



# Platinum Wine Club

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

## Huge Bear Wines | Knights Valley

You know from the beginning that you are in for something special when you see either the name or the label of this month's Platinum Wine Club selection. Located in the hills of Sonoma County and Napa Valley, Huge Bear Wines is exactly what its name implies.

"We produce big, rugged wines that are both rural and hearty at the same time," offered Douglas Danielak, winemaker for Huge Bear Wines since its inception "I try and employ a more rustic style of winemaking that was more common some 30 to 40 years ago." Danielak began his career in France at Beaune's (Burgundy) *Lycée Agricole et Viticole de Beaune* High School and later matriculated to UC Davis where he earned his viticulture and enology degree. He has worked for numerous Napa Valley and Sonoma County wineries including Jade Mountain Winery, Pont Neuf Wines and Huge Bear Wines' sister winery, Knights Bridge Winery. His wines have consistently been met with unqualified success and received high scores from trade publications and reviewers.

Huge Bear Wines' initial release of around 600 cases occurred more than a decade ago with the production of a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Chardonnay. Two families, the Baileys and the Costins, formed the company to show off the fruit from their 49-acre vineyards that are located in Knights Valley.

"Knights Valley is somewhat remote as AVA's go," continued Danielak, "and the fruit it produces is different from the other Sonoma appellations, and also that from the Napa Valley. I feel it's a bridge between the Sonoma-Napa growing areas. The weather in Knights Valley doesn't lend itself to producing the riper fruit that Napa winemakers prefer. Our fruit yields what I call a perfect example of Cabernet Sauvignon with a flavor profile that is not exaggerated by climate."

This year, Huge Bear Wines will produce around 2,200 cases, with most of the fruit originating from its own estate vineyards.

*How about future growth for Huge Bear Wines?* "We are quite happy with where we are now," maintained Douglas Danielak. "We have never developed a growth plan beyond 5,000 cases. We are of the belief that volume is driven by quality and personality and if that combination produces more demand for Huge Bear Wines, we will most certainly

increase our production."

The name *Huge Bear Wines* comes from an article its owners discovered in local historic archives written in the mid 1800's. A huge bear would often venture down from the mountains in search of food and was so elusive, he was never trapped. Around the same time, Thomas Knight (namesake of Knights Valley) was leading a movement to raise the Bear Flag and declare California an independent state. The story of this local bear's independent spirit caught the imagination of many involved and because a cause célèbre for Thomas Knight and his followers. The Bear Flag was first raised in Sonoma in 1846 during a revolt against Mexican rule.

*What's the story behind the wonderful, award-winning Huge Bear label?* "The illustration used on our label is adapted from Lynd Ward's classic book, *The Biggest Bear*. Mr. Ward illustrated more than 200 books (most are now considered American classics) and won the Caldecott Medal in 1953 with *The Biggest Bear*. His daughters gave us permission to use the illustration on our label. We feel it is truly amazing art and it captures the passion involved in our wines," surmised Danielak.

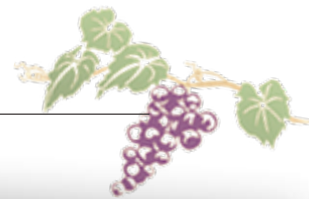
Huge Bear Wines are currently made at the Laird Family Estate in Napa Valley, a super-premium custom crush facility that caters to extremely high end small wineries.

Another interesting note concerns the Huge Bear Tasting Facility that is located in Calistoga in the northern part of Napa Valley. Local folklore has it that a huge bear came to occupy the space that was formerly an old bank and the owners of Huge Bear Wines simply couldn't pass up the opportunity to fuse their winery with history. A (really) huge carved bear can be found inside the tasting room guarding the place against any intruders from the outside.

Huge Bear Wines is a most successful boutique winery that offers a different style of wine to its large following. It is fun to take a step back into time and enjoy wines that mirror their ancestors of many decades ago. We admire Huge Bear's innovative approach to the wine business and hope that you will enjoy this Platinum Wine Club selection. There are few wineries that employ this sort of wine philosophy and we are delighted to introduce our members to this marvelous wine.



