



# Platinum Wine Club

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

## Red Thread | Napa Valley

Even though he was born and raised in the wine-filled Napa Valley, Brian Brakesman never felt he would wind up in the great grape industry while attending college.

Brakesman had chosen Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo for his schooling and had received his degree in agricultural engineering in 1999, with a minor in irrigation design.

"As I neared graduation," Brakesman commented in a recent interview, "I began feeling that a career based on irrigation wasn't all that interesting. I hadn't really thought about the wine business until a great opportunity opened the door for me. I had gone to New Zealand and Australia and played rugby at a fairly high level before I came back home for good. Fortunately, a wonderful break came my way, and, as I look back, I am lucky to have made the correct decision."

That prospect came in the form of renowned winemaker John Gibson, the celebrated winemaker for Napa Valley icons Vine Cliff Winery and Stags Leap Wine Cellars for starters. Gibson had just founded a consulting company and quickly hired Brakesman for his staff. John Gibson became his friend and mentor and taught him the fine art of winemaking. "John is a gifted professional in every respect and has won a slew of awards for his wines. He took me under his wing and taught me the correct way of doing things in the cellar. I owe a great deal to him and his approach to winemaking," Brakesman added.

Brian Brakesman learned quickly and eventually landed assistant winemaker jobs at Duckhorn Vineyards and Paraduxx Vineyards. His first job as winemaker came in 2005 when he headed Ledson Winery and Vineyards' winemaking operation in nearby Sonoma County.

By 2009, Brian and his wife Gretchen made the decision to go out on their own and the fledgling Red Thread Winery became a reality. The name 'Red Thread' came from a Chinese proverb that said that two people who are destined to be together are bonded by a red thread that somehow ties them to each other. The pair had met in San Francisco more than sixteen years before, when they discovered a common interest in wine and each other. The red thread is prominently featured on the brand's eye-catching label that was designed by Gretchen Brakesman.

Red Thread's first release came in 2014, a microscopic 56 cases. Needless to say, the wines proved incredibly popular and accolades came pouring in.

"We are fortunate to have fruit from my family's 20-acre ranch on Howell Mountain," Brakesman continued. "We have managed to double our Red Thread production each year and will produce around 300 cases this annum. We review our progress each year and base our production on actual demand. Our wines tend to sell out quickly, which is a win-win for everyone."

Brian Brakesman feels that his forte in winemaking is the fine art of blending that he has developed during his winemaking career. "I don't want to sound arrogant," he related. "I am always humbled by the accolades we receive. But, my family's Howell Mountain estate fruit is arguably the best in Napa Valley (many wine industry insiders publicly and privately agree with this premise) so I consider the blending of this fruit an insight into what the wines of the future will be from Napa Valley. I'm just happy to be part of the whole experience, even if Red Thread represents just a small portion of the entire production of Napa Valley."

While Brian Brakesman makes all Red Thread wines, Gretchen Brakesman does just about everything else. "She can sell refrigerators to Eskimos," beamed Brakesman. "She does all the marketing and handles the office part of the business. Without her, Red Thread wouldn't exist."

The couple has two children, Blythe, 12, and Benjamin, 11. The kids are active around harvest time and during bottling making Red Thread Winery a family operation. Brian and Gretchen are guardedly optimistic that one or more of their children will follow them into the wine industry. An upcoming project involving a new label design has been handed to Blythe who has shown a talent for design.

This seems an almost perfect ending to a true success story from the Napa Valley. Red Thread Winery is already recognized for its incredible wines and the future remains bright for the Brakesman family. Even though it is a tiny operation, it fulfills an important cog in the vast machinery that is the Napa Valley production area. It is our pleasure to present Red Thread to our *Platinum Wine Club* members.



# Red Thread | 2016 Red Wine Blend, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley



## 94 POINTS

— *Tastings.com*  
(Beverage Testing Institute)

