



# Platinum Wine Club

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

## Velvet Bee Cellars | Santa Barbara County

It is a well-accepted fact that a number of successful lawyers have made the wine industry a perfect destination for a second career outside the practice of law. The most notable lawyer turned vintner is probably Jess Jackson, the San Francisco landmark attorney who passed away in 2011. Jackson turned a small Central Coast winery (then Kendall-Jackson and today Jackson Family Wines) into one of California's premiere winery operations and home to its Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay that had become the country's top-selling wine.

But, it wasn't Jess Jackson's success that lured another top California attorney into the wine business.

"Two of my partners had made the leap into the wine arena," explained Phil Kaplan, co-owner of a boutique winery cleverly named Velvet Bee Cellars. "I was originally a collector and user of fine wines, mostly the great Chateaux of Bordeaux. When I saw how much enjoyment my law partners were having with their venture, I decided it might be a good idea for me and my wife Collette to attempt it."

The pivotal moment for the Kaplans occurred in 2009 when the couple bought a home in the Santa Ynez Valley near the town of Los Olivos. The property contained a small vineyard and Phil Kaplan realized it was time to delve into his dream. He began making small amounts of wine for family and friends. He began sourcing grapes from neighboring appellations including the red-hot (in terms of reputation) Sta. Rita Hills AVA and Happy Canyon AVA.

Bolstered by a host of compliments on his wines, Kaplan decided to release his first commercial wines in 2015, a minuscule 300 cases.

### *How were your first wines received?*

"I was genuinely surprised by the overwhelming positive responses to the wines," Kaplan recalled. "I was blown away at first. Then, I thought it might just be beginner's luck. In the time since 2015, I have felt more confident that our products are really, really good and on par with a number of other top boutique wineries."

Kaplan credits his good friend, owner/winemaker Joe Davis of Arcadian Winery for most of his success.

"Joe is my mentor," he proclaimed. "He was open to my entering the wine business and let me glean from his great feeling for wine. His winemaking is

Burgundian by choice and it has had a great influence on my Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays. Remember, I started on the great Bordeaux Chateaux, but my taste shifted to Burgundies. It was a matter of pairing wine with food. The Pinot Noir contains so many different notes of fruit and flavor, so it is easy to pair it with certain foods. Not so with Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varietals that are not really that flexible."

### *How large is your current production?*

"We will produce around 500 cases this year, and intend to stay at that level," Kaplan replied. "I can manage everything with a little help and can control the quality. At this level, it's all about quality and I firmly believe smaller is better. By keeping our production around 500 cases, I can replicate the quality and terroir of the outstanding vineyards that make up our wines."

Kaplan said the intriguing name 'Velvet Bee Cellars' is a tribute to the extensive bee colony that services the lavender field on his property. The term 'velvet' conveys a sense of finesse usually associated with great Burgundian wines, a main facet of Velvet Bee Cellars' portfolio.

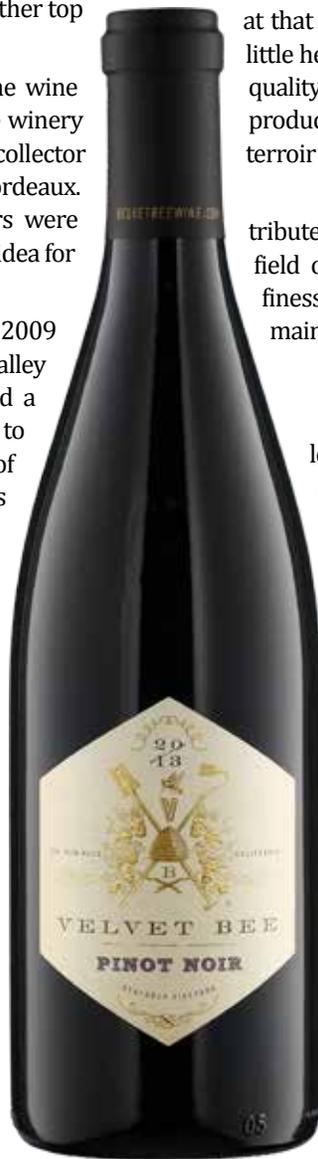
### *Do you still practice law?*

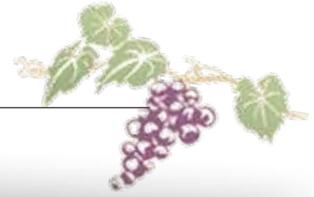
"Most assuredly," Kaplan replied. "I still carry a full case load and that sometimes presents problems. My legal clients expect me to answer their calls and be available to meet their needs. I try and limit my law cases around harvest time, but I'm not always successful and I have to juggle it a bit. It makes for an interesting time, that I can tell you."

Collette Kaplan plays an interesting role in the Velvet Bee operation. According to her husband, she has a good commercial palate that is attuned to what the buying public likes. Whenever a blending session is necessitated, Collette Kaplan fills an important role in the decisions. Like her husband, she took UC Davis extension courses in viticulture and enology to enhance her ability to contribute to the family's wine endeavors.

