



Estero Americano Ranch

Marin County, California

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Introduction



Happy California cows enjoying the organic grass

First time on the market in nearly 150 years, this 1,118±-acre California heritage ranch is one of the oldest in Marin County. It has been in the same family since the 1860's and is annually celebrated at the California State Fair as an example of sound stewardship in agriculture. Because of its unique beauty, the ranch lands have been featured in movies and commercial ads. The ranch has been USDA Certified Organic since 2006, producing Certified Animal Welfare Approved and American Grass Fed Full Blood Registered Beef Cattle, as well as a commercial herd.

Tucked within the coastal valleys of Marin County, the ranch is less than two miles from the quaint town of Valley Ford as you head east and two miles to the Pacific Ocean as you head west. Historical town of Tomales and the coastal resort towns of Dillon Beach and Bodega Bay are about 10 miles away. Petaluma and Santa Rosa are each less than 20 miles. You can be crossing the Golden Gate Bridge in less than 50 minutes.

The ranch features a modest ranch house headquarters home within the sound of the ocean, a large barn, equipment garage, corrals, ranch shop, natural spring ponds and reservoirs, rock quarry, and wildlife habitat.

The ranch has been the location of several commercial advertising photo shoots and Hollywood movies, one in 2001 starring Bruce Willis and Cate Blanchette, was nominated for a Golden Globe award, and the location manager, John Panzarella, won the COLA "California on Location Award" as the "Location Professional of the Year".

Unequaled in peace, beauty, and quiet tranquility. The ranch has almost two miles of the Estero Americano, a seldom seen land mark by the public (see page 4 for detail). Because this is a working cattle ranch, you must call Broker Todd Renfrew, to see the unique property, as entry is by *appointment only to qualified buyers*. **This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.**

Size and Description



Sun setting on the Estero Americano

The entire ranch is enrolled in the Williamson Act with Marin County.

*“The California Land Conservation Act of 1965--commonly referred to as the Williamson Act--enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, **landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower** than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. Local governments receive an annual subvention of forgone property tax revenues from the state via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971.”*

With almost 2 miles of Estero Americano the property rises from sea level to 411 feet elevation at its highest point. Rolling hills with some steep canyons, the ranch lends itself to spectacular views of the Estero Americano, Estero San Antonio, and Pacific Ocean.

Water and Utilities



Pelicans on the Estero Americano

Water is on the ranch. 22 natural springs, ponds and reservoirs have been developed for the cattle and wildlife for over 100 years. The present owner has seen photos and infrastructure of ranch roads, reservoirs and natural ponds dating back prior to 1914. The house has a 4-5 gpm well and supplies plenty of water for the main house, lab, garden and processing center.

The ranch is riparian to the Estero Americano which meanders through the northern boundary of the ranch for over two miles. It is a unique body of water providing an extraordinary water ecosystem and amazing views of the Estero, with shore birds and natural wildlife.

As described in an article in *The Press Democrat* on 4-9-09 by Robert Digitale:

*“The **Estero Americano** today remains a place that most North Bay residents have never seen, even though it lies within a short drive of Santa Rosa. The estuary is one of the few in California that has escaped development. A government report touts the dramatic, fjord-like estuary and its steep slopes and weathered cliffs on the Pacific Ocean between Dillon Beach and Bodega Bay.*

The waters often lie shut off from the oceans waves by a wide, secluded beach. On a calm day, the estuary can seem as still as a lake. In its bottom reach, the tidewater meanders wide and open between the cliffs and rolling hills. But upstream the estuary becomes a narrow ribbon, at times a muddy ditch amid cow pastures, as one kayakers guide describes it.

*The **Estero Americano** has stayed remote because there is no access overland, no public road or trail to it. It lies surrounded by privately owned grazing land. The only way for the public to draw near is by water. Kayakers and other boaters have done so for years, most of them putting in near an unadorned highway bridge west of the ranching community of Valley Ford.”*



Map of Estero Americano



Estero Americano in October 2013

Livestock



Happy California Cows enjoying the spring weather

The owners have spent a lot of capital upgrading the ranch so that it is USDA certified organic and completely fenced. Over 2/3 of the ranch fencing is new within the last two years by Southwest Fence installing green coat wire and West Texas cedar posts and specialty gates. It has deer fencing and a special pumpkin patch with ingress and egress gates off the county road for school bus visits. The springs, reservoirs and ponds are strategically placed to allow the cattle to move from pasture to pasture to prevent over grazing. Due to the climate and abundance of grass, the cattle graze year round with no extra feed.

The 500 head accommodating corrals have a covered hydraulic chute area, weigh scales, vaccination area with power and water, calf table, and medicine refrigeration. The steel beamed barn of almost ten thousand square feet, is actually a recycled Bonny Doon Airport Hangar from Bonny Doon's private access airport in Santa Cruz County, California.



