



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, THREE AMIGOS VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2016





Pinot Noir, Three Amigos Vineyard 2

forty years of farming Pinot Noir!

It was the “low rent” district; a patchwork of derelict farms, rusting vehicles, dilapidated barns with an occasional sad looking horse, a few sheep or a small herd of cattle milling about. The Carneros was in its infancy as a wine region when we planted the Three Amigos Vineyard forty years ago. Yes, there were a few breakthrough vineyards at the time like Winery Lake and Carneros Creek and a smattering of upstart wineries concentrating on the “Burgundian” varieties of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Overall the region was a throwback to a more pastoral time.

We planted our vines just a few years before what would turn out to be a seven year drought that stunted some of our vines and limited the early yields. We talked about the concept of “Global Warming” in those days, and how it could impact the vines and the quality of our wines. We surmised that if a warming environment was inevitable, we needed a more resilient vine that could withstand the extremes of unstable weather. Enter winemaker Jeff Virnig and the concept of organic/biodynamic farming with its lessons of regarding the farm as a series of interrelationships, all working together to achieve a natural balance. It is the human’s role to observe the interrelationships and overcompensate for the potential destruction caused by farming - “to heal an ailing earth.” This gave birth to the idea that fine wine shouldn’t hurt your palate or the planet... based on the premise that “conventional” chemical farming releases carbon and contributes to climate change, whereas the organic/biodynamic model sequesters carbon while building a healthier soil that leads to healthier vines for better wines without the baggage of climate altering practices.

We can only do so much without concerted efforts by all farmers and the consumers who have the power to instigate real change through their purchasing habits. I have observed over the past forty years the slow demise of the California live oaks and redwoods due to drought, changing climate, pestilence and disease. The kelp beds on the California coast are shrinking due to warming oceans. I have seen the barns that dotted the Carneros burn in the intense series of fires over three of the last four years... fire with an intensity that used to occur once every 50 to 100 years, though never at the scale we have recently experienced.

I wrote over twenty years ago that Pinot Noir was the canary in the coal mine when it came to farming practices and climate change. It could be our teacher if we were good listeners. We’re still listening and we still have a lot to learn... and do!

Winegrowing Notes

The drought spell was broken for a brief year as 2016 shaped up to be a pretty nifty vintage. A mild July and August allowed the Pinot Noir to mature slowly and develop complex flavors without excessive sugar development. RSV's organically farmed Three Amigos Vineyard enjoyed foggy mornings and late afternoon cooling winds that helped to preserve the natural acidity in the low yielding Pinot Noir. This small-production Three Amigos cuvée of three adjacent vineyards sports no less than eight heirloom selections and clones. This wine has a bit more tension as the wine is first poured into the glass, but evolves gracefully and takes you on a journey as it opens up over the course of a meal. This bottling has benefited from extended bottle aging before release and will continue to gain nuance as it ages in your cellar.

Tasting Notes

A complex, youthful rendition of the Three Amigos Pinot Noir from RSV's organically farmed vineyards. Pomegranate and cranberry meet hibiscus, sage and black tea create a high-tone bouquet of classic Three Amigos Vineyard aromas that express the true potential of the three adjacent vineyards in the cool, southern Carneros growing region of Napa. The lush fruit quality of the 2016 vintage delivers flavors of juicy red plum, ripe summer red berries, citrus peel and spice for a mid palate that is both luxurious and welcoming at this young age. The vineyard's cooler, fog morning and wind-swept afternoons are expressed in a resolve of sturdiness and tension in the finish that ensures this vintage will age gracefully and complement cuisine from any season featuring a wide range of ingredients like roasted eggplant, salmon, duck and lamb.

The equivalent of 459 cases produced for 918 - six bottle cases.





OPEN SESAME

I was blown away the first time I tasted sesame noodles with our Three Amigos Pinot Noir. The light, nutty flavor of the sesame married perfectly with the red berry fruit and hint of earth wafting from the swirling wine in my glass. It was totally unexpected. The zippy, bright acidity of the wine gently cut through the richness of the sesame seed, well-endowed with oil. It's exciting to taste flavors in wine and food that are harmonious and balanced. It's a prime example of a wine and food "happy accident" when a wine drinker wins the lotto at the dining table and stumbles upon a delicious pairing.

I'm including my favorite recipe for sesame noodles below. These noodles taste great freshly made or marinated overnight. My recipe uses high quality white sesame paste from Japan. You can substitute Tahini if you can't find Japanese sesame paste but the taste won't be as delicate. The seeds are more deeply roasted for Tahini and the texture is slightly more coarse than white sesame paste.

A bowl of noodles is easy to toss together and is a comforting dish made to savor with a glass of well-crafted Pinot Noir.

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*

SESAME NOODLES

Noodles can be cooked in advance, rinsed with cold water and kept chilled in the refrigerator. Loosen by adding a few drops of water at a time to the noodles and gently tossing with your fingers to separate. Trim the roots from the scallions and slice both the green and white parts. Sautéing the scallion mellows its intense oniony bite. Serves 4

1 2 ounces dry udon noodles, cooked according to package directions	5 tablespoons Japanese white sesame paste
4 scallions, white and green parts, thinly sliced	2 ½ tablespoons soy sauce plus more to season
1 teaspoon untoasted sesame oil or vegetable oil	1 tablespoon seasoned rice wine vinegar
2 tablespoons + 2 tablespoons sweet mirin rice wine	1 tablespoon toasted sesame seed plus 1 tablespoon for garnish
	1 recipe quick pickled mushrooms, recipe follows

1. Place the cooked and chilled noodles in a large bowl. Reserve at room temperature.
2. Heat a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Add the oil to the pan and then the scallions. Sauté until the scallions are soft.
3. Add 2 tablespoons of mirin to the pan and cook until it is evaporated. Use a rubber spatula to turn out the cooked scallions over the noodles.
4. In a medium bowl, combine the remaining 2 tablespoons of mirin, sesame paste, soy sauce and rice wine vinegar. Whisk until smooth.
5. Whisk in 4 tablespoons of water to make dressing creamy and smooth. Add 1 tablespoon of toasted sesame seeds. Dressing can be made up to 2 days in advance and stored in the refrigerator.
6. Pour the dressing over the noodles and toss until well-combined. Add a little more water to thin the dressing if necessary. Season to taste with a little soy sauce.
7. Top with pickled mushrooms and toasted sesame seed to serve.

QUICK PICKLED MUSHROOMS

These mushrooms get better the longer they sit so make them ahead of time. Yield: 1 cup

1 cup enoki or beach mushrooms, stems trimmed to ½-inch
or sliced shitake mushroom caps
1 cup seasoned rice wine vinegar

1. Place the mushrooms in a small bowl.
2. Bring the vinegar to a boil in a small pot and pour over the mushrooms. Use a small plate to submerge the mushrooms. Cool to room temperature and then transfer to a storage container and keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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