



# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

CABERNET FRANC, VANDAL VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY, 2014





## *Honest talk in disingenuous times!*

### *Franc (Old French): "free, genuine, sincere"*

As I write this, our fearful leader is closing in on his first 100 days in office. So far, his major achievement has been to dismantle the effectiveness of the Environmental Protection Agency - an agency created by none other than Richard Nixon. Ironically, this traditional 100 day milestone closely coincided with Earth Day and the March for Science, two events that only amplified our digression from the path of environmental protection started in the 1970's.

Now, for the record, I do not believe in one party over the other. Both parties have made contributions and both have made major mistakes... but what happened to common sense?

Spending my early years in SoCal in the 60's was a mixed blessing. You had a health conscious society, yet that society was exposed to some of the most toxic air in the world. I remember "smog alert" days when my eyes and lungs would burn, triggering asthma and forcing thousands of people indoors on days that otherwise would have been ideal to spend at the park or the beach. The content of those toxic airborne events included lead (one of my many excuses for not being able to remember anything) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In response, laws were created and enforced by the EPA to force automobile producers to create cleaner burning cars that achieved higher gas mileage. Cars had to be redesigned, not only to burn lead-free gasoline but to be smaller and lighter. The early results were pitiful (remember the Pinto, Maverick and Vega?) and lobbyists claimed we were destroying our automobile manufacturers through our restrictive laws. Then the Japanese, Germans, Swedes, and even the Italians, saw opportunity and started making cars we wanted to drive - cars that were more efficient, fun and reliable than anything that came before. It took years for the American auto industry to catch up but, through the application of science and engineering, we are now producing some of the best automobiles in history... and the air in LA has seen the VOCs decline by an astonishing 98% while the burning of fossil fuels have increased threefold. Yet our president, ignoring the facts, wants to reduce mileage quotas to help the auto industry.

Tradition in wine is one thing. It is cool to look into the past in order to understand how wine was made historically. However, it is not so cool to look backward when it comes to technology. By its very nature, it demands we look forward to solve our problems. We need to dream, we need to aspire and we need to make seemingly out of reach goals a reality.

## ***Winegrowing Notes***

Early, excellent, shaken and shredded. We'd been picking for less than a week when the South Napa Quake hit. The epicenter was just a mile south of The Three Amigos Vineyard with the fault running north through RSV's OSR and Vandal Vineyards. Things were knocked about and some vines were lost due to cracking along the fault line, but we fared much better than some.

The 2014 vintage was one of the driest on record with rainfall half of normal. The vintage was saved by the reservoir-filling rains that came in late February and early March. Overall, the growing season was amenable and tracking early until a freak hail storm shredded the canopies of the Cabernet Franc vines and slowed down the ripening cycle. The fruit came through relatively unscathed and the extra hang time might have actually helped.

The third year of drought created wines of beauty, depth and concentration. The Cabernet Franc was quintessentially ripe with hints of dried herb and marvelous dark red fruits. The 2014's are structured wines with balanced acidity and firm tannins - perfect for the cellar or for the table.

## ***Tasting Notes***

RSV's Cabernet Franc, Vandal Vineyard 2014, exhibits high-tone aromas of violet, oregano and sage — leaving a first impression that suggests old world styling, but with a delicious core of California sun-kissed blackberry and black cherry accompanied by notes of mocha, clove and nutmeg. Brooding concentration and complexity resolve into a focused finish on rails of sleek tannins. Drunk early, the wine will benefit from a swirl in the decanter prior to serving, yet all signs suggest this 2014 vintage has the bones to be cellared with the best of RSV's Cabernet Francs. (04/2017) 900 cases produced





## DUST

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Dust follows me everywhere. During the summer it sifts in through the screen door and settles on every surface in the house. It's one of the joys of living in the middle of a vineyard. But dust can be a good thing in a very particular way. One of the most intriguing aromas of RSV's Vandal Vineyard Cabernet Franc is a dusty minerality that is born by the grapes of that singular vineyard. This dustiness is checked by a beautiful perfume of violets and cocoa powder. These aromas are benchmarks for a well-grown and well-crafted Cabernet Franc. The Taragna plays off the dust and touch of earth nicely. The slight bitterness of the buckwheat tends to smooth the tannins of this nascent wine and makes the fruit explode. A perfect dish and wine for a rain-soaked day kissed by a cool breath of wind.

Until the Next Wine....

*Maria*

## TARAGNA WITH GREEN GARLIC

*Taragna is a northern Italian peasant dish if there ever was one. Polenta and grain porridges are typical dishes of the Cucina Povera - or cuisine of the poor. This makes a hearty main course and is wonderful served with simple greens and a spritely vinaigrette that leans to the tangy side. While I like it served with green garlic, it is wonderful with finely chopped braised greens or walnut pesto. Serves 8.*

8 cups cold water

2 cups taragna (buckwheat polenta)

Kosher salt

3 stalks green garlic, trimmed, washed and sliced thinly

2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon plus 8 ounces unsalted butter

Freshly ground black pepper

½ pound crescenza cheese or Italian fontina, cut into ½ pieces

1. Place the water in a 5 quart pot. Whisk in the polenta until smooth.
2. Place the pot over medium high heat. Add 3 teaspoons salt and whisk until the taragna comes to a boil and thickens. Switch to a wooden spoon and continue to stir until the taragna is thick and smooth. Reduce the heat to low and cook for 40 – 50 minutes stirring occasionally until the taragna is tender and grains have expanded.
3. Sauté the green garlic while the taragna is cooking. Heat a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Add 1 tablespoon butter. When the butter starts to brown, add 2 tablespoons olive oil and then the garlic. Cook until the garlic is fragrant and golden. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Turn out onto a plate and reserve at room temperature until ready to serve.
4. Stir the remaining 8 ounces of butter into the taragna until incorporated.
5. Stir in the cheese until it is swirled and partially melted. You want a few chunks of cheese. Pour into a serving bowl and top with the green garlic. Serve immediately.







## FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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