



# Diamond Wine Club

## HILL FAMILY ESTATE

### Napa Valley

The word 'family' in a winery name can have different connotations. Some utilize the name for marketing purposes and some to denote tradition regarding the winery.

At Hill Family Estate, the term 'family' means that all aspects of the word are meticulously formed and integrated into the daily routine of the business.

"We are actually a fourth-generation of the Hill Family," pointed out Ryan Hill, one of the owners and the director of sales for the winery. "My great-grandfather grew apricots around San Jose and my grandfather grew prunes and apples. My dad, Doug, has grown exceptional grapes for almost four decades and my sister Carly and I are the fourth generation in the agribusiness."

Doug Hill started everything, wine wise, back in 1977 when he acquired his first vineyards. Since then, eleven different vineyard locations have been added to the Hill Family Estate portfolio, mostly in Napa Valley and its environs. For nearly four decades, the fruit was sold to the likes of Far Niente Winery, Silver Oak Cellars, Duckhorn Vineyards, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Caymus Vineyards, Cakebread Cellars and a host of other winery luminaries. His grapes were considered among the finest grown in the prestigious Napa Valley. Hill Family Estate's vineyards now surpass more than 100 acres and enjoy numerous significant sub-appellations within Napa Valley.

Sometime after the turn of the century, Ryan and Carly Hill approached their father with an adventuresome idea. "Carly and I realized we were not farmers like our parents," Ryan Hill explained. "Dad never wanted to be a vintner, but we kids both enjoyed the aspect of having our own winery with our family name on it. Our family had sold our marvelous fruit to the greatest Napa wineries and we knew we could do well if given the opportunity."

Parents Doug and Darci Hill endorsed their children's aspirations and in 2001, the first fruit that would become Hill Family Estate was processed. A total of around 980 cases were produced and released in 2004.

The new winery was immediately acclaimed and vaulted into national prominence. Awards and industry plaudits accumulated in little time. The winery was well on its way to realization.

Today's Hill Family Estate produces some 10,000 cases annually.

*What's left to do? Any goals for the winery?* "We are just beginning," Ryan Hill stated proudly. "We have a number of goals ahead of us. First and foremost, we need to prepare our venture for the next Hill generation. My children are son, Landon, and daughter, Charlotte. We intend for this to last for future generations, just as our forbearers did for us."

"We intend to acquire more vineyard rights and I definitely feel that we need to make our wines more worldly."

*Worldly?* "Yes, worldly. We would like to see Hill Family Estate become a household name and a force to be reckoned with in the wine industry. This is like the first inning of a long baseball game. We have been very prudent with our earnings and whenever something interesting (vineyard-wise) comes around, we intend to act. You can never have too much great fruit and great fruit comes from great vineyards. We also hope for added exposure in our nation's top restaurants and additional high quality restaurants abroad."

Hill also feels that his family has played it straight in the wine business. "We haven't burned any bridges and we are extremely hard-working people. We hope that our customers fall in love with our family and respect our family's dedication to our wines."

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RYAN HILL,  
PROPRIETOR

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Hill Family Estate has opened a tasting facility in downtown Yountville, directly down from the famous French Laundry Restaurant of Chef Thomas Keller. Ryan Hill was formerly a sommelier at Keller’s Bouchon Restaurant, a classical French bistro also located in Yountville.

“I saw the other side of the wine business and like what I saw,” Hill added. “It gave me and my sister the courage to approach our parents about starting Hill Family Estate. I had been working in the vineyards since I was seven, but I found that meeting people and working with people suited me better. I am thankful my parents saw fit to trust us with the winery operation.”

Hill Family Estate is already solidly ensconced among Napa Valley’s elite wineries, and seems destined for even greater honors and acclaims. If drive and determination are deciding factors, Ryan Hill and Hill Family Estate don’t seem to have too far to go.

## Hill Family 2013 Red Door Red Blend, Napa Valley

495 CASES PRODUCED

94 POINTS —*Robert Parker’s The Wine Advocate*

“The 2013 Proprietary Red Estate is another big-time winner, tipping the scales at 15.5% alcohol. This is the blockbuster of the entire portfolio and a sensational effort. Yes, it’s the most expensive, but is also the most promising for long-term development of, say 10-12 years. This is a beauty and another top-flight effort. The color is opaque purple and the wine is just explosive in the mouth with its richness.”

### Winemaker’s Notes - Alison Doran

Red Door is a wine blended to take advantage of our best small lots that work together in the most rich and flavorful way, regardless of variety or appellation. In 2013, Cabernet Sauvignon was once again rich and elegant, with the new Windy Flats vineyard pulling in the intense flavors, and Baker (vineyard) providing the mountain structure. But Apallas, Beau Terroir, and Knubis (vineyards) have wonderful individuality that would be lost in a big blend, so the Red Door can give them a place to show off.

“Inky bluish/purple with notes of blueberry liqueur, black raspberry, licorice and incense, this full-bodied opulent wine hits all the sweet spots on the palate, but is dry and full bodied with voluptuous texture, terrific palate presence and complexity.”



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

Frias 2015 ‘SMD’ Spring  
Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon,  
Napa Valley

94 Points - *Robert Parker’s The Wine Advocate*

94 Points - *Jeb Dunnuck*

500 CASES PRODUCED



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