



Platinum Wine Club

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

Hearst Ranch Winery | Paso Robles

Jim Saunders is a native-born Paso Robles resident that has been in the wine industry for more than three decades. Many of those years he was content in supplying high-caliber grapes from his Saunders Vineyards to a number of customers on the Central Coast and other top wine producing areas. His 350 acres of vineyards accounted for an amazing 17 different varietals and his fruit was always in high demand. Excellent clay loam soils provided good drainage and were located on south and southwest-facing hills that were ideal for grape growing.

Saunders also considers himself a builder/developer and on one occasion, built a new winery for a venture within the Paso Robles area. Paso Robles was already into the huge explosion of vineyards and wineries that have made the seaside location one of California's premier wine producing areas. After the new winery was completed, Saunders had the opportunity to watch its winemaker do his thing.

"The winemaking process fascinated me from the start and I found it quite compelling," Saunders related during a recent interview. "I knew we had been growing grapes for many years and the idea of my own winery seemed a natural extension of what I was already doing."

Along with his wife Debi who handles the winery's financial side, he released the first 600 cases of Hearst Ranch wines in 2009. "I stopped selling my fruit and utilized it in making our own wines," he recalled. "Today, we produce in the neighborhood of around 20,000 cases. That's still not a large amount and it's a number where we can control our quality and our winery's destiny."

The name Hearst Ranch comes from the fact that the winery is located directly across from the famous Hearst Castle in San Simeon and from owner Jim Saunders' long-term relationship with the Hearst family.

Hearst Ranch Winery even uses the actual cattle brand from the family's entry into the cattle business way back in 1865. Saunders designed the label, a capitol 'H' with a slash on top that mirrored the family's cattle brand.

"The Hearst Family story is so amazing that I couldn't name our winery anything else. When I was starting out, Steve Hearst suggested I name it Hearst

Ranch. Do you think I could possibly object?" Saunders went on.

The story of Hearst Ranch Winery's success might be one for the record books. A host of top awards and continuing high scores have propelled the entity into the Central Coast's stratosphere. "I always knew we grew great grapes on our property, and all the wineries we did business with would tell us so. I feel the key to our success was my putting together a winemaking team and taking care of our business," the personable 70 year-old added.

Hearst Ranch Winery's team consists of Winemaker Soren Christensen, a dedicated crafter that Saunders has known for more than twenty years. Christensen's other wine exploits include stints with the likes of successful wineries such as Hope Family Wines and Alta Colina Vineyard and Winery, both located in Paso Robles. Consulting French Winemaker Guillaume Fabre also brings an experienced hand in European winemaking to the winery. Saunders works closely with Christensen, but relies on his own palate and taste for the winery's final blends. "When it comes down to the nitty-gritty, I know what I like and I believe I know what our customers are asking for. That method has proven successful for us and it's not going to change. Another close friend with a remarkable palate also sits in and gives us his opinions."

Hearst Ranch Winery has undoubtedly one of the most beautiful settings to be found anywhere in California. It commands a wonderful bay view along with a storied past covering the small village of San Simeon. A large picture within the tasting facility frames rolling hills dotted with great oak trees and vineyards. The Salinas River meanders through the area and provides even more picture opportunities.

It is to his credit that Jim Saunders has vaulted his winery to its present level. The Vietnam Veteran has used innovation and insight to compliment the great fruit grown on his estate to consistently produce award-winning wines.

It is our distinct pleasure to introduce Hearst Ranch Winery to our *Platinum Wine Club* members. This 2015 Barrel Select Red Blend combines almost all of the Bordeaux varietals and it is an excellent example of the winemaker's art. It will be a definite addition to any cellar of distinction.



