



Diamond Wine Club

BRAVANTE VINEYARDS

Napa Valley

Neither George nor his wife-to-be Nancy had any idea a trip to Napa Valley forty years ago would have a profound effect on their lives. At the time, George was part of the Bass Family (oil and real estate company) of Ft. Worth's real estate division. The New Jersey native was simply visiting the Howell Mountain area of Napa when he decided he really liked what he saw.

Shortly thereafter, he purchased a piece of property there, simply because he liked the view.

"It was then that people started telling me that some rows of vineyards would look really good in this meadow below the spot we intended to build a house," Bravante recently recalled. "We thought about it and agreed. Once I started into the farming end of the business, I found I really enjoyed it and the rest, as they say, is history."

That was in 1980. By 1996, George Bravante was selling fruit to the likes of Robert Mondavi and other top Napa Valley wineries. Again, close friends began encouraging him to make some wine on his own. After all, the Howell Mountain appellation (awarded in 1984) was among the most coveted in Napa Valley and the home to such winery powerhouses as Dunn, Turley, La Jota, and many more. Rugged and remote, Howell Mountain was arguably California's top Cabernet Sauvignon growing area.

The Bravantes made the decision to get into the winery business and partnered with old friends who shared their vision for crafting great wines and uncompromising quality. Built on twenty acres of undeveloped land on Howell Mountain, the Bravante Estate Stone Ridge Vineyard was planted in early 1998 by viticulturist Peter Murphy to Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Another small vineyard, just down the road, was acquired in 2000 and planted to the same three varietals, plus small

amounts of Sauvignon Blanc Musque, Petit Verdot, and Malbec.

The Bravantes also teamed up with winemaker Duane Dappen, who has been involved with Bravante Vineyards' production since the beginning, and celebrated his twentieth year with the winery in 2019. Dappen's extensive resume includes experience with Grigich Hills and Rombauer to name a couple. His mark on Bravante Vineyards' portfolio became immediately apparent from the get-go, as the winery began garnering impressive scores from industry periodicals and numerous awards in top competitions. In 2007, the respected Wine & Spirits magazine even named Bravante Vineyards its Winery of the Year, a distinctive award from the prestigious periodical.

After a number of years of custom crushing their fruit at other local wineries, they built their own winery next to their vineyards and unveiled the intricately designed, state-of-the-art estate in 2009. Included in the property is an impressive cave, amazingly carved into the side of a section of the mountain that affords a constant 56-degree temperature at all times. At this time, Bravante Vineyards also gained the coveted status of being 100% estate grown, produced and bottled.

"We are extremely proud of what we have accomplished," Bravante added. "We took a simple plan and it came out better than anyone expected. We have some additional growth possible in the foreseeable future and now have a complete story to tell."

Nancy Bravante works alongside her husband and handles the financial end of the business, an all-important aspect of the small winery.



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GEORGE & NANCY BRAVANTE,
OWNERS

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Over the years, Bravante Vineyards has taken its place among Howell Mountain's revered wineries and has kept to its premium style in the manner Bravante and his partners chose to pursue.

Visits to the winery are by appointment only and are highly personalized, held in one of the two caves on site where visitors have the opportunity to taste current release wines, including the high-end reserves. Located well off the beaten path outside of St. Helena, a visit to Bravante Vineyards promises to be a fun, educational and memorable experience.

We are proud to offer the highly-rated Bravante 2014 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon to our Diamond Wine Club members and hope you enjoy it to its fullest. Cheers!

Bravante 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

95 POINTS + Named "One of the Year's Best U.S. Cabernets"

— *Wine & Spirits magazine*

"This Cabernet, aged in caves carved out of the volcanic rock at Stone Ridge Vineyard, has nothing overtly fruity about it; instead, the wine completely saturates the palate with its sophisticated, earthy flavors. What's arresting is its energy, coming through in shades of light and shadow, in an explosion of volcanic intensity that feels monumental and coordinated, the power expressed as motion and dark flavor rather than heat.

That liveliness and energy continues to determine the wine's development over the course of several days, as it will if you keep it in bottle for five years or more."

93 POINTS — *James Suckling*

"Impressive focus and a long stream of fine tannins certainly speaks to the quality of the Cabernet fruit at the heart of this wine. Aromas of cassis and blueberries follow through to flavors on the palate in seamless, suave style. A blend of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Cabernet Franc."



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**This month's Diamond *Plus!*
Featured Wine:**

Mathew Bruno 2013
Cabernet Sauvignon,
Napa Valley

95 Points + Best of Class + Double Gold Medal
- West Coast Wine Competition

540 CASES PRODUCED

