



Platinum Wine Club

90+ Rated, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers.

Dragonette Cellars | Santa Barbara County

As with many small wineries, it might be considered something of a cliché to say the owners of upstart Dragonette Cellars all love wine. A thorough examination into the rather successful Santa Barbara County winery has proved beyond a doubt that those same owners *really* love wine. In fact, their love of the almighty grape governs their every action.

To set the facts, Dragonette Cellars is the product of brothers John and Steve Dragonette, and their best friend, Brandon Sparks-Gillis. It seems that John and Brandon found themselves working for famous Los Angeles wine retailer *Wally's* and formed a bond that would eventually lead to the establishment of Dragonette Cellars. John's younger brother Steve came aboard and the entity was soon in the business of making wine.

"We all come from different business backgrounds," confessed Brandon Sparks-Gillis. "John was a lawyer taking a wine hiatus from his career, and Steve was working as a computer engineer. I was a geology major in college, but I had already turned to the wine business and had worked in various capacities for some significant wineries both in California and abroad."

The plan hatched by the three friends was quite simple: Establish a winery that would use prime Santa Barbara County grapes and hand-produce the finest wines possible. The trio figured they had something of a leg up since they had a wealth of experience between them. John had studied wine on his own for the past ten years and had apprenticed at renowned Fiddlehead Cellars. He had also worked for three years for one of the area's top vineyard management companies, and had developed great relationships with a number of the leading growers in the area. Sparks-Gillis' experience included the cultish Sine Qua Non Winery of Manfred Krankl and the highly-rated Torbreck Vintners of the Barossa Valley in Australia.

The name 'Dragonette' was selected for the winery because it carried a certain panache of mystery and uniqueness. The family name was originally Italian (Dragonetti), but was changed when the family emigrated from Italy in the 1930's.

"We all thought that *Dragonette* was perfect for our new venture," continued Brandon Sparks-Gillis.

"When Steve's wife Jen came up with the logo that looked and felt medieval, we knew we had something special. Graphic artist Jon Krauss took it from there and our labeling worked out much better than expected."

The Dragonette Cellars logo is a story in itself. The logo is actually an old alchemist symbol for the 'elixir of life' or 'drinkable gold.' During medieval times, it was believed that gold contained certain medicinal properties and the alchemists sought a process by which gold could be dissolved into a liquid that could then be ingested to obtain healing properties. For Dragonette Cellars, the symbol was a perfect fit.

"We have been told that many of our customers identify with the story behind Dragonette Cellars, and that is exactly what we had hoped for," added Sparks-Gillis.

Dragonette Cellars' first release was a minuscule 300 cases in 2006. Aided by exceptional scores and medals, the tiny winery has expanded and will produce about 5,000 cases this year, with no immediate plans to increase production.

"Since we do all the work ourselves, from vineyard to bottle, we feel that the 5,000 case level is all we can handle," Sparks-Gillis continued. "With us, it is all about hand growing and hand producing our wines. We even have long-term relationships with some of our growers that allow us to go into their vineyards and perform the maintenance work ourselves. That way, we are assured of getting exactly what we want from the vines, and I can't begin to tell you how important that is to making great wines."

Dragonette Cellars' trio of owners says they are truly humbled by the public's response to their wines. They produce all wines at their smallish winery in Lompoc, California and have a tasting room in nearby Los Olivos across from the Corner Coffee House.

The arrangement between the three close friends has worked to perfection and even more accolades can be expected in the future. "We all grow, crush, taste and decide on each wine," Sparks-Gillis concluded. "Along the way, we have met some really wonderful people who really enjoy our wines. I ask myself, what more can you ask for? Somehow, I never seem to get an answer."