The Kaplans seem to have it all together: Their winery continues to produce exceptional, award-winning wines and has developed a cadre of high-caliber friends and consumers.

It is a great pleasure to be able to introduce this incredible winery to our Platinum Wine Club members. Enjoy!



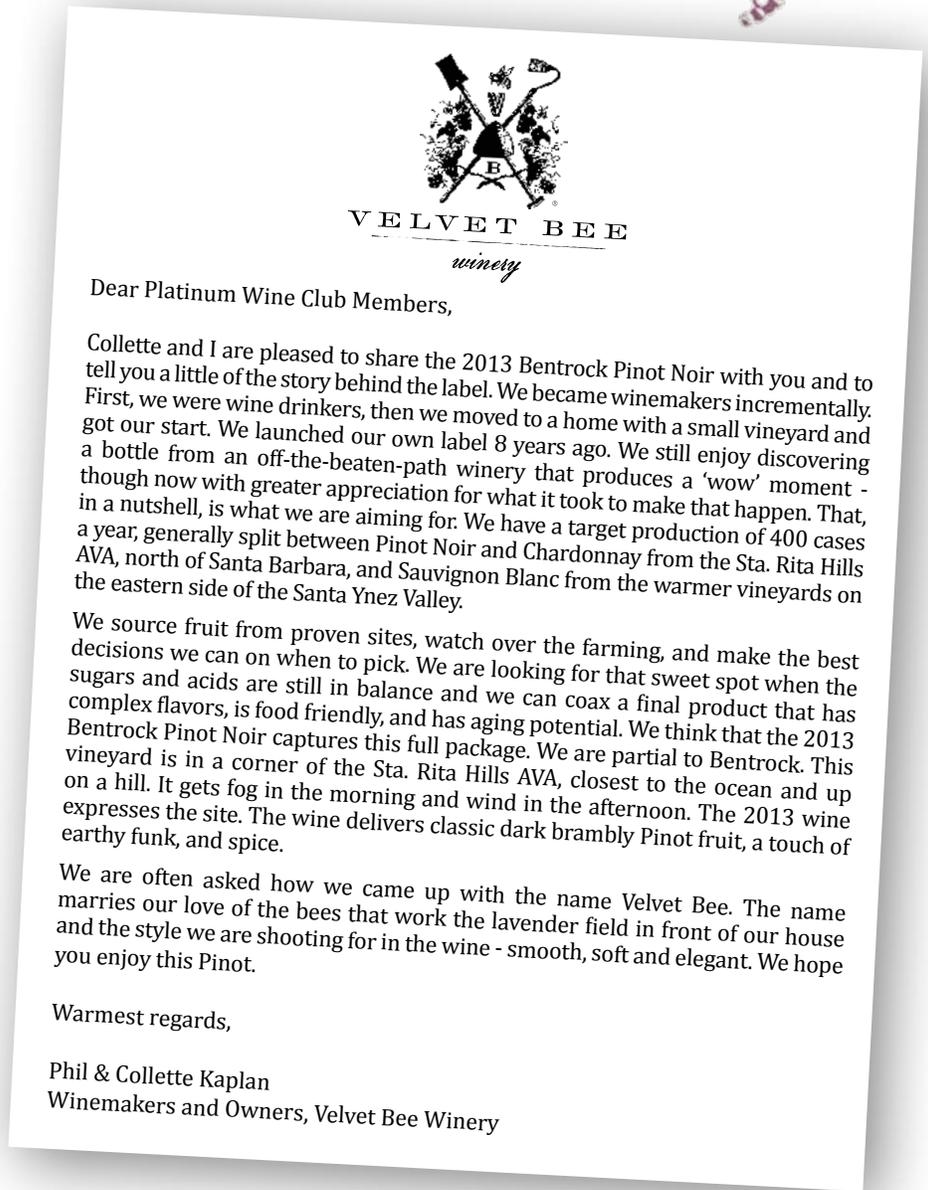


**92 POINTS**

— *Wine Enthusiast*  
magazine

**196 cases produced**

Velvet Bee's 2013 Bentrack Vineyard Pinot Noir is from the highly regarded Sta. Rita Hills appellation on California's Central Coast. This cool-climate region is home to some fantastic vineyards that produce exceptional, world-class Pinot Noir. Deep garnet in color, the Velvet Bee Pinot Noir offers dense aromas of strawberry, blackberry, vanilla and spice for an alluringly rich experience. Notes of clove, allspice and gingerbread arise on the palate, with background tones of mulberry and elderberry jam that provide an elegant and intriguing mix of flavors. Soft tannins and spice carry through on the long, lingering finish. Aged 24 months in oak. 100% Pinot Noir. Enjoy now until 2021.



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

**Testarossa 2015 Pinot Noir,  
Santa Lucia Highlands**

93 Points - *Anthony Dias Blue, The SOMM Journal*  
93 Points - *Antonio Galloni's Vinous*



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.