The cows headed west

View of Ranch Headquarters



The ranch headquarters house is a classic modest 1200 sq ft painted redwood home with 3 bedrooms (one bedroom used for an office) and one bath, commodious front porch for ranch entertaining. Outbuildings include a 4200 sq ft ranch shop and garage which includes a walk in refrigeration unit for meat hanging. The ranch shop cement floor was constructed to accommodate a CAT D6 for entry repair. An additional stand alone lab and ranch processing meat curing facility is nearby.

The huge steel barn was originally from Santa Cruz County, and the owners carefully moved the almost ten thousand sq. ft. airport hanger from Bonny Doon private access airport and re-fabricated the beams and metal parts.

The ranch has three legal parcels and a portion of the ranch is within the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission. The land is zoned Agriculture 60 acre minimum for home building. A call to the Marin County Planning group would be a good place to start to discuss building requirements. (415) 473-6269.

A unique feature of the ranch is the historical Bay Trees natural private amphitheater over looking the Estero Americano. A gathering place for weddings, spiritual meetings and sacred events.

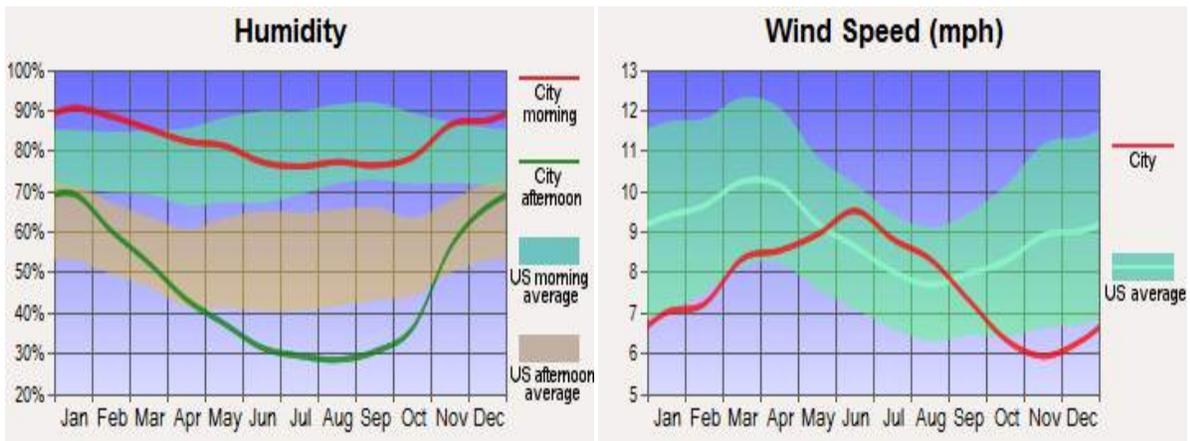
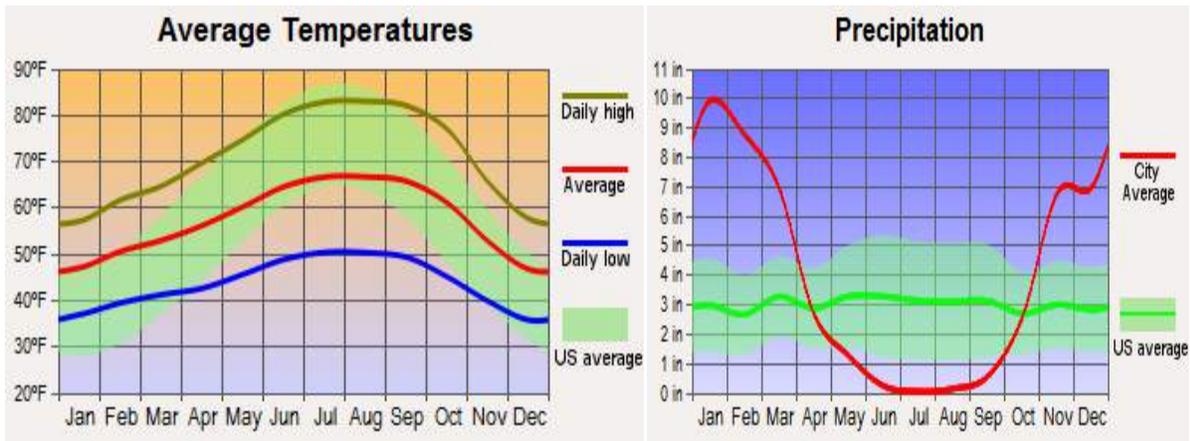
The property has a plethora of wildlife: deer, turkey, quail, eagles, burrowing owls, bobcats, mountain lions, birds of all color, pelicans, ducks, geese, shore birds, and everything in between. It is a National Registered Way Station for the Monarch Butterfly. The property even has a "*grandfathered*" rock quarry in place which for over 100 years has provided the rock and gravel for the network of infrastructure ranch roads, as well as the neighboring farming community and Marin County roads.