Dragonette | 2016 'Seven' Syrah, Santa Ynez Valley

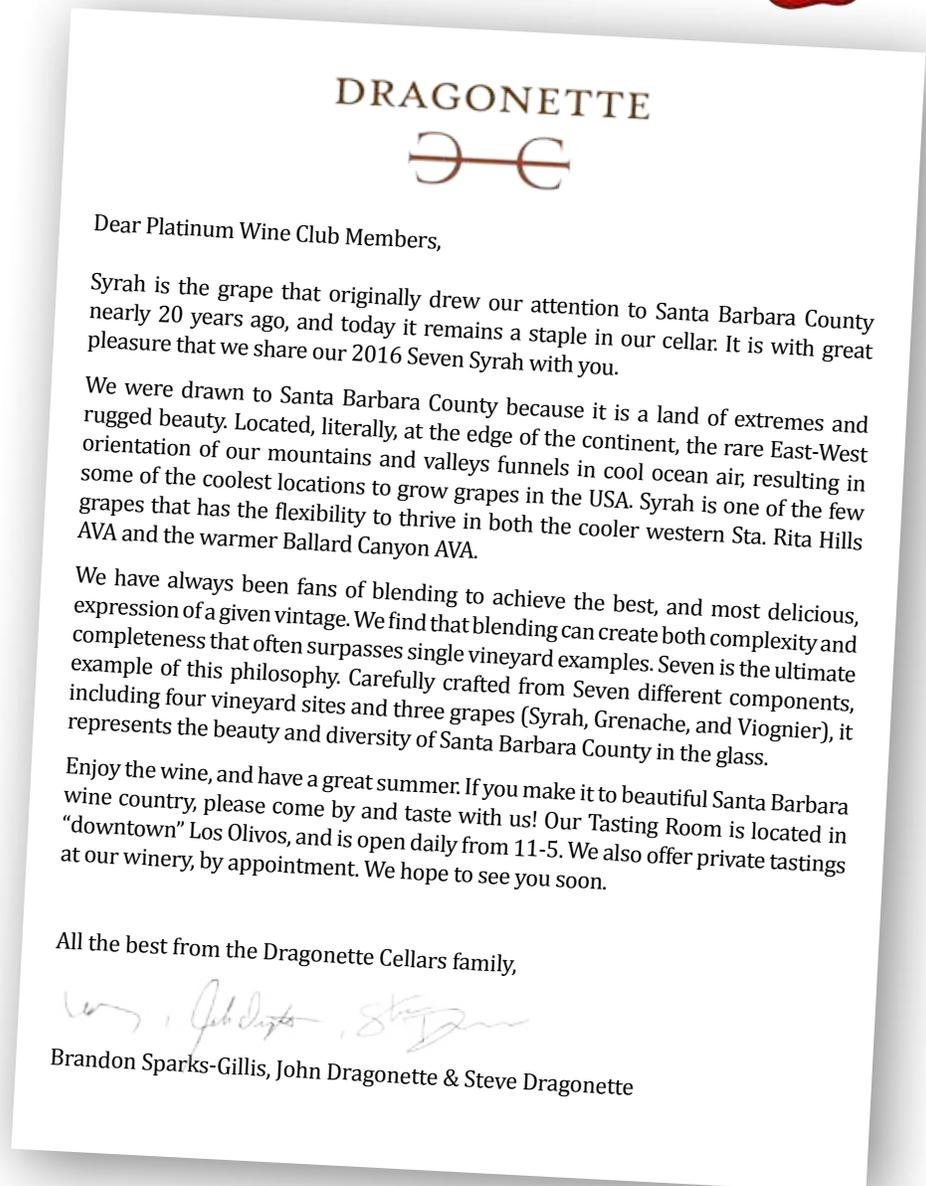


93 POINTS
— *Wine & Spirits magazine*

92 POINTS
— *Connoisseurs' Guide*

575 cases produced

Dragonette's 2016 'Seven' Syrah is a blend of 89% Syrah, 10% Grenache and 1% Viognier from four vineyards within the Sta. Rita Hills and Ballard Canyon AVA's of Santa Barbara County. The seven components (three varietals and four vineyards) provided the inspiration for the name, *Seven*, and the result is a beautifully complex wine that represents the diversity of the region. This Syrah is a deep, densely filled blend that delivers plenty of concentrated blackberry fruit with notes of pepper, black mushrooms, black cherries and potpourri before coming together in a smoky finish. Full-bodied and deliciously savory with soft, fine-grained tannins, this Syrah can be counted on to evolve in the cellar for another six to ten years. Aged 18 months in oak. Enjoy!



DRAGONETTE

Dear Platinum Wine Club Members,

Syrah is the grape that originally drew our attention to Santa Barbara County nearly 20 years ago, and today it remains a staple in our cellar. It is with great pleasure that we share our 2016 Seven Syrah with you.

We were drawn to Santa Barbara County because it is a land of extremes and rugged beauty. Located, literally, at the edge of the continent, the rare East-West orientation of our mountains and valleys funnels in cool ocean air, resulting in some of the coolest locations to grow grapes in the USA. Syrah is one of the few grapes that has the flexibility to thrive in both the cooler western Sta. Rita Hills AVA and the warmer Ballard Canyon AVA.

We have always been fans of blending to achieve the best, and most delicious, expression of a given vintage. We find that blending can create both complexity and completeness that often surpasses single vineyard examples. Seven is the ultimate example of this philosophy. Carefully crafted from Seven different components, including four vineyard sites and three grapes (Syrah, Grenache, and Viognier), it represents the beauty and diversity of Santa Barbara County in the glass.

Enjoy the wine, and have a great summer. If you make it to beautiful Santa Barbara wine country, please come by and taste with us! Our Tasting Room is located in "downtown" Los Olivos, and is open daily from 11-5. We also offer private tastings at our winery, by appointment. We hope to see you soon.

All the best from the Dragonette Cellars family,

 Brandon Sparks-Gillis, John Dragonette & Steve Dragonette



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 93 Points + Cellar Selection
 - *Wine Enthusiast magazine*
 200 Cases Produced

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