# Huge Bear | 2011 Knights Bridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon



**94 POINTS +  
GOLD MEDAL**

— *Tastings.com*  
(Beverage Testing Institute)

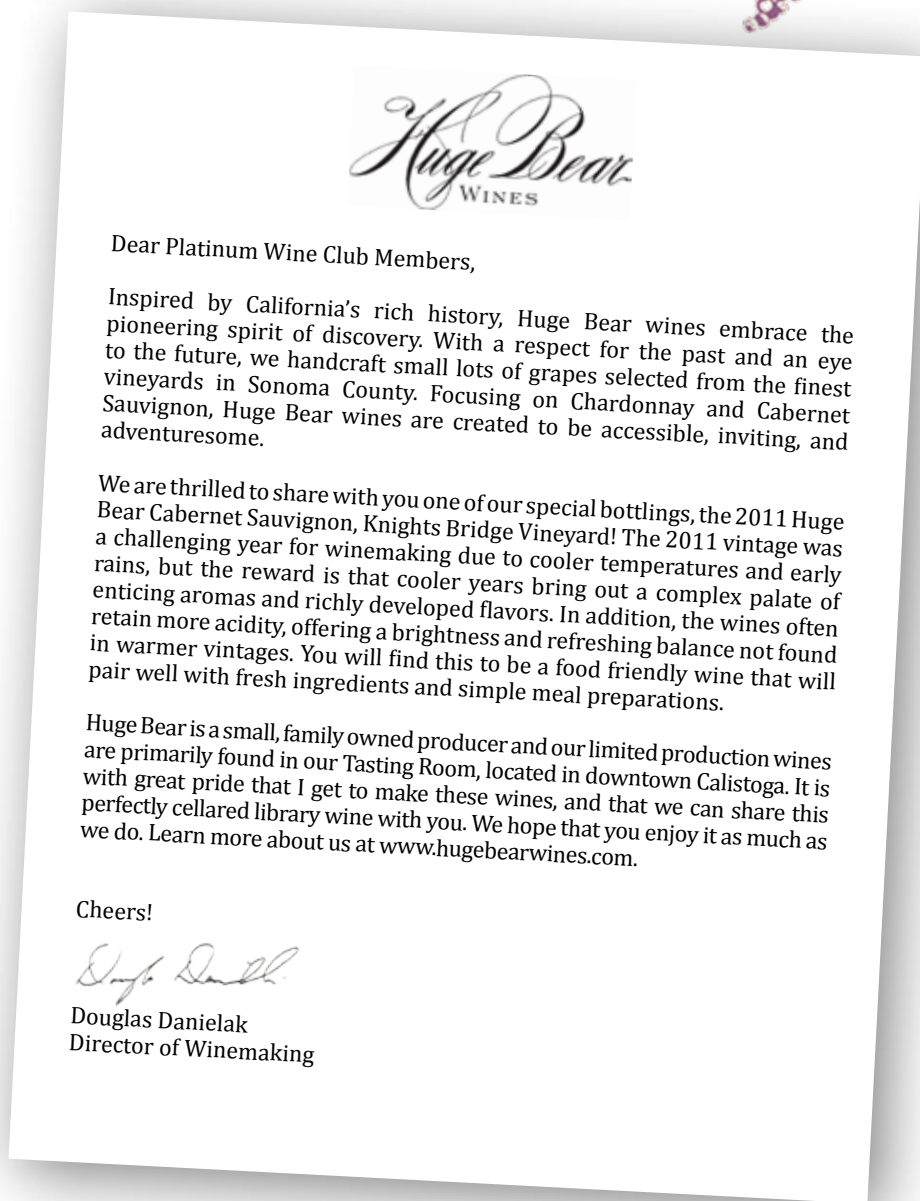
## 400 cases produced

Huge Bear's 2011 Knights Bridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon comes from a small hillside property in the Knights Valley appellation of Sonoma County, where long warm days are offset by early morning fog and cool, late afternoon breezes. This climate allows the old vine (21+ years old) Cabernet Sauvignon grapes to slowly and evenly ripen with bright yet richly developed flavors. The 2011 Knights Bridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon has distinctive notes of freshly picked blackberries, English Lavender, cocoa, and earthy brown spices on the nose. On the palate, this wine is deep, intricate and round with flavors of black cherries, blackberry compote, earth, and dark chocolate. Soft tannins carry the dark, sweet-fruit and spice notes through the long finish. Aged 21 months in oak. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy now until 2021.



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**This month's Platinum *Plus!*  
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Syrah, Santa Barbara County**

93 Points - *Jeb Dunnuck*  
269 Cases Produced



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