



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

BLANC, LOS CARNEROS 2018





BLANC SLATE!

by Rob Sinskey

I wish that I knew what I know now...

Ever wish you could get a “do over” - start anew once experience has been gained and facts acquired? Just think, we could go back in time armed with current knowledge to fix things before they broke. We could have slowed or stopped climate change before it became an issue, created better rapid transit, improved our roadways, saved more of the rainforest, preserved open space and wetlands, stopped wars, made sure we had the right leaders - ones who could have worked in the best interests of the planet. But we can't go back. We can only move forward with the knowledge gained from time.

We've seen and learned much over the past three-plus decades. We've seen how conscientious, organic farming practices can improve soil, sequester carbon, increase healthy microbial activity, improve bio-diversity with an increase in beneficial insects, birds and wildlife - all while producing better quality grapes for more elegant wines. But we can always learn more each vintage by tweaking things here and there to get better and less impactful as we go - all the while improving our wine growing and wine making for more expressive, delicious and elegant wines. Each step along the way is an opportunity for a do over... that is if we don't fear change and learn from the past to make a better future.



Winegrowing Notes

RSV is getting a do-over of sorts with Pinot Blanc. When RSV started growing the delicately beautiful grape, just a few acres of Pinot Blanc was planted as an experiment in the OSR Vineyard. Once the grape was a proven success in the Carneros, a block of Blanc was added to the Three Amigos Vineyard. Both of these vineyards are on the Napa side of the Carneros. Then, a block of Blanc was added to RSV's Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard on the Sonoma side of the Carneros. These three distinct vineyards offer an ability to create different wines, each a unique cuvée with an individual expression. The half-bottles of Pinot Blanc, primarily from grapes grown on the two Napa vineyards, have more malates (naturally occurring malic acid) for a brighter, more structured wine that shows best with a bit of bottle patina, whereas the Blanc, bottled in full size bottles, is a cuvée of almost equal amounts of Napa and Sonoma fruit. The Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard produces a Pinot Blanc that is a bit fleshier, with a roundness that allows the wine to be served younger and, since it was bottled in regular sized bottles with a cork finish, will evolve gracefully over time.

Tasting Notes - by Rob Sinskey & Jeff Virnig

A stunning Pinot Blanc with youthful aromas and flavors of magnolia or vanilla flower, pear, lemon verbena and pineapple guava. The wine has a bright entry, a wonderful fleshy mid-palate tempered by an elegant minerality with a touch of jasmine tea on the long-flavorful finish. A beautiful wine for the table that can work as the opening wine served with seafood or charcuterie or as the featured wine with the main course.





BRING ON THE HEAT!

RSV's Blanc is so fresh and bright, it can handle just about anything - even heat. Heat, as in spicy chilis, can be the killer of wine. The Blanc's purity of fruit, vivacious, bright acidity balanced by a plush mouthfeel - that comes from time well spent on lees - gives it the ability to face the heat. It's a seamless wine with not only spicy food but bright green aromatic herbs, seafood, salad with intense vinaigrette and an extremely wide range of other dishes that normally beat up wine.

All hail the Blanc... and bring on the heat!

Until the Next Wine....

Maria

HARISSA SHRIMP

Cooking the shrimp in the shell can be messy for the eater but the reward is juicy, flavorful, succulent shrimp. The messiness is well worth it!
Serves 4 to 6

2 pounds extra-large shell-on 16/20 shrimp, about 32
2 tablespoons Harissa, store-bought or recipe follows
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt
1 large yellow onion, peeled and sliced into thin wedges

1. Use a pair of kitchen scissors to split the shrimp down the back and devein. Loosen the shell a little on both side of the meat.
2. Whisk the harissa with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and the lemon juices, season to taste with salt. Pour over the shrimp and toss.
3. Heat a ¼ inch layer of olive oil in a large pan. Add the onions and fry them until they are all golden brown. Remove onions to a serving dish as they brown to prevent them from burning. Continue to transfer the golden onions to the bowl with a slotted spoon until they are all cooked. Season with salt to taste.
4. Add the shrimp to the same oil as the onions. Reserve any remaining marinade.
5. Cook until the shrimp are pink and tightly curled about 2 minutes on each side. They will be plump and juicy. Turn the heat down if the pan begins to smoke or the bits that are sticking start to blacken. Place the cooked shrimp on top of the onions.
6. When all of the shrimp are cooked drain the excess oil from the pan and add the leftover marinade with ¼ cup water and bring to a boil scraping the pan with a spatula to loosen any adhered bits. Reduce the liquid until slightly thickened and pour over the shrimp.
7. Serve the shrimp with smoky eggplant and pita or the accompaniment of your choice.

