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Hi Sang Lee is proud of his motto "plus one," which means making the effort to take one more step. "We want to be the best at whatever we do," he said.

It took many steps—and locals estimate over \$25 million—for Mr. Lee to achieve one of his goals: Create a winery that could reach the pinnacle of the competitive, ego-fueled California winemaking community. In 2005, Mr. Lee, a 65-year-old Korean businessman nicknamed Chairman Lee, bought six vineyard acres, an old ranch house, a barn and the crumbling ruins of a 19th-century winery. He then hired what he believed was the best architect (Howard Backen), the most esteemed winemaker (Philippe Melka) and the most professional vineyard manager (Pete Richmond). Over the next five years Mr. Lee completed Dana Estates, a winery that specializes in single-vineyard Cabernets. In 2009, wine critic Robert Parker gave the 2007 Dana Estates Lotus Cabernet a perfect 100 points.

At a recent dinner party at Dana Estates, Mr. Lee gave a toast and took a sip of his top-scoring Cabernet. "Not bad," he joked, eyeing guests including veteran vintner Bill Harlan of nearby Harlan Estate, which makes similar-style Cabernets that have also earned perfect scores.

Mr. Lee sees his winery, which measures about 27,000 square feet, as an extension of his home and as his primary entertaining venue. A courtyard, where 130-year-old restored stone walls surround pistachio trees, leads inside to an entry of a copper rotunda, 22 feet in diameter, its ceiling embedded with tiny lights. A round table stands in the middle and is surrounded on all sides by Mr. Lee's collection of a few thousand bottles behind locked glass doors.

From the rotunda, dark hallways lead to the three fermentation caves, a large living room and the dining room, where a 16-foot-long walnut table sits below three big wrought-iron chandeliers hanging from a 28-foot-high ceiling. An entire glass wall pivots horizontally, opening the room to the courtyard outside. A modern Asian feel comes from long sheer curtains, Korean stone sculptures and a large painting by contemporary Chinese artist Lu Jian Jun of a woman in a traditional robe but bare feet. Classical music plays loudly throughout, as Mr. Lee believes wine, like people, needs music to thrive. (The music is turned off at night so the wine can sleep.)

On a small hill behind the winery is the 2,200-square-foot rebuilt home, originally a four-bedroom ranch that was taken down to its studs and converted into a one-bedroom house with a white marble kitchen, an open living and dining room that stretches the length of the house and an enormous screened-in porch overlooking the vineyard. A large garden in back features a fountain that starts with an antique millstone, with water flowing down a 60-foot stainless steel trough-like chute.

Further up the hill is a swimming pool, pool house with outdoor entertaining area and bocce court. On the other side sits on a 1,800-square-foot barn that was also completely rebuilt, adding a guest room and kitchen.

Local architects estimate the cost of the whole project to be over \$600 a square foot, about double the cost of building an average high-end house in Napa. The project's architect Mr. Backen said that, unlike most of his clients' designs, Mr. Lee's was never compromised by cost. "I had a hundred percent freedom. I'd explain what I wanted to do and then I'd get to do it," Mr. Backen said.

Mr. Lee made his fortune expanding the flour-milling company he inherited from his father and developing it into the Woonsan Group, a conglomerate in businesses ranging from pet food to Ferrari dealerships. He discovered wine in the 1970s during a weekend at Stowe, Vt., and began importing wines in 1996 (he's now the third-largest importer of fine wine into Korea). In 1999 Mr. Lee came to Napa to persuade wineries to export to Korea. After befriending some winemakers, he decided to try his hand.

"I feel at home here now. Before I was a visitor," said Mr. Lee, who swaps out his black glasses in Korea for a yellow pair when he's in Napa for a more casual look. He and his wife live primarily in a restored traditional home in Seoul—he heads to Napa about once a month and spends a month there in the summer.

It took 2½ years for Mr. Lee to approve the design for the winery's label. "He looks very friendly but inside he is very strong. He never compromises," said Jae Chun, Mr. Lee's son-in-law who runs Dana Estates. Although it has the capacity to produce far more, Dana Estates produces only about 600 cases a year because only the best grapes are used.

Last month, before the dinner party started, Don Weaver, director of Harlan Estate, toured the winery, noting the similarities in the architecture to his winery, also designed by Mr. Backen. The similarities ended when Mr. Weaver entered a 130-foot-long, 26-foot-wide cave with barrels sitting under eight 16-foot-tall steel arches embedded with lighting.

"Wow, have you seen this yet? Is this new?" Mr. Weaver asked. Mr. Harlan nodded. "Mr. Lee has taken everything to an even higher level," he said.