

Diamond Series



Lail Vineyards

This month's *Diamond Series* selection, Lail Vineyards, is a winery that can literally trace its roots back to the very beginning of wine history in Napa Valley, the area in Northern California that most experts consider the finest wine-producing locale in this country.

To elucidate further, Lail Vineyards traces directly back to legendary winemaker Gustave Niebaum, the Finnish sea captain turned fur trader who founded the original Inglenook Winery back in 1879. Niebaum built his Rutherford property into one of the finest wineries in the world and produced the highest caliber wines to critical world-wide acclaim.

When Niebaum died, Inglenook eventually fell to his great nephew John Daniel, Jr., who continued Niebaum's impeccable tradition of producing great wines, and in particular great Cabernets. With the repeal of Prohibition in the early 1930's, Daniel produced a string of world-class Cabernets that ended in 1964, and has seldom been equaled thereafter. Circumstances forced the sale of Inglenook and a series of corporate decisions by the new owner to utilize the scope and power of the Inglenook name soon became the downfall of the once proud winery.

Three decades later, John Daniel, Jr.'s youngest daughter, Robin Daniel Lail, who had grown up at Inglenook and had watched in disbelief as the property changed hands, decided to reenter the wine world. Robin recalled the splendid long-lived wines her father had once produced and vowed to recreate a new winery in his memory.

"Getting back in the wine business was not something I had to do," Robin Lail confessed. "I literally grew up in the wine business as part of its pulse. My ancestors left such a beautiful legacy and made such substantial contributions. I want if at all possible to be able to pass on some of the greatness they left."

It's not that Robin Lail is now without great practical experience of her own. In 1982, she co-founded (along with Christian Moueix of Chateau Petrus) the marvelous Dominus Estate that she held until 1995.

That same year, Robin Lail took the step she had always yearned for. Along with her now famous architect/husband

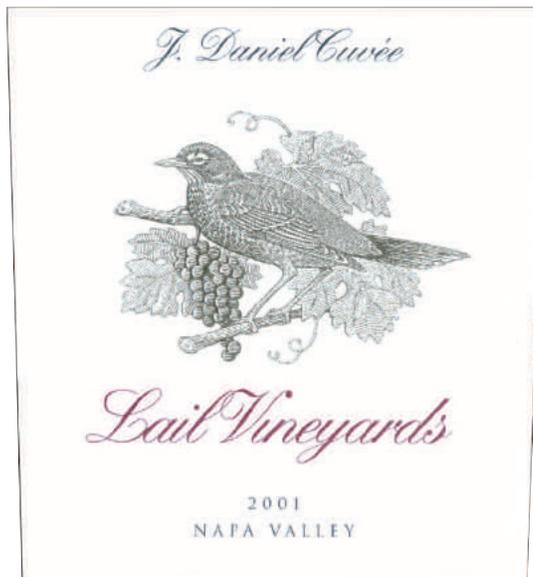
Jon, she founded Lail Vineyards, a tiny producer of extraordinary quality wines that utilized the fruit from two vineyards she had personally selected. The first was a small vineyard in Yountville that was originally part of her family's famous Napanook Vineyard that has produced superlative wines for many decades. She also planted a smallish 3-acre vineyard on prestigious Howell Mountain, generally considered the Mecca of Napa Valley vineyard sites.

Lail Vineyards' first release came in 1998 and was only 450 cases.

"We started small and have kept our production limited," Lail added. Since

the first release, the winery's production has only grown to 3,900 cases. The team is very specific about which lots go into the final blends, and to make the best wines possible, keeping the production small is completely necessary.

Robin Lail realizes, however, that the present time differs greatly from the period of her family's former success.



Diamond Series

Continued on page 2



“When you consider that 98% of today’s wines are consumed within one week of purchase,” she related, “you can see the challenge everyone in the wine business faces. The wine business is a moving target that changes constantly

and it’s up to us to be aware of those changes and adjust to them. The 21st Century is an entirely new picture and we must evolve as the circumstances change.”

Robin is pleased that her daughter, Erin Dixon, has followed her into the business and now serves as Lail Vineyards’ operations manager. Like her mother, Erin possesses a true passion for the wine business.

“Any person in the wine business is in it for the pure passion it offers,” Robin added flatly. “You don’t do it because it is expected of you.”

The four diamonds on Lail’s label also give a noteworthy double meaning, commemorating the diamonds on Inglenook’s greatest wines and representing the four partners of Lail Vineyards (Robin, Jon, and daughters Erin and Shannon). We find it incredibly fitting to feature Lail Vineyards as this month’s *Diamond Series* selection.

Accolades and Tasting Notes

94-Points, Robert Parker’s *The Wine Advocate* - “The 2005 J. Daniel Cuvée has put on considerable weight since last year. This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is full-bodied, powerful, tannic, and seems to combine the best of both a top Bordeaux and a Napa Cabernet Sauvignon. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2030.”

93 Points, *Stephen Tanzer* - “Good full medium ruby. Black cherry, cassis and licorice on the slightly medicinal nose. Pliant, juicy and spicy, with good grip to the flavors of dark berries, plum and bittersweet chocolate; this reminded me of a St. Julien. Nicely tactile wine, finishing persistent and complex, with dusty tannins. A very successful vintage for this wine.”

One of the Stellar Napa Cabs, *Food & Wine* magazine - “An impressive synthesis of structure with power, elegance and richness; a Howell Mountain standout.”

Philippe Melka Winemaker Notes - “The wine shows intense ruby color. The very seductive nose reveals fresh crushed berries of cassis, strawberry and cherry essence. The attack in the mouth is dense with soft texture and layered with fruit. It expresses the finesse and harmony of a ‘grand vin.’ The finish arrives with vibrancy and pure tannins.”

Reorder

Lail Vineyards traces its Napa Valley roots back five generations and this flagship J. Daniel Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon brings to each glass an incredibly historic family winemaking tradition. With the blend of their ingredients – the land, the seasons, the winemaking team and the generations who led the way – the 2005 J. Daniel Cuvée is an exceptional vintage through which the Lails continue their passionate quest to produce wines among the finest in the world.

Winery Direct: \$125.00 / bottle

Diamond Series Price:

2-Bottle members.....\$99.00 / bottle

4-Bottle Members &

Multi-Series Members...\$95.00 / bottle

(Plus shipping)

Call: 1-800-266-8888 • Fax: 1-800-266-8889
Reorder Web Site: www.goldmedalwine.com/member
E-mail: orders@goldmedalwine.com

