



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

MERLOT, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY, 2014



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MERLOT

LOS CARNEROS - NAPA VALLEY

40 BARRELS PRODUCE

WINEMAKERS & BOTTLED BY ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS
NAPA, CALIFORNIA USA

DAVID AND GOLIATH

By Rob Sinskey

The school groundskeeper is rich - but he won't be able to spend it in his lifetime. He's dying of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. A jury recently awarded \$289 million in his suit against a well-known glyphosate herbicide manufacturer. He is our hero for successfully indicting a company that caused something we suspected for decades - that one of the most common herbicides is a carcinogen - and has set a precedent that will make agriculture and our food supply safer.

Our hunch that glyphosate was problematic was based on the observation that farm workers and people who live in agricultural areas seem to suffer a higher incidence of cancer. It could be that they are also exposed to fertilizers, pesticides and other synthetics in addition to glyphosate and the chemical cocktail might amplify the problem - but glyphosate is one of the most common chemicals applied on a "conventional" farm and was one of the most common chemicals the groundskeeper applied in his schoolyard... a place where children could come into contact with applied areas and the overspray.

"We live in an age when unnecessary things are our only necessities."

Oscar Wilde

We don't need herbicides. We don't need wine for that matter. So, if wine is a luxury, why accept a luxury food item that uses harmful chemicals in its farming? There are plenty of ways to control the undergrowth in a vineyard without resorting to the use of herbicides, but those techniques require more effort and, with that effort, an increased cost - but a fine wine should be worth it as guilt-free hedonism is the ultimate luxury. Sheep can graze a vineyard in the winter. Mechanical mowers can take care of it in the summer and those cover crops provide nutrients, fix the top soil and allow the ground to percolate during the rainy season. We have also observed that areas applied with herbicides tend to have less microbial, fungal and worm activity... so if you use herbicides, you are destroying many things that contribute to a healthy farm eco-system.

How do you know if your wine was produced without potentially harmful chemicals? An organic vineyard certification is not the end-all, but it assures that the wine was farmed without the use of synthetic chemicals like and including glyphosate. We love food and we love wine and the last thing we want is to be afraid of the things we put in our body.



Winegrowing Notes

Merlot, at its best, is one of the most enjoyable cuisine wines and the Carneros, one of the great Merlot growing regions in the world, creates great, food friendly Merlots. It is in the rolling hills of Carneros where you can achieve quintessential ripeness without sacrificing structure and acidity.

Comprised of seven individually fermented lots from RSV's three Los Carneros Merlot vineyards, the final cuvée consists of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. The individual lots spent 18 months in the RSV caves in 60 gallon French oak barrels, of which about 30% were new.

Tasting Notes

A California Merlot with soul... a rich, silky-smooth soul. Commanding aromas of ripe black cherries, bramble, summer plum jam, dark chocolate, clove and tobacco take the lead while a bouquet of red flowers and bay leaf form atop as the wine is poured. Behind the delicious fruit lies a backbone of black tea and accents of forest floor that lend structure and complexity. The wine exhibits a hedonistic harmony with a ripeness that is mouth-filling with a mouth watering vibrancy that is balanced by finely woven tannins for a deliciously long finish. 982 (12x 750ml) cases bottled in June of 2016.





MERLOT MAGIC

A well-crafted Merlot has the ability to shapeshift from savory and sleek to fruity and rich depending on what food is served with it. I've created dishes for over 20 years that showcase Merlot's flexibility with food... and it continues to amaze me! I've thrown cherries, plums, rosemary, fennel, and olives at it and it catches them beautifully. Juicy, roast duck with maple, sage and black pepper is no exception. The balance of savory and sweet with the gentle scent of sage pulls out aromas and flavors of plum, cherry and dried herb. A delight for all of the senses. This Merlot deserves applause at the dinner table.

Until the Next Wine....

Maria



ROAST DUCK BREAST WITH MAPLE SYRUP, SAGE AND BLACK PEPPER

These crisp-skinned juicy duck breasts scented with sage and maple are a delicious treat. Fresh duck breasts are best but frozen ones will work fine because of their rich meaty texture. Choose the largest breasts available. Serves 4 to 6

Two whole 12 to 16-ounce duck breasts, split*
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper

12 large sage leaves
8 teaspoons pure maple syrup

1. Use a sharp knife to score the fatty skin of the duck in a diamond pattern. Take care not to cut into the meat. Season the duck breast on both sides with salt and freshly ground pepper and lay three sage leaves on top of each breast. Press down firmly.
2. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
3. Heat a 10-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Add the duck breasts to the dry pan skin/fat side down. Make sure that the sage leaves are flat against the breast. Render the fat from the skin until the skin is golden, about 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Use a spatula to hold the breasts and tilt the pan to drain the fat into a heatproof container as it renders out. Adjust the heat if the pan gets too hot and starts to smoke. The rendered fat can be saved and stored in the refrigerator for later use**.
5. When the skin is crisp, turn the breasts over and cook for 2 to 3 minutes on the meaty side.
6. Turn the breasts back over and drizzle 2 teaspoons of maple syrup over each breast. Place in the oven and roast for 4 to 5 minutes.
7. Remove the pan from the oven. Place the breasts on a plate to rest 7 to 10 minutes before slicing.
8. Add a ¼ cup water to the pan to loosen the browned bits. Scrape into a small sauce pan with a rubber spatula and reserve to spoon over the duck.
9. Slice each breast on the diagonal against the grain of the muscle into ¼ inch thick slices. Drizzle with sauce and serve.

* Whole duck breasts are usually sold as two half breasts attached by the skin in between the meat. This recipe calls for 2 whole breasts separated into 4 half breasts about 6 to 8 ounces each. Choose large, hefty breasts.

** The rendered fat from the skin can be used to fry potatoes. It adds wonderful richness and flavor.

MAPLE GLAZED SWEET POTATOES

These potatoes are a delicious accompaniment to a large variety of roasted birds and meat. They are so satisfying they can also be enjoyed on their own. Serves 4

1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut in half length wise and sliced into ¼ inch thick slices
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or duck fat

8 whole sage leaves
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons maple syrup
Flaked sea salt to garnish

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Heat a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Add the butter to the pan and cook until it starts to brown.
3. Add the olive oil or duck fat and then the potatoes. Toss the potatoes or use a spatula to coat with the fat. Sauté until starting to brown, about 3 minutes.
4. Add the sage leaves and toss. Continue to cook for 2 to 3 minutes, tossing or stirring so that potatoes are evenly browned.
5. Season with salt and pepper and drizzle with the maple syrup.
6. Place in preheated oven and roast for 10 minutes. If the maple syrup caramelizes too quickly add a few teaspoons of water and shake pan vigorously to incorporate.
7. Remove the pan from the oven and turn the potatoes onto a serving plate. They should be golden and shiny with glaze.
8. Sprinkle lightly with the flaked sea salt and serve.



FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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