



Platinum Wine Club

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

Ram's Gate Winery | Sonoma County

When a group of savvy, wine industry connected investors got together more than a decade ago, the entity now known as Ram's Gate Winery emerged from their collective efforts.

The site chosen for the new winery was a perfect choice. Located on a rolling hillside near the junction of Highways 121 and 37 in the Carneros AVA, Ram's Gate Winery is the first winery any visitors from the South (San Francisco) and East (Sacramento) encounter in the prolific quality environs of Sonoma County.

"We are the compass rose of Sonoma County and the gateway to wine country," explained Taylr Benham Cuneo, General Manager of Ram's Gate Winery who started with Ram's Gate early in its existence as a sous chef. The California native has progressed to her present level as General Manager. "Our estate vineyard is where the Sonoma Valley AVA ends on our south-side, the Sonoma Coast AVA is to the east, and where the Carneros AVA begins to the west. It's an amazing locale and produces some incredible fruit that makes our estate selections really special," she asserted.

The four investors that founded Ram's Gate Winery include Managing Owner Michael John (wine collector and private equity investor), Jeff O'Neill (owner of O'Neill Vintners and former Chair of the Wine Institute), Paul Violich (agribusiness leader), and Peter Mullin (winegrower who also owns an Italian estate in Umbria).

The initial offering of Ram's Gate Winery occurred in 2011, a healthy number of around 9,000 cases. In its first decade, the winery has grown slowly and presently produces around 12,000 cases, making it just over the boutique-winery levels. Its name pays tribute to its location in Sonoma County - Carneros means 'rams' in Spanish and the Gate refers to the fact that it's the first winery you see when entering wine country.

"We are completely happy with our production level," remarked Taylr Benham Cuneo. "We have carefully studied the needs of our business and the overall sourcing of our fruit. We want to concentrate on single-vineyard production and give due attention to terroir and also to land stewardship. Our five-year plan shows us some growth, but only to the 15 to 17,000 case level. We want to remain a small winery that produces extremely high quality wines."

To that end, Ram's Gate Winery has already ascended to the upper level of Sonoma County wine entities. A bevy of high scores and awards from a resolute fan base has vaulted Ram's Gate Winery to the level of top producers in the state.

The actual acreage for the winery is just over 100 acres, of which 22 are under vine. "We source some of our grapes from a number of vineyards around the state," added Taylr Benham Cuneo. "We are very exacting in what we expect from our growers and our best vineyards are under long-term contracts."

A new director of winemaking joined the Ram's Gate Winery team in 2018. Joe Nielsen spent ten years as winemaker for the well-respected Donelan Family Wines operation in nearby Santa Rosa before taking the reins at Ram's Gate Winery. Nielsen is completely enamored with the estate and expresses himself thusly. "Coming to Ram's Gate, I feel like I've been given a pile of gold and silver and they're asking me to make jewelry. I have everything I need to make great wines that are complete, complex and compelling."

The label that accompanies the 2015 Bismark Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, according to Taylor Benham Cuneo, "is designed to connote quality and decadence. It makes a statement that signifies the fact that we are here to stay and will not compromise our wines."

It is interesting to note that Ram's Gate Winery has altered its original business plan to fit its needs. "We did what we thought was right and that included hiring Joe Nielsen," concluded Taylor Benham Cuneo. "The wine business is constantly evolving and it is up to us to keep up with the times. We realize that building a legacy brand takes a good bit of time and a great deal of effort, and we are dedicated to making it all happen."

Ram's Gate Winery is well on its way to ultimate success. Competent ownership and excellent management have seen Ram's Gate Winery continue its successful rise to the top echelon of Sonoma County wineries.

We are delighted to introduce our Platinum Club members to this remarkable winery. The Cabernets from Sonoma's Moon Mountain District where Bismark Vineyard is located tend to be long-lived and get better with age. Enjoy!

