett represents an exciting new crop of gifted young female winemakers. Hailing from Southborough, Massachusetts (about 30 miles west of Boston), her passion for wine grew out of her life-long love of science. Upon receiving a BS in Chemistry from the University of Vermont, Laura sought a career that would prove more compatible with her piquant spirit than traditional lab work. Post-graduation, she took a year off to travel, landing at Stony Ridge Vineyards, a boutique winery on Waiheke Island, New Zealand. It was at Stony Ridge where she fell in love with winemaking after spending a year working in the vineyards and cellar.

Later returning to the United States to attend UC Davis, Laura received her Masters in Viticulture & Enology, received the La Reve Foundation scholarship, awarded to female V&E students of outstanding academic standing, and traveled to the Margaret River wine region of Western Australia on the International Wine and Food Society Global Internship Award.

Soon after her return, Laura found herself working in the lab at the Napa Wine Company, where she rubbed elbows with up-and-comers who would go on to become some of the Valley's most influential winemakers. Upon graduating from Davis, she became the Assistant Winemaker at Fisher Vineyards for five years, under the direction of Mia Klein, one of Napa's most sought-after consulting winemakers (with a resume that includes Chappellet, Araujo, Spottswoode, Viader and Dalla Valle).

Laura's attraction to Casey Flat Ranch is rooted in its unique location. She saw unparalleled potential in the altitude of the vineyards and their ability to produce site-specific wines from their pristine mountain setting. Inspired by the AVA's somewhat 'untapped' aura, her inner frontierswoman was ignited and she joined the Casey Flat Ranch team in 2008. She has since been involved with the winery from the very first vintage, when she put those wines to bottle.

Laura describes her approach to winemaking as “very realistic” and credits her success at Casey Flat Ranch to the estate’s exceptional fruit. With her focus on balance, she pays close attention to tannin extraction. Her natural curiosity leads her to modest experimentation, but she prefers to let the grapes speak for themselves. Laura’s formula is simple: let the wine quietly age, taste regularly and judiciously, and blend carefully.



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## **Tom Prentice Consulting Viticulturalist**

Tom Prentice, the highly respected and unassuming founder and Chairman of Crop Care Associates, is widely regarded as one of the most knowledgeable viticulturalists in the California wine business. A genuine icon, Tom's experience spans both decades and continents. Tom has managed technical services from India to Chile, Hawaii to New Zealand, and Australia to Arizona, and throughout the state of California.

It was Tom's analysis of the Ranch's well-draining, silty clay-loam mountain soils that convinced the Morey family to plant vines. He adheres to meticulous vine-by-vine farming practices, managing crop levels and customizing irrigation by vineyard block. A licensed Pest Control Advisor, Tom's expertise in sustainable vineyard practices helps Casey Flat Ranch grapes achieve their maximum potential with minimal impact on the property's delicate ecosystem. His use of cover crops and moisture probes are consistent with his philosophy that great wine should leave a lasting impression everywhere but on the land.

Tom is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley with a Bachelor of Arts degree. A sought after authority, guest speaker, teacher and practitioner, Tom's wisdom, guidance and boot prints have informed and shaped the Casey Flat Ranch Vineyards.





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## History of the Ranch

Casey Flat Ranch represents a living monument to California history. The Winton Tribe of Native American Indians were the earliest known residents of the property, before it was settled in the mid-19th century. Cabin foundations and hand-dug wells have been found throughout the ranch, as well as Indian campsites, primitive tools, artifacts and rock formations.

The Ranch encompassed a large portion of the famous 1846 Berryessa Spanish land grant, part of the Spanish government's encouragement to permanently settle the territory now known as California. It was from the establishment of these large land grants called *ranchos*, from which the English word 'ranch' is derived. Devoted to raising cattle and sheep, the owners of the *ranchos* hired native tribes to work the land.

The 1846 Berryessa transaction took place when Pio Pico, the Governor of California, granted approximately 40,000 acres of Cañada de Capay to the three Berryessa brothers (following their father's murder by John C. Frémont's men in the Mexican American War). In 1850, American land speculators purchased large portions of what was to become Yolo County and homesteading began.

One of the speculators, John Gillig, established the areas first vineyard and winery. In 1861 the winery was awarded "the Premium" for having the finest vineyard in the state of California. Records indicate that the Capay Valley Winery on Gillig's ranch processed enough grapes to yield 30,000 gallons of wine.

The onset of the Gold Rush saw prospectors swarm much of California during this time period and the Vaca Mountains were no exception. Legendary frontiersman John Casey arrived in the mid to late 1860's and homesteaded a portion of the current property, which still bears his name.

The Ranch boasts several historic 19<sup>th</sup> century homesteader cabins and structures, most notably a small schoolhouse near the property's entrance that was used for local Indians - long-standing relics that, like the ranch, have withstood the test of time.



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## Casey Flat Ranch FAQ

### **Q. What makes Casey Flat Ranch ideally situated for high quality viticulture?**

A. The elevation, soil and climate combine to create a unique environment, perfect for the production of world-class wines.

