



BLACK STALLION

ESTATE WINERY

Ralf Holdenried, Director of Winemaking

Ralf Holdenried leads the winemaking team at Black Stallion Estate Winery, a Silverado Trail estate specializing in site-specific winemaking from Napa Valley's diverse terroirs. Ralf's winemaking starts in the vineyard, and draws on a deep-seated knowledge from more than two decades of creating award-winning wines in both California and his native Germany.

“The immense diversity of Napa Valley's vineyards provide an inspirational palate for a winemaker,” says Ralf. “I am fortunate to have the opportunity to hand-select fruit from some of the finest sites throughout this region.” To create his wines, Ralf ferments and ages the individual vineyards separately, allowing the unique personalities to develop. He then blends the characteristics of each lot to craft wines with incredible depth and breadth.

From childhood chores on his family's vineyard in Rheinhessen, Germany—the largest of Germany's 13 wine regions — to creating small-lot wines in Napa Valley, Ralf has a diverse and rich combination of winemaking experience. He studied winemaking and viticulture at Germany's prestigious University of Geisenheim before moving to California, where he attended University of California at Davis earning a bachelor's degree in Fermentation Science, and later a Master of Business Administration. Here, he became fascinated with California's wine culture and the exciting opportunities for crafting fine wine. “I love the California approach to making wine,” says Ralf. “There is so much room for flexibility and creativity, free from conventional customs or traditional rules.”

Ralf joined Black Stallion Estate Winery in March 2014. His prior experience includes a tenure as the winemaking director of Louis M. Martini's small-lot wines and William Hill Estate, both in Napa Valley.