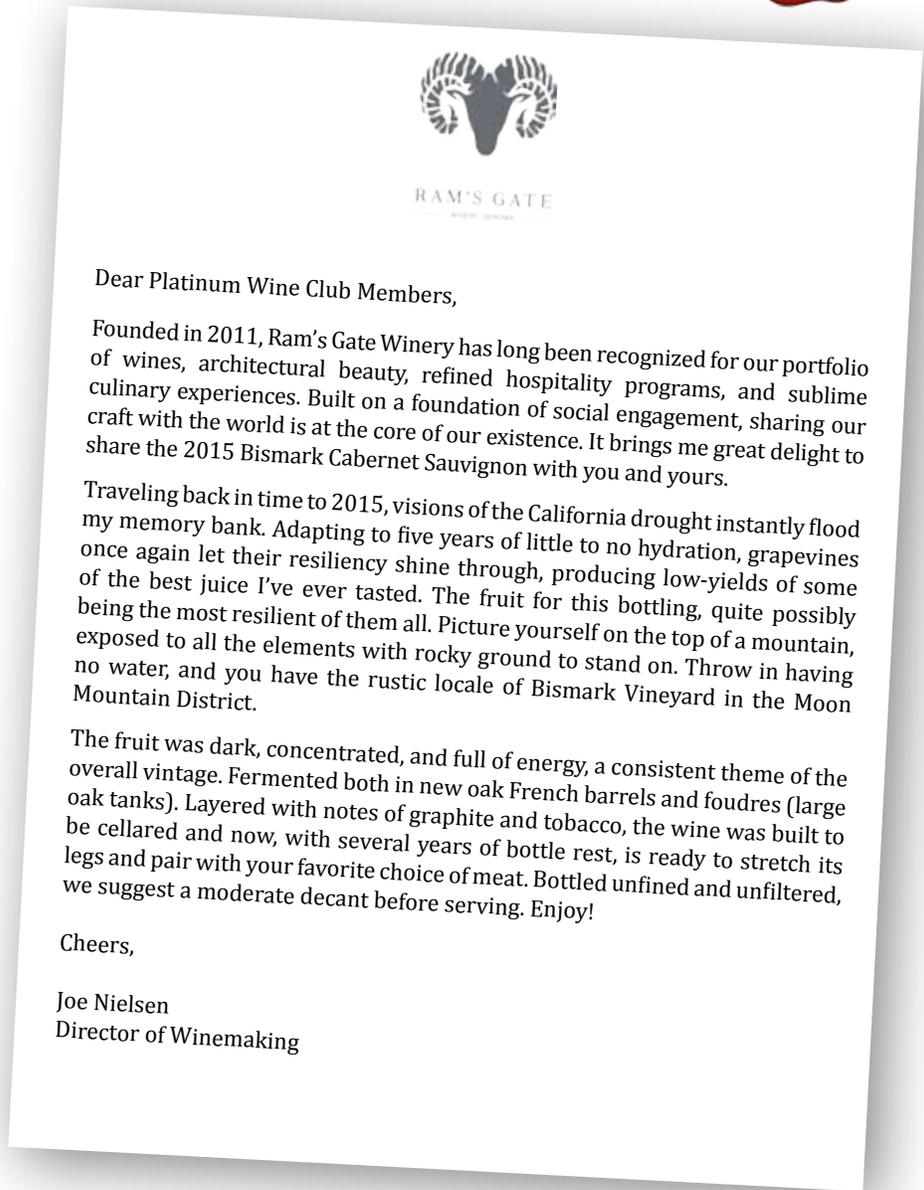




93+ POINTS
—Jeb Dunnuck

125 cases produced

Produced from Sonoma County's esteemed Moon Mountain District AVA, which lies on the opposite side of the Mayacamas Mountains from Mount Veeder, the Ram's Gate 2015 Bismark Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon captures the intensity of the vintage and the character of this special site. Aromas of crème de cassis, crushed rocks and violets lead into an equally earthy and dark fruit driven palate with excellent structure and flavors of black currants, tobacco and cumin accompanied by a touch of oak sweetness. The broad finish is framed by fine tannins and classic Sonoma minerality. This is a compelling wine that will continue to evolve over the course of the next decade. Aged 18 months in oak. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy!



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**This month's Platinum Plus!
Featured Wine:**

**Dragonette 2018 'Seven' Syrah,
Santa Ynez Valley**

92-94 Points - Jeb Dunnuck
91 Points - Connoisseurs' Guide
450 Cases Produced



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