



# PLATINUM SERIES



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

Like a flashy thoroughbred horse whose fashionable pedigree imparts breeding and class, Napa Valley's Vine Cliff Winery stands confidently among the wine industry's elite establishments from a number of points of view.

First of all, Vine Cliff's history traces back to the original estate of George C. Yount, one of Napa's founding scions and namesake for the popular Southern Napa town. Five years after Yount's death in 1865, George Burrage and Thomas Tucker purchased a portion of his estate and started wine production approximately a year later. The site was situated on a rocky hillside on Napa Valley's northeast side and quickly became the largest winery in the valley.

When Burrage and Tucker died prior to 1890, wealthy San Franciscan John Fry purchased the property with its incredible winery and tunnel complex and set out to make Vine Cliff the finest winery in the State. He had made his fortune in Nevada silver and through San Francisco real estate investments. He also had important connections to the Napa Valley Wine Company, a dominant force in the late 19th Century wine industry.

Phyloxera destroyed both the vineyards and winery and by 1900, wine production had come to an end.

It wasn't until eighty-five years later that the proverbial phoenix arose and Vine Cliff was rescued from obscurity. The winery's modern day benefactors are the Sweeney Family of Northern Virginia, who gained prominence in the hotel business and finally settled in Napa Valley. In 1985, Chuck and Nell Sweeney purchased the estate and set about restoring it to its former elegance and standing.

At the same time, the winery was officially proclaimed a "ghost" winery, or a winery that had fallen on hard times and had to be abandoned.

Of the original winery and tunnels, only the rudimentary first floor and most of the tunnel complex remained. For the next decade, the Sweeney Family embarked on an ambitious building plan that today ranks Vine Cliff among the finest facilities in the entire world. The winery's centerpiece is a state-of-the-art gravity fed production plant that compliments its world-class buildings and vineyards.

The Sweeneys' son Rob who serves as Vine Cliff's general manager makes most of Vine Cliff's day-to-day decisions. Rob returned to Napa Valley in 1990 to manage the family's vineyard operations and lend a hand in running the winery. Upon his return, Rob immediately introduced a number of specific ecological farming practices to Vine Cliff, a subject about which he is most passionate.

"If I had my own way," he recently confided, "Vine Cliff would be 100% organic. Due to the steep slopes that constitute our vineyards and the incredible rockiness that persists throughout the area, I prefer to call it integrated pest management, as least for now."

It is also interesting that Vine Cliff Winery's annual production has shrunk to around the 6,000-case level, down from approximately 17,000 cases around the turn of the century. This can be attributed to the winery's decision to plant a number of new vineyards in specific appellations with the ultimate aim of being a completely estate-producing winery. There are no plans to increase production, as the goal is to focus exclusively on high quality, limited batch, estate grown wines.

"The idea has always been quality," Sweeney recently explained. "To that end, we have never left a stone unturned that could help us attain our goal. I am immensely pleased with the strides our winemaking has achieved in just the past few years. I can honestly say that we are narrowing in on being the very best we can be."

While Rob Sweeney carries the mantle for Vine Cliff's everyday operations, he is assisted by winemaker Jim Kress in the cellar. Jim joined the Vine Cliff team in 2011, bringing 16 vintages of Napa Valley winemaking experience with him. He works closely with Rob in crafting wines with amazing balance, depth, and complexity, and has advanced Vine Cliff's rise to greatness.

The Sweeneys are truly a hard working family, firmly dedicated to the continuing job of improving both the quality and image of the winery. As for

Rob Sweeney, he'd just as soon greet you with a shovel in the vineyards than behind his office desk.

Such a reliable formula is destined for greatness. Many wine industry insiders believe Vine Cliff has already achieved such status.



*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:

**Pozzan 2011 Red Blend**

**92 POINTS + 2 GOLD MEDALS**

**650 Cases Produced**

Learn more at: [www.GoldMedalWineClub.com/plus](http://www.GoldMedalWineClub.com/plus) or Call 1-800-266-8888



Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

Vine Cliff Winery has been producing wine under this name since 1871 and was part of Historical Bond #9 up until a valley-wide Phylloxera outbreak wiped out many of the original vineyards. Not long after, a fire burned the original wood portion of the winery to the ground – the original stone structure remained and is one of the famed “Ghost Wineries” of the Napa Valley. The property sat abandoned for nearly 85 years until my family purchased it in 1985. We planted grapes right away and they took off. After nearly selling out our first vintage as bulk juice, we quickly realized we had a gem on our hands and bottled our first Vine Cliff wine in 1990; we haven't looked back since.

We started producing Chardonnay in 1992 by hand selecting rows from some of our favorite vineyards in the Los Carneros region. In 1997, we had the opportunity to purchase a small piece of land adjacent to the vineyard where we felt the best Chardonnay was growing in the region. We planted 14 acres of Chardonnay there and saw our first vintage from this property in 2001. Bright, balanced, and simply delicious – this 2012 Los Carneros Chardonnay has flints of lemon curd, apricot, and vanilla. This is a staff and family favorite!

As a family, we focus on limited production, high quality Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon with some fun little side projects here and there. We recently opened a second tasting room in Saint Helena and rolled out a cheese and charcuterie program that we would love to share with any of you that plan to stop by and see us! If a visit to our Estate to tour the caves and the original “Ghost Winery” is more up your alley, please contact us for a reservation.

Best Regards,

Rob Sweeney  
Vine Cliff Winery

7400 Silverado Trail Napa, California 94558 [www.vinecliff.com](http://www.vinecliff.com)  
Administrative Offices: 707-944-2388 Fax: 707-944-2399 Retail Sales: 707-944-1364 Fax: 707-944-2466



## TASTING NOTES

**93 POINTS + GOLD MEDAL**

*-Beverage Testing Institute*

Vine Cliff Winery's 2012 Los Carneros Chardonnay was produced from the winery's picturesque twelve-acre vineyard in the heart of the historic Winery Lake District of the Los Carneros appellation. Here, cool fog and breezes from the nearby San Pablo Bay keep the climate cooler and more moderate than the surrounding areas, creating a pocket of ideal conditions for growing rich, complex, and expressive Chardonnay. The 2012 Los Carneros Chardonnay has wonderful balance between oak, fruit, and acid, opening with a burst of tropical fruit aromas and notes of tangerine, honeydew, and melon – all in perfect harmony with a subtle kiss of oak in the background. The palate has rich, concentrated flavors of lemon and lime, baked pear, honey, candied butterscotch and apples. It shows wonderful depth from start to finish, a full body, and substantial texture thanks to the French Oak. Aged 10 months in oak. 100% Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2017.



## REORDERS

**Vine Cliff  
2012 Los Carneros  
Chardonnay**

Retail Price at the Winery: \$40.00

***You Save 13% to 23% off the winery retail price!***

***New! Gold Medal Membership Rewards Pricing:\****

# of Bottles Ordered:	2+	6+	12+	24+
2-Btl. Members:	\$35.00	\$33.33	\$32.50	\$31.67
4-Btl. Members:	\$35.00	\$32.50	\$31.25	\$30.83

**[www.GoldMedalWineClub.com](http://www.GoldMedalWineClub.com)  
1-800-266-8888**

\*Effective per bottle prices after  
**Membership Rewards** discount is applied at checkout.

Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included in above prices.  
**Membership Rewards** does not apply to Sale or Specials Wines.