SMOKEY EGGPLANT

I love this silky eggplant puree as a dip for vegetables and toasted pita or as a spread for sandwiches. Charring the skin of the eggplant adds a beautiful smokiness to the silky puree. If you don't have a grill, split the eggplant lengthwise and place cut side down on a lightly oiled sheet pan and roast in a 350 degree F oven until the eggplant is very soft when pierced with a knife, about 45 minutes. Scoop out the soft flesh with a spoon. Yield: approximately 3 cups

1 medium head garlic, cut in half horizontally
1 ½ pounds large Japanese or other thin-skinned Asian eggplant,
firm and smooth
2 tablespoons Tahini

3 tablespoons lemon juice
Kosher salt
½ cup extra virgin olive oil plus more to drizzle
Handful of basil & mint leaves

1. Wrap the garlic in half and roast for 1 hour until soft and caramelized. Squeeze out ½ of the garlic into a bowl, discard the skins and reserve. The other half of the garlic can be wrapped and frozen for another use.
2. Over a stove gas burner or a grill, char the skin of the eggplant. Use tongs to turn the eggplant so that it chars evenly. Place the charred eggplant in a bowl and seal with aluminum foil. Let the eggplant cool until it is cool enough to handle. Peel off the charred skin. The eggplant should be very soft. If it's not seal in foil and bake in a 350 degree F oven until it is very tender.
3. Chop the eggplant coarsely and place it in a strainer to drain over a bowl until it is well-drained.
4. Puree the eggplant and tahini until very smooth in a blender or food processor.
5. Add the lemon juice and pulse. Season to taste with salt.
6. Start the machine and drizzle in olive oil to emulsify. Add up to ½ cup of olive oil until mixture is smooth and rich. Let sit for 30 minutes then adjust seasoning and salt/lemon juice balance. Turn out into a bowl and drizzle with olive oil. Tear herb leaves over before serving.

HARISSA

Yield: 1 ½ cup

½ teaspoon coriander seeds
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon caraway seeds
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 small red onion, roughly chopped
3 medium garlic cloves, roughly chopped

1 small red pepper (peeled piquillo works), seeded and diced
3 hot red chilis, deseeded and roughly chopped (reconstitute 3 dried and chop)
1 tablespoon tomato purée
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1. Preheat a medium sauté pan over medium heat.
2. Toast seeds separately in the pan for 2-3 minutes tossing occasionally to freshen and exude their scent. Cool.
3. Place the seeds together in spice grinder and grind to powder. Reserve.
4. Heat olive oil in a medium pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook until onions are golden about 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Add the red pepper and chilies. Cook until heated through.
6. Add tomato puree and cook until bubbly and thick. Remove from heat and cool to warm.
7. Place in a blender. Add spices and lemon juice. Puree until smooth. Season with salt, blend and let sit for 15 minutes and add additional salt if necessary and repeat until seasoning is to your taste. Leftover harissa can be stored in the refrigerator for a week or in the freezer for up to 6 months.

PITA BREAD

12 pieces

1 ½ cups warm water
2¼ teaspoons dry yeast
1 teaspoon granulated sugar

3½ cups all purpose flour
½ cup whole wheat flour
1 tablespoon kosher salt

1. Pour ½ cup of water into the bowl of a stand mixer. Sprinkle the yeast evenly over the water and let it bloom for a few minutes then whisk until smooth. Whisk in the sugar to dissolve. Whisk in ½ cup of flour to form a loose paste. Cover the bowl with plastic and let it rise in a warm place until the mixture has risen and is bubbly, about 15 minutes.
2. Mix together the remaining flours and salt.
3. Add the remaining 1 cup of water to the bubbling yeast mixture and then the flours and salt. Use a dough hook to knead the bread until it is smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes.
4. Coat a large bowl lightly with oil and place the dough in the bowl. Flip the dough over to coat it on all sides. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and allow to sit in a warm place for 2 hours or until it has doubled in size.
5. Punch down the dough, turn it out onto a lightly floured counter and roll it into a thick log. Cut the log into 12 equal pieces and roll them into balls. Let the balls rest on the floured counter or on a lightly floured sheet pan, covered lightly with a damp cloth or piece of plastic wrap, for 10 to 15 minutes. The balls will start to rise and press on the plastic wrap. Once they do they are ready to roll.
6. Preheat the oven to 500 degrees F or as hot as it will go. Position a rack on the lowest rung in the oven and remove the racks above for easy access. Place a half sheet pan on the newly positioned rack to preheat.
7. Use a rolling pin to roll each ball into a circle 5 to 6 inches in diameter and ¼-inch-thick. The pita will stick slightly to the counter. Do not flour the counter or the dough will slide around and it will be difficult to roll the rounds thin. Let the pita rest for 5 minutes before baking.
8. Spread your finger out with your palm facing upwards and lay the pita over the top. Open the oven door and flip your hand over to drop the pita on the hot sheet pan. Immediately shut the oven door and do not open it until it is time to flip the pita after it has puffed. This should take about 3 to 4 minutes. Reach into the oven and flip the puffed pita with a pair of tongs. Cook for 2 minutes more. Remove the pita from the oven and place it on a clean dish cloth or napkin and cover it. Press gently on the pita with the closed tongs to deflate it. Mind the steam from the deflating pita as it is very hot and quite a shock when it hits you. Repeat for the remaining pitas. Store the warm pitas in a napkin lined basket for serving. You can also cool the pitas and keep them sealed in a zip lock bag in the fridge or freezer. Thaw and rewarm before serving.

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.



Robert Sinskey Vineyards
6320 Silverado Trail
Napa, CA 94558
707.944.9090
robertsinskey.com

Winemaker: Jeff Virnig
Chef: Maria Helm Sinskey
Photos and Text: Rob Sinskey
gluttons@robertsinskey.com

