



Platinum Wine Club

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

Summit Lake Vineyards | Napa Valley

Owner Bob Brakesman readily admits his beloved Summit Lake Vineyards is one of Napa Valley's best locations, and a little slice of paradise. Located high above the valley floor at around 2,000-foot elevation, the 20-acre site is not far from the quaint town of Angwin on Napa Valley's eastern shoulder.

The fact is that Summit Lake Vineyards has been in existence for close to fifty years, after Brakesman purchased the property shortly before Christmas in 1971.

"The place was really run down and had been abandoned for fifteen years, and we weren't sure we were going to keep it," Brakesman recalled. "My wife Sue and I really had to work to even make the house (built in 1892) livable. But, it snowed that Christmas and we both fell in love with the pristine beauty of the place."

Fast forward to the present and Summit Lake Vineyards is alive and very, very well. From its first releases in 1978, the smallish winery has continued to produce award-winning wines in the red varietal categories. Summit Lake Vineyards was one of the first Napa wineries to produce Zinfandel from Pre-Prohibition vines Brakesman discovered when first cleaning up the property.

"I got to know Joe Swan who was a true pioneer of Old Vine Zinfandel in these parts," related Brakesman. "He was making the type of wine I wanted to make. I followed his lead and the rest is history."

The modern Summit Lake Vineyards produces around 1,500 cases annually, and expects to return to around 2,500 cases in another year or two. Replanted vineyards are coming to fruition and will allow for the increase in production.

"We are just another small winery," insisted Brakesman, "and, a totally family-oriented one at that. Around here, everyone pitches in to help, and I mean *everyone*."

Brakesman's daughter, Heather Griffin, serves as the entity's general manager while Brakesman does most of the winemaking chores himself. Son Brian is also a noted winemaker with past stints at both Domaine Chandon Winery and Beringer Vineyards. Brian helps on critical decisions at Summit Lake, involving bottling and blending whenever necessary.

Another key ingredient is Heather's husband, Mark Griffin. Griffin manages vineyards at iconic Harlan Estates and other top vineyard properties and oversees the vines at Summit Lake Vineyards.

The fact that Summit Lake enjoys a really top management team is not lost on Bob Brakesman.

"It hasn't always been easy for us," he informed. "In fact, I had to work another outside job to support our ranch until about ten years ago. Then things began to turn around and now we are in much better shape. Everyone works hard around here and that has made us a really tight family."

Brakesman also said that his operation "doesn't run by the clock like some other wineries." He feels that the fact that Summit Lake is still a small farm operation makes it all the more fun to operate.

Summit Lake Vineyards sells some of its fruit to other local wineries, but utilizes most of its production for its signature Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah.

Numerous awards and accolades have accrued to Summit Lake during its existence. This is no small feat when you consider the number and facilities of many of its Napa competitors.

Summit Lake Vineyards' greatest accomplishment? "Nothing is really finished, so that's a hard question to answer," replied Brakesman. "I bought this place within ten minutes of first seeing it. Something within me told me it was the right thing to do and I haven't regretted a minute of it since then. The land has repaid us many times over and for that I am extremely grateful."

The former mechanical engineer by profession (he attended both UC Berkeley and San Jose State before receiving his degree from the latter) also recalled building the winery. "The place is hand built from the ground up. Everyone around here came over and helped us put up the walls and roof. That's typical of the people around Angwin. Everyone pitches in and helps. That's why this is such a wonderful place and I feel so blessed."

Summit Lake Vineyards offers a keen insight into a well-established, small production winery in Napa Valley. Enjoy!



Summit Lake | 2014 'Emily Kestrel' Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley



