



PLATINUM SERIES



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

This month's *Platinum 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 worldwide 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.

Winemaking is overseen by Philippe Melka. With degrees in geology, agronomy and enology, and fifteen years of experience in France, Australia, Italy, and the Napa Valley, Melka brings consummate knowledge of vineyards and winemaking to Lail Vineyards. He also consults for a few other notable cult wineries, including Dana Estates, Gemstone, Parallel, and Seavey Vineyard, with past clients including Quintessa, Dalla Valle, and Bryant Family. Melka was recently named **One of the Top 9 Wine Consultants in the World** by *Robert Parker*, which is among the most prestigious honors a winemaker can receive. His efforts at Lail Vineyards have resulted in many award-winning wines, many of which with ratings in the mid to upper 90's.

Robin is pleased that her daughter, Erin Lail Dixon, has followed her into the business and now serves as Lail Vineyards' general 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."

Sage words from a wonderful lady with an incredible upbringing and fervor for her life's work.

The four diamonds on the foil topping Lail's wine bottles 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 *Platinum Series* selection.



The road to great wine begins at your door.



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Lail Vineyards

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

I grew up at the fabled Inglenook Vineyards, home to four generations of my family and their legendary wines. From the time I was little, there was no escaping the magic of the land and the vineyards and the fascination of the winery. The passion of my father, John Daniel, Jr., was contagious. As owner and winemaker of Inglenook, he called himself the caretaker of the family legacy.

My memories are indelible...playing in the mustard in the vineyards, hunting for arrowheads, tasting the little grapes with too many seeds, riding through the vineyards with Dad in our ancient truck, stopping at the winery on my way home from school, reveling in the aroma of harvest, and smelling the wines that graced our dinner table every night.

After co-founding and then selling my interest in both Dominus and Merryvale Vineyards, I felt a responsibility to carry this important thread in the tapestry of California winemaking forward into the 21st Century. My husband, Jon, and our two daughters Erin and Shannon agreed, and we established Lail Vineyards in 1995. I named our "Blueprint" wines in honor of Jon, as a nod to his very successful architectural design firm based in Napa Valley.

Today, six generations of our family have been touched by the passion of winemaking in Napa Valley and over 135 years of experience. Each year, the family continues its passionate quest to produce the very finest wines in the world from the blend of their ingredients – the land, the seasons, the winemaking team and the spirit of the generations who led the way. We are keepers of the stories, in pursuit of wines of perfection and dedicated to making magic in the lives of our patrons.

Robin Daniel Lail
Founder & Proprietor

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TASTING NOTES

93 POINTS
-Antonio Galloni

Just 1,572 Cases Produced

Lail Vineyards' 2011 Blueprint Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon was named as a nod to John Lail's Napa Valley architectural practice, and also because it is made like the winery's flagship wine, the J. Daniel Cuvee. The fruit for the Blueprint Cabernet Sauvignon is mostly estate grown from the Lail family's small, meticulously cared for properties in Howell Mountain and Yountville, with just a touch of added fruit from select nearby growers. The result is a wine that's soft and generous with attractive silky tannins and luscious flavors of ripe cranberries, blackberries, licorice, flowers, and spice. There is gorgeous depth and purity to the fruit in this round, supple Cabernet Sauvignon. According to *Antonio Galloni*, "The ability to blend fruit from a number of sources gave consulting winemaker Philippe Melka the opportunity to get the most out of this vintage, and he crushed it with this superb Cabernet Sauvignon." 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy now until 2021.



REORDERS

Lail 2011 Blueprint Cabernet Sauvignon

Retail Price at the Winery: \$70.00

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