## 90 POINTS

— *Robert Parker's*  
*The Wine Advocate*

## BEST IN CLASS

— *SF Chronicle Wine Competition*

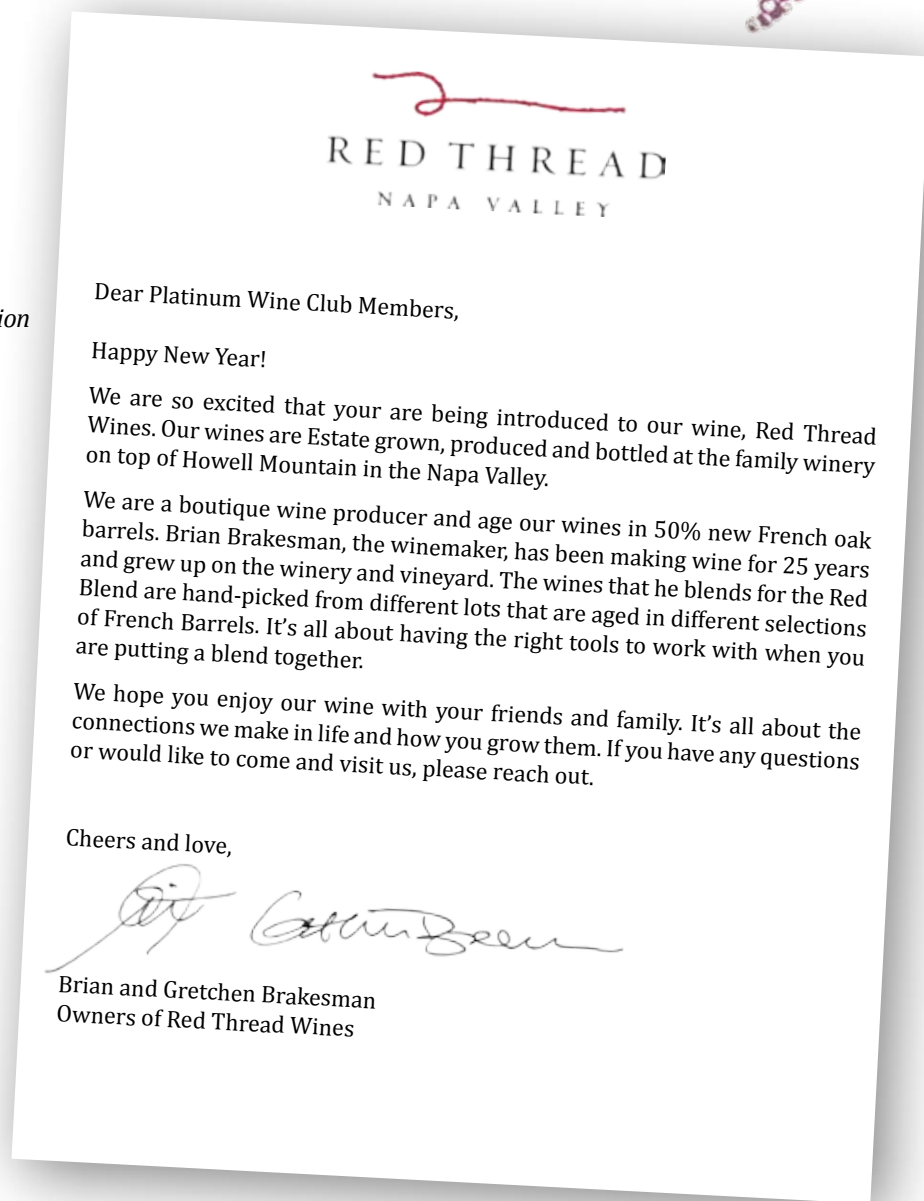
### 175 cases produced

A dense, complex Red Blend from the Brakesman family's estate vineyard on Howell Mountain in Napa Valley, the Red Thread 2016 Red Wine Blend is comprised of 57% Zinfandel, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 15% Petite Sirah. Black ruby in color, this wine offers inviting aromas of herbs de Provence, mocha latte, leather, baking chocolate, vanilla and boysenberry. The palate is fruity and full-bodied with warming, intricate flavors of raspberry crumble, flourless chocolate cake, smoked almonds, and honey drizzled golden raisins that carry through to the long and lingering finish. Well-integrated tannins and moderate oak offer structure and support to the complexity and range of flavors. Aged in oak. Enjoy!



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Winery Retail Price \$65.00/btl.	2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
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4-Bottle Members:	\$57.00	\$54.50	\$53.25



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

### Modus Operandi 2014 'Vicarious' Red Wine, Napa/Sonoma

91 Points - *Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate*  
91 Points - *Jeb Dunnuck*  
675 Cases Produced

Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in above prices.  
\*Effective per bottle prices after Membership Rewards discount is applied at checkout. Membership Rewards does not apply to Sale or Special-Offer Wines.