

Luxurious Ledson

The Ledson Winery was second on my list of paintings for my series for several reasons, but mostly due to its elegance and silky red wines. This winery is located on Highway 12 East of Santa Rosa towards Sonoma and sits at the base of one of the most majestic sections of the Mayacama Mountain range. This rustic mountain range makes for an interesting contrast to the castle-like Ledson buildings amongst the immaculately manicured pristine grounds. The entrance to the winery begins with a grand iron gate which must be 20ft at its peak! The gate is inscribed with the name 'Ledson' and sets the stage for the beauty and majesty within its grounds. As you meander along the driveway to the winery tasting room, you are treated to beautifully manicured white roses, vineyards as far as the eye can see, stately light posts, and of course the elegant castle building.

I've visited Ledson several times in the past with my husband, with friends, and with family. On September 21, 2019, my husband and I visited with the sole purpose of tasting wine and "experiencing" the winery in preparation for my painting. It was a warm early Fall day; the sun was shining and the vineyards were still green, not yet ready to show their fall colors. As typical for this winery, there were several limousines in the parking lot, no doubt carrying people celebrating some sort of birthday...bachelorette party...corporate getaway, etc. The grounds are meticulous, from the velvety green grass, to the dazzling white roses, and the perfectly groomed chartreuse hedges.

Upon entry into the grand castle through the immaculate white doors with sparkling beveled glass, you are greeted with a grand staircase of glistening oak (that you can't go up). This entrance is a perfect introduction into what lies ahead with beautiful oak throughout the building and the gorgeous outdoor areas.

My first sketch placed great emphasis on the iron gates, to the point where I revisited the winery two more times just to get better pictures of the gates with just the right angle. I literally became obsessed with these gates!! And what became ironic is that they never made it into the painting!! To this day, I still think of maybe placing them somehow, or at least a glimpse of them.

My goal with the mountain backdrop was to illustrate the rustic nature of this section of the Mayacamas, which on this date still showed signs of the 2017 wildfires that ravaged Sonoma and Napa counties. The hue I selected for the winery is not quite the same as the actual building, but I wanted to create a warm sense of the building and make it 'pop' against the mountain backdrop. The vineyards, white roses, and grassy lawns sort of speak for themselves.

Given the luxuriousness of this winery, I wanted to depict this characterization with a limousine. When visiting Ledson, you don't really have to dress up as they will treat you well no matter what. But if you want to overdress....this would be the place to do so!! Of course, a limousine without a steward in a tuxedo and a beautiful woman, would be just another long shiny car! The steward is actually my husband with gardening gloves (as I needed a model to pose for me), the legs belong to First Lady Melania Trump, and the hand is just a woman's hand decorated with red nails.

I hope you enjoy my painting, and hopefully have an opportunity to visit this winery and experience it for yourself!

Cheers!