### **Q. Where is Casey Flat Ranch?**

A. Casey Flat Ranch is ideally located, nestled 2,000 feet high in the Vaca Mountain Range anchoring the rugged western border of Northern California's Yolo County overlooking the Napa Valley and Lake Berryessa to the southwest and the Capay Valley to the east. A 90-minute drive from San Francisco and 45 minutes from Sacramento, the ranch is 22 miles north east of St. Helena.

### **Q. How did the Morey family come into Casey Flat Ranch?**

A. Alison comes from a family of East Coast entrepreneurs, who always admired the enterprising spirit, heritage and values of the American West. The Moreys have dedicated their lives to exploring frontiers, in both business and in life. They recognized such a frontier in this rugged oasis over 25 years ago, quickly falling in love with the Capay Valley and with California. Avid conservationists, they see themselves as stewards of this land, preserving it as a family retreat, and creating a legacy estate for the next generation.

### **Q. What is the topography of the property?**

A. Casey Flat Ranch is an expansive 6000-acre mountainous property, unique for its vast landscape and the plethora of wildlife it supports. The terrain is dramatic and

diverse, elevations range from 300 feet to 2400 feet, with both gentle and steep slopes cascading down onto large plateaus or *flats* and pastures. A pristine natural sanctuary, the ranch is home to quail, turkey, deer, mountain lions, black bear, bobcats and coyote.

It is also a working cattle ranch, supporting a herd of purebred longhorn cattle.

**Q. Describe the terroir of the Casey Flat Ranch vineyards.**

A. The vineyards are located in the undulating hills of Casey Flat, 2,000 feet above sea level, and planted to mainly Bordeaux and Rhone varieties. With its well-draining silty clay loams underlain by sandstone and shale, the soil type carries the local Dibble Millsholm association.

Described as a hidden oasis for viticulture, the vines benefit from temperatures that compare to the northern end of Napa Valley, averaging 8-10 degrees cooler than those of the Capay valley floor. The diurnal temperature shifts help account for the even ripening and vibrant acidity of the grapes.

**Q. What is Laura's philosophy & approach towards winemaking?**

A. Laura is always looking for the perfect ratio of balance and acidity. Her thoughtful style reflects her pensive, earthy disposition. She tends towards European elegance and restraint, with a serious focus on minerality and terroir-expression.

**Q. How does Laura describe recent vintages?**

A. Recent vintages have produced complete, rich wines of ever-higher levels of sophistication. Laura credits this uptick in quality to the maturity of the vines and her increasingly better understanding of the vineyards, resulting in a progressively hands-off approach in the cellar. She believes that Casey Flat Ranch wines are uniquely their own, and does her best to let them speak for themselves wherever she can.

**Q. What is the case production?**

A. Approximately 2400 cases total production for the Estate program. (1200 cases of the Estate Red Wine, 700 cases of the Sauvignon Blanc, 200 cases of Rose, 200 cases of Viognier, and 100 cases of Grenache).

**Q. What does the 1846 on the label stand for?**

A. It commemorates the ranch's inclusion in the 1846 Berryessa Spanish Land Grant. The area was settled soon after with the California Gold Rush, and valley locals soon named the property 'Casey Flat' for legendary frontiersman and early homesteader John Casey. The date on the label represents a tribute to the rich California history that defines the land upon which Casey Flat Ranch sits.

**Q. What is the outlook for the Capay Valley AVA in 5 years? 10 years?**

A. Viticulture on a large scale is, without question, a long game for the Capay Valley. There is limited real estate for the high-quality hillside vineyards like Casey Flat Ranch's, but with average temperatures at 8-10 degrees warmer, it can be difficult to achieve the balance more easily attainable in mountain fruit. The region needs more experts who are willing to invest in rigorous manual farming in the cooler hills. The Capay Valley AVA (established in 2003) will thus likely remain a hidden gem for the time being.



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## **The Longhorn Cattle at Casey Flat Ranch**

With their impressive horns and lumbering gait, perhaps no sight is more iconic of the Old West than that of a herd of Longhorn Cattle. Casey Flat Ranch pays homage to its western heritage with its own herd of these truly magnificent animals. A registered breeder of the cattle, the ranch is a member in good standing with the California Association of Texas Longhorn Breeders.

The family has maintained a Longhorn Cattle operation on the property for 11 years. All cattle are born at the ranch, encounter no vaccinations and are aged on the hoof in the old style. They remain there year-round and are fed a combination of barley, corn, flash and oat hay. The resulting meat is of the highest quality - tender, sweet and lean.

Current estimates have the herd numbering between 140 and 170 head, with 30 to 40 heifers as annual replacement. Registered Bulls, purchased out of Texas from the Bass Brothers Ranch have been used as the basis for the line breeding program.

Cattle are exclusively sold as recreational team-roping livestock. The current breeding program is structured for this use with special attention being paid to weight, horn length, etc. The herd is cared for by Casey Flat Ranch's experienced Livestock Manager, Mike Plechaty (who can also accommodate private visits, by appointment).