



PLATINUM SERIES



Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

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 relatively new 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 miniscule 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 as the new kid on the block. 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 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."



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TASTING NOTES

93 POINTS
-Connoisseurs' Guide

92 POINTS
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91 POINTS
-Wine Spectator

550 Cases Produced

The 2012 MJM is Dragonette Cellars' signature, Syrah-based blend, named in honor of Brandon, John, and Steve's wives and co-conspirators in this winery venture (Mitchi, Jen, and Michelle). The wine attests to their belief that Syrah from cooler sites in Santa Barbara and Paso Robles make wines of extraordinary depth, aromatic complexity, elegance, and longevity, on par with those from the great growing regions of the world. With fruit sourced from renowned sites on the Central Coast, this blend of 95% Syrah, 4% Grenache, and 1% Viognier is bold and dramatic with a beautiful concentration of complex, focused flavors. Deep, dark berry fruit notes mingle with rich oak and spice on a full-bodied, rounded palate with ripe tannins. Aged 27 months in oak. Enjoy now until 2022.

DRAGONETTE CELLARS



Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

Greetings from the Santa Ynez Valley! We are proud to present you with our 2012 MJM, Santa Barbara County. MJM is our signature, Syrah-based blend, combining our favorite few barrels of Syrah (some co-fermented with small amounts of Viognier) with small amounts of Grenache. The name MJM is an homage to Mitchi, Jen, and Michelle, our wives and co-conspirators in the fabulous journey that began in 2005 when we launched this winery.

This wine is crafted from four superlative vineyards, all of which we farm on per acre contracts, to allow us to farm for low yields and maximum quality. John Sebastiano (Santa Ynez Valley at the edge of the Sta. Rita Hills) provides 50% of the fruit for this wine and is our coolest Syrah site, which results in remarkable aromatics of spice and dark fruits, in a wild, medium bodied frame with plenty of earth. Stolpman Vineyard (Ballard Canyon) represents 30% of the blend. It is expertly farmed organically and with little irrigation, producing low yields of spectacularly dark, intense red fruits and meaty notes. Thompson (Los Alamos Valley) is 10% of the blend. Our blocks are at the top of the vineyard's steep, south-facing, shale slopes, where cool ocean influences give intense blue fruits with solid structure. Harrison Clarke (Ballard Canyon) contributes 10% of the blend. This vineyard yields tiny bunches of grapes whose wines combine blackberry fruit and minerals.

We harvest each vineyard block separately and ensure only the best fruit makes it to the winery. We ferment and age each lot separately in various oak barrels, and once the wines have developed their personalities, we taste and select the most intense and age worthy-lots for the MJM.

Enjoy the wine and have a great Fall season. If you make it to beautiful Santa Barbara wine country, please come by and taste with us!

All the best from the Dragonette Cellars family,

Brandon Sparks-Gillis, John Dragonette & Steve Dragonette

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REORDERS

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