**94 POINTS +
GOLD MEDAL**
— *Tastings.com*
(*Beverage Testing Institute*)

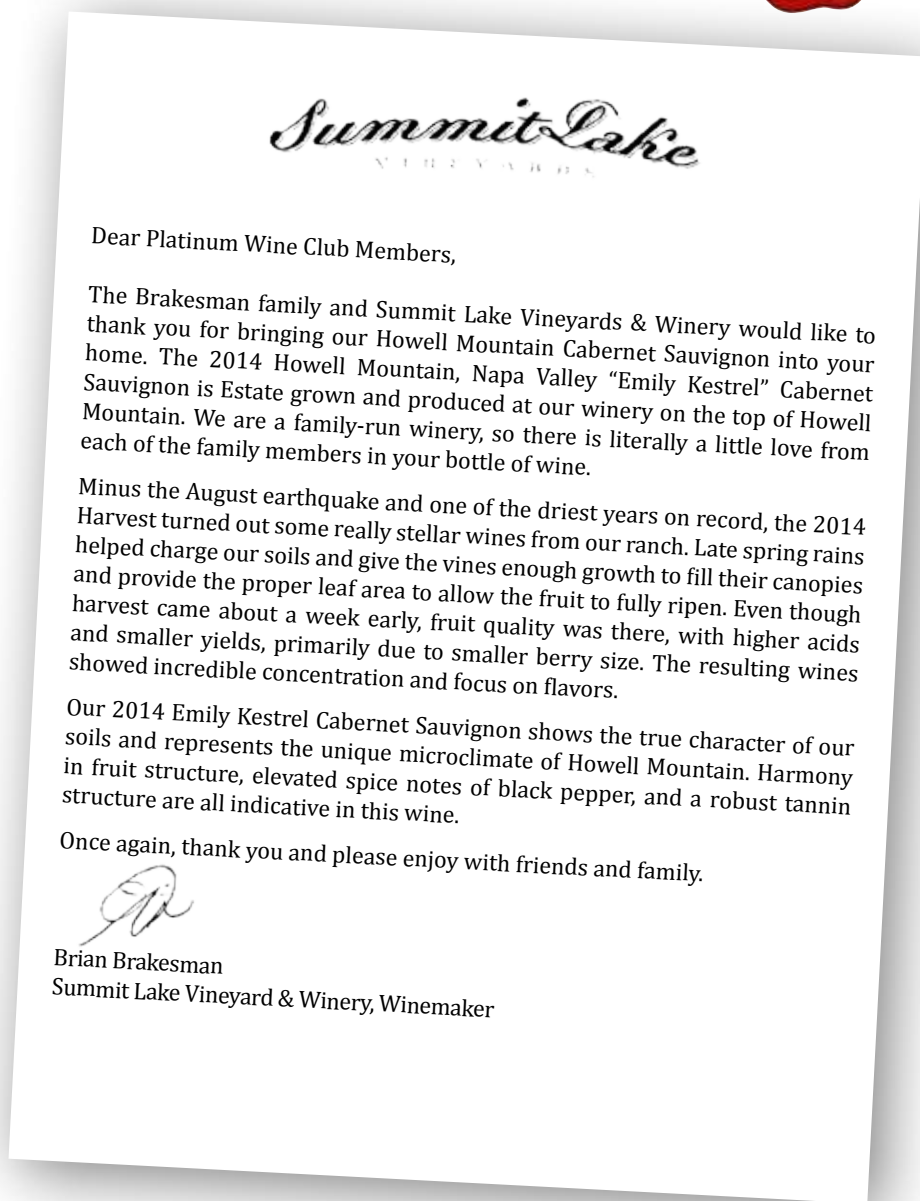
229 cases produced

Named for Bob and Sue Brakesman's first granddaughter, the Summit Lake 2014 'Emily Kestrel' Cabernet Sauvignon comes from the family's estate vineyard on Howell Mountain in Napa Valley. The specific grapes for this wine are selected from two unique Cabernet vineyards blocks - one of which was planted by Bob Brakesman back in 1973. Both blocks yield intense fruit with concentrated flavors. The award-winning 2014 'Emily Kestrel' Cabernet Sauvignon shows both complexity and elegance. Aromas of black cherry, blackberry, cassis and dark espresso awaken the senses, while rich, black and red fruit flavors are supported by masculine tannins on the full-bodied palate. Underlying notes of crushed granite and spicy black pepper make this wine even more intriguing. Aged 24 months in oak. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy!



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Winery Retail Price \$85.00/btl.	2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2-Bottle Members:	\$68.00	\$66.33	\$65.50
4-Bottle Members:	\$68.00	\$65.50	\$64.25



Dear Platinum Wine Club Members,

The Brakesman family and Summit Lake Vineyards & Winery would like to thank you for bringing our Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon into your home. The 2014 Howell Mountain, Napa Valley "Emily Kestrel" Cabernet Sauvignon is Estate grown and produced at our winery on the top of Howell Mountain. We are a family-run winery, so there is literally a little love from each of the family members in your bottle of wine.

Minus the August earthquake and one of the driest years on record, the 2014 Harvest turned out some really stellar wines from our ranch. Late spring rains helped charge our soils and give the vines enough growth to fill their canopies and provide the proper leaf area to allow the fruit to fully ripen. Even though harvest came about a week early, fruit quality was there, with higher acids and smaller yields, primarily due to smaller berry size. The resulting wines showed incredible concentration and focus on flavors.

Our 2014 Emily Kestrel Cabernet Sauvignon shows the true character of our soils and represents the unique microclimate of Howell Mountain. Harmony in fruit structure, elevated spice notes of black pepper, and a robust tannin structure are all indicative in this wine.

Once again, thank you and please enjoy with friends and family.

Brian Brakesman
Summit Lake Vineyard & Winery, Winemaker

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

**Benessere 2015
Cabernet Sauvignon
St. Helena, Napa Valley**

91 Points - *Wine Spectator* magazine
267 Cases Produced

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

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