



PLATINUM SERIES



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

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, now 68, 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 between 1,800 and 2,000 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, 42, serves as the entity's general manager while Brakesman does most of the winemaking chores himself. Son Brian, 38, 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 Vineyard's greatest accomplishment?

"Nothing is really finished so that's a hard question to answer," replied Brakesman. "I bought this place within 10 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."

One missing piece is Brakesman's youngest son, Danny, 34. Danny is presently a paramedic at Boston General Hospital while his wife attends school in Boston. "I want him back, really badly," Brakesman declared. "Then everything will be whole once again."

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



The road to great wine begins at your door.

ADD A PLUS! BOTTLE

to your next wine delivery!

Plus! wines are all highly-rated, very small production wines with availability too limited for all regular club members to receive. Only *Plus!* Program participants receive these rare gems!

The *Plus!* Program automatically adds on a special wine to each regular scheduled wine delivery, or as often as you like!

Don't miss out on another shipment!
Join the *Plus!* Program today!
\$35-\$45 each delivery

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

Sailor's Grave 2010 Napa Red

93 POINTS + 3 GOLD MEDALS

Just 900 Cases Produced!

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



TASTING NOTES

**94 POINTS
+ CELLAR SELECTION
+ GOLD MEDAL**

-Beverage Testing Institute

Just 300 Cases Produced

Named for Bob and Sue Brakesman's first granddaughter, the Summit Lake 2009 "Emily Kestrel" Cabernet Sauvignon is a wine with great concentration, complexity and style. The wine was produced with 100% estate fruit from the family vineyard high above the Napa Valley on Howell Mountain. Deep ruby black in color, the Emily Kestrel 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon opens with expressive aromas of spicy cherry chutney, toffee, leather and honeycomb. The palate is full bodied with rich flavors of dried blueberry, anise, earth and mocha custard and its fine, elegant tannins create a deliciously smooth finish. Aged 30 months in oak. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Enjoy now until 2019.

Summit Lake Vineyards & Winery

Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

2000 Summit Lake Drive, Angwin, Ca 94508

Tel. 707-965-2488 Fax 707-965-2281

www.summitlakevineyards.com

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

On behalf of Summit Lake Vineyards and Winery and the Brakesman family, I would personally like to thank you for taking the time to enjoy our wines. Our family has been producing high-end Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel on Howell Mountain for over 44 years. During that time, we have made many great friends who share with us one common belief: Life is about good friends, good times, and fantastic wines.

To date, our winery produces less than 2,000 cases, focusing on 100% estate fruit. We are family run and operated and strive to have our hard work and dedication be truly represented in each bottle of wine we produce. Our winery sits 2,000 feet above the Napa Valley in the Howell Mountain AVA. Known for our Zinfandel and Cabernet, we also produce small quantities of Rose, Petite Sirah and Zinfandel Port.

Winemaking at Summit Lake Vineyards has always been about family. Bob Brakesman (founder and Howell Mountain Pioneer) has recently passed his duties on to me to help elevate our wines to an even higher quality standard. While I strive to keep the winemaking vision of my father, I also believe that my own style, technical expertise and attention to detail are making our wines better and better every vintage. Again, enjoy!

Thank you!

Brian Brakesman
Winemaker
Summit Lake Vineyards



REORDERS

**Summit Lake 2009
"Emily Kestrel" Cabernet
Sauvignon**

Retail Price at the Winery: \$60.00

As a *Platinum Series* Member,
Save 13% - 20% Online!

**GoldMedalWineClub.com
1-800-266-8888**

These special discounts are available only to club members, gift recipients and gift givers. Remember to **login** to see your prices online!

*2 bottle min. per wine, per order. Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in above prices. Call for details.