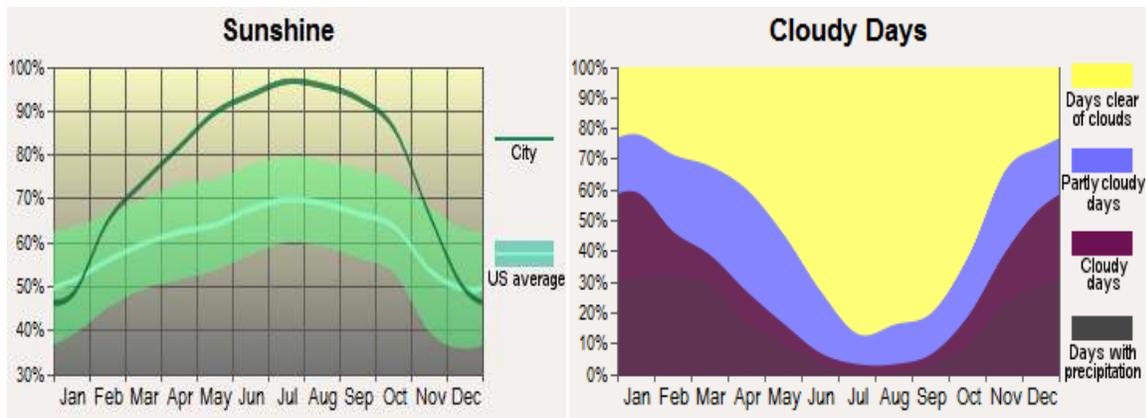


Cows rotating to next pasture

Weather and Marin County







The fog rolling in August 2013

Marin County as noted in part from the Visitor's Bureau:

Marin County is one famous bridge (Golden Gate) away from San Francisco. And right next door to the vineyards of Napa and Sonoma. Closer than you could ever imagine to everything that's unique in this magnificent corner of California.

Wikipedia notes in part:

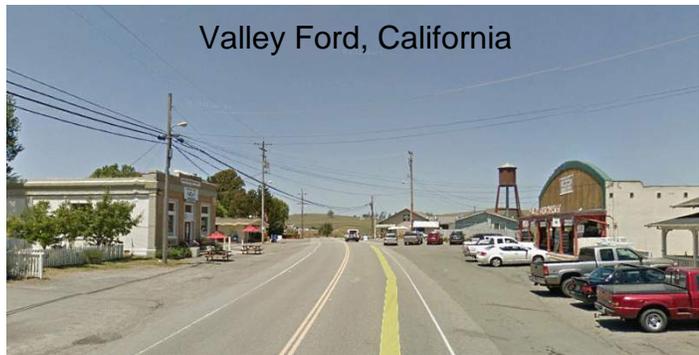
Marin County is located in the North San Francisco Bay Area of the State of California, across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco County. As of 2010, its population was about 252,400. Its county seat is San Rafael and its largest employer is the county government. Marin County is well known for its natural beauty. In May 2009, Marin County had the fifth highest income per capita in the United States at about \$91,480, and currently the highest per capita income in California.

Located in the county, is George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch. Autodesk, the publisher of AutoCAD, is also located there, as well as numerous other high-tech companies. The Marin County Civic Center was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and draws thousands of visitors a year to guided tours of its arch and atrium design.

Mountain biking was invented on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais in Marin. Marin County's natural sites include the Muir Woods redwood forest, the Marin Headlands, Stinson Beach, the Point Reyes National Seashore, and Mount Tamalpais. Marin County is one of the original 27 counties of California, created February 18, 1850, following adoption of the California Constitution of 1849 and just months before the state was admitted to the Union.

*This **Estero Americano Ranch** was established seventeen years thereafter.*

The nearby town of Valley Ford, CA, as noted in part in Wikipedia, is an unincorporated community in the adjacent county of Sonoma. It is located on State Route 1 in an area of rolling hills about 75 minutes north of San Francisco by automobile. Like all of Sonoma County, Valley Ford is included in both the San Francisco Bay Area and the Redwood Empire. The village lies just north of the Estero Americano, about 5 mi from the Pacific Ocean. It is 7 mi north of Dillon Beach, 9 mi east of the town of Bodega Bay and 20 mi southeast of Jenner.



Valley Ford had a grain mill in the mid-19th century. Starting in the 1870's, Valley Ford was a stop on the North Pacific Coast Railroad connecting Cazadero to the Sausalito ferry, enabling local ranchers and fishers to export produce to San Francisco.

Prior to its settlement by Europeans, the indigenous Coast Miwok and Pomo people hunted, fished, and gathered in the area. A Miwok village named Ewapalt has been documented in the Valley Ford area. Europeans explored the coastline in the early 17th century but did not settle until 1812, when Russian fur traders came south from Alaska and built Fort Ross about 22 mi northwest of Valley Ford.

The Russians remained until 1841, when the area came under Mexican rule. In 1850, the year California became a U.S. state, the area was made part of Sonoma County.



In 1976, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installation art piece, Christo Running Fence passed through Valley Ford on its way through Marin County to Bodega Bay and the Pacific Ocean, The Smithsonian called it "the single most important work of art in the latter half of the 20th century."

This **Estero Americano Ranch** is in the area of The Running Christo Fence.

Offering Price

Please call us for a price.

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