



PLATINUM SERIES



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

To say that Cloak and Dagger Wines are among the most unique in the wine industry is literally a mouthful – and the statement is absolutely true.

There are numerous reasons to back up the aforementioned.

First of all, Cloak and Dagger won't reveal the location, nor any really pertinent information about the company's background. Some details of the wines are derived from the labeling necessities ordained by the federal government.

The wines are all from the Paso Robles AVA, the new darling of the Central Coast. That much is known.

According to company spokesman Ray Schofield, and a transplanted Englishman, very little else will be forthcoming about the wines.

"All I can say is that our project started almost ten years ago and it involved buying some property (15 acres) to produce fine wine grapes," he recalled. "For various reasons, it was necessary to conclude the deal with a degree of secrecy. For the first few years of our existence, everything was done on an undercover basis, and the details were a closely held secret."

Schofield also stated that the original principals came from outside the wine industry, and knew little about the business and its multiple complexities. "The only real experience we had with wine was drinking it," Schofield confessed, "so there was quite a learning curve involved for us to overcome."

In 2011, the first 1,000 cases of Cloak and Dagger Wines were released, to some excellent reviews and plaudits. But, Cloak and Dagger Wines has since scaled back to around 400 cases, and for good reason.

"We are basically a tiny operation that only produces a limited amount of wine," Schofield continued. "It was not enough production to interest distributors or middle men. We found it was smarter to sell the wines ourselves and so we scaled back our production. This does not mean that we aren't open to increases for the future, but we will let the market dictate where and when."

At this point, only selected high line restaurants and bottle shops sell Cloak and Dagger Wines throughout California, mostly in areas that Los Angeles-based Schofield can easily access by driving. The company also has an excellent website

that appeals to both young and old.

"We wanted to do something different," Schofield explained. "So we hired a design firm in Malibu to come up with some ideas and so far the reaction has been incredibly positive."

The website conveys Cloak and Dagger Wines' ongoing attempt at secrecy with a helping hand from author Dan Brown (*The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels and Demons*, etc.). Labels are well thought out and convey a degree of surprise along with a helping of the mysterious. Ray Schofield admitted to being a fan of Brown and other authors whose works he found "speculative in nature."

Oh, by the way, the wine *inside* the bottles is also amazing in its own right.

"We have been pleasantly satisfied with the degree of success the wines have enjoyed," Schofield added. "Almost all of our on premise (restaurants) placements have resulted in multiple reorders. We also have a wine club that is sold out, so that is a really good sign."

Schofield also admitted that he decided not to sell to certain restaurants and shops "who really didn't seem to get the brand. We really wanted to keep our wines at a manageable level with regard to fruit so that places limitations that we need to observe."

About fifty percent of Cloak and Dagger Wines come from its home vineyards, one of which is called, of course, "Hidden Valley Vineyard." The remainder of the fruit is sourced from neighboring vineyards all located within a mile of Cloak and Dagger's home vineyards.

There is no tasting facility at this time for Cloak and Dagger's wines, nor is there any access to the vineyards. Since no one knows the location of the vineyards, it would seem impossible to visit them anyway.

The most amazing aspect of these wines is the quality achieved in a relatively short period of time. Many wineries take several years to achieve high quality levels, but Cloak and Dagger has done so since its inception.

"Great fruit begets great wine," concluded Schofield. "And our area around Templeton (a non-veiled hint) produces some of the finest fruit on the Central Coast. It's a tribute to our winemaker (who is unknown) that we have achieved such recognition and accolades. We just helped by supplying the very best fruit that we could."



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This month's *Platinum Series* featured *Plus!* wine:

Michael Scott 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon
92 POINTS – *Wine Enthusiast* magazine

400 Cases Produced

Learn more at: www.GoldMedalWineClub.com/plus or Call 1-800-266-8888



TASTING NOTES

93 POINTS
+ EDITOR'S CHOICE

-Wine Enthusiast magazine

90 POINTS + GOLD MEDAL

-Beverage Testing Institute

75 Cases Produced

The Cloak & Dagger 2012 "Illuminatus" Reserve Sangiovese was produced from the winery's estate vineyard, Hidden Valley Vineyard, located in the Templeton Gap region of Paso Robles. Keeping with the brand's ongoing theme of secrecy, the wine was named after the 'Illuminati' secret society, which is central to some of the world's most widely known and elaborate conspiracy theories. While there may be plenty unknown about the winery's origin and winemaker, the wine's quality is no secret at all. On the nose, an elegant blend of red cherry, rose petals, and purple flowers support an exquisitely layered palate with flavors of espresso, dark red cherry, black plum, mission fig, toasted chestnuts, and a touch of spice. An earthy-chocolately flavored finish lingers after each sip. Aged in oak. Enjoy now until 2022.

cloak & dagger

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

It is our pleasure to share with you our critically acclaimed 2012 "Illuminatus" Sangiovese Reserve.

The fruit is from our estate vineyard, Hidden Valley Vineyard, located in the Templeton Gap area of Paso Robles' Westside. The sloping terrain drains rapidly and the vines enjoy long warm days and cool nights throughout the growing season. The mature, cane pruned vines produce low yields of intense and expressive fruit.

The 2012 Illuminatus Reserve is perhaps our favorite Sangiovese vintage so far. The 2012 growing season was almost ideal in most respects and the fruit was of particularly high quality. The early part of the season was cool and dry. A heat wave just ahead of veraison stressed the vines, keeping the cluster sizes in check and concentrating the flavors and aromas. The grapes were harvested on November 2, 2012 and barrel aged in French oak for 18 months.

The wine is bold and textural, exhibiting mouthwatering cherry, plum and spice notes. Only three barrels were produced, making the wine almost as elusive as the shadowy secret society from which its name is derived.

We hope you will enjoy Illuminatus in the company of trusted friends. Please pour carefully – secrets may be spilled . . .

Ray Schofield
Conspirator-in-Chief
Cloak & Dagger Wines

www.cloakanddaggerwines.com



REORDERS

Cloak & Dagger
2012 "Illuminatus"
Reserve Sangiovese

Retail Price at the Winery: \$39.00

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