Hearst Ranch | 2015 'The Point' Barrel Select Red Blend, Paso Robles

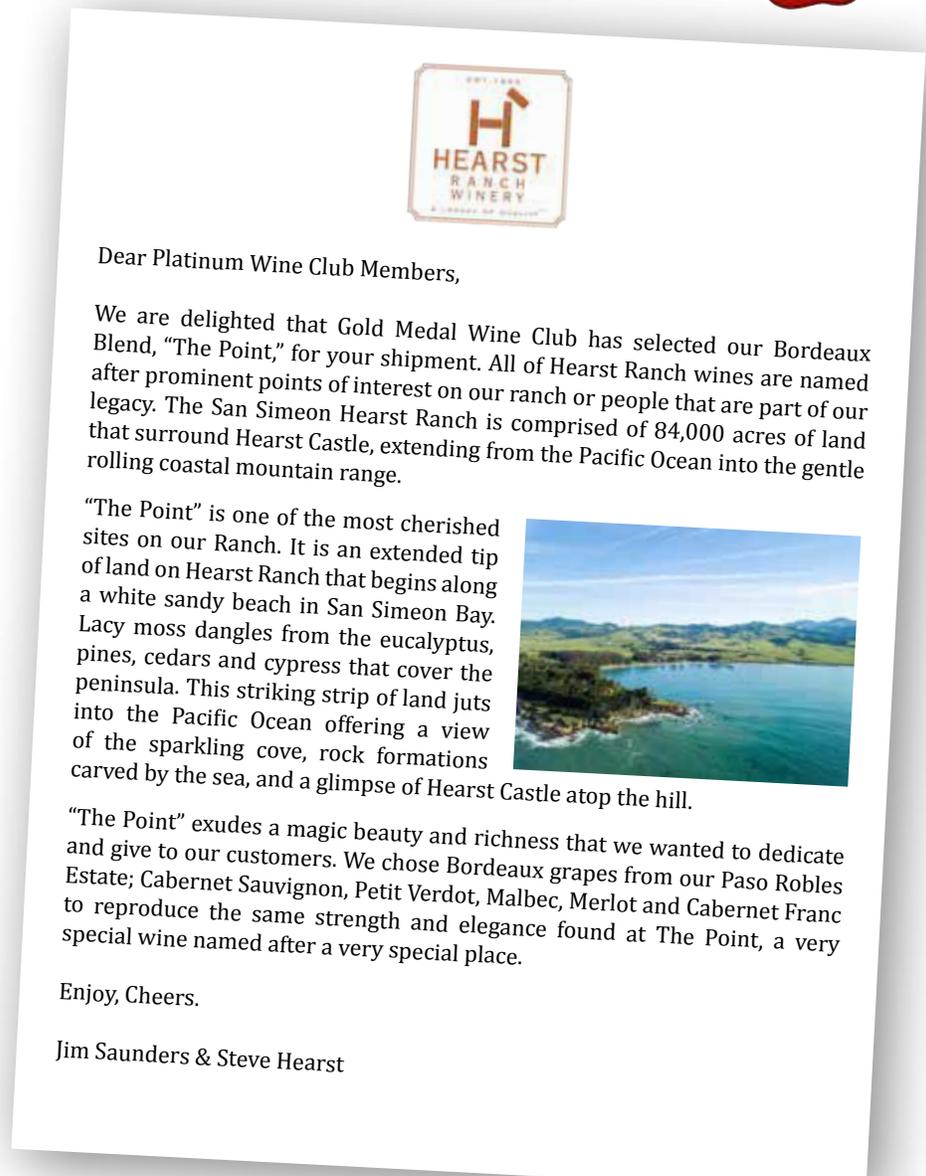


93 POINTS
— Antonio Galloni's *Vinous*

92 POINTS
— *Wine Enthusiast* magazine

231 cases produced

A blend of 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Petit Verdot, 20% Malbec, 20% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, the Hearst Ranch 2015 'The Point' Barrel Select Red Blend is regal, lush, and age-worthy, crafted with premium fruit from Paso Robles. On the nose, notes of blackberry and cassis, layered with hints of toasted oak and leather make for a dense and intriguing bouquet. The palate is supple, savory and full-bodied with finely textured, soft tannins and abundantly lush fruit flavors of plum, marjoram and Asian spice. The Petit Verdot adds wonderful length to the lingering finish. With over 2 years of bottle age, this wine has great complexity but it is very approachable. Aged 18 months in oak. Enjoy!



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

**Thacher 2016 'Normal Deviation'
Zinfandel/Petite Sirah,
Paso Robles**

92 Points - *CA Grapevine*
210 Cases Produced



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