



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, FOUR VINEYARDS, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2016



PINOT DIPLOMACY...

by Rob Sinskey

Make the world go away, and get it off of my shoulder... I can't seem to get the old Eddy Arnold (famously covered by Willie Nelson) song out of my head these days. I long for the days when we could just enjoy a bottle of Pinot, a feast and friends... when the most divisive subjects were Old World vs New World or organic vs natural vs conventional wines. In some ways, what used to be so important to us seems quaint in light of the pandemic, climate change driven fires and a divisive political landscape.

We like to think that what we do is important to those who care about what they enjoy and consume. We are not going to fix the problems of the world but we can offer a salve during difficult times and a center piece of a celebration in good times.

I attended high school in the 70s in a small central coast California town where kids identified with one of three groups; the cowboys, the hippies, or the nerds. Since I had long hair, you know what camp I was in. The cowboys felt they were the original and authentic inhabitants of the region. Most were born into cattle ranching families. They pretended to despise the hippies and would do such fun things as capture a hippie and use the sheep shears to cut their hair or hang one by their feet in the barn. Sounds violent but no one was physically hurt...only their pride. The classic, annual face-off occurred every halloween. Each group would "arm" themselves with eggs, fruit and vegetables they had collected throughout the year and, for maximum effect, left in the sun for months to rot. The hippies, along with some of the nerds, would take over the rooftops of the two-block, old-town main street while the cowboys would fill their pickup beds with kids and "ammunition". They would then speed down main street while the kids in the back hurled rotten eggs at the hippies on the buildings and the hippies would attempt to score one in the back of the pickups. All the while, the local sheriff (whose two sons were on the cowboy team) would stand by and watch. Amazingly, no one was seriously injured and once all the "ammo" was depleted, the two groups would meet up at the park or cemetery and one of those trucks would show up with a keg of cheap beer, a cooler of cheap wine and a bottle of 151 in the back and the two groups would no longer be adversaries.

Years later, some of those cowboys looked me up and came to visit the winery where we sat in the cave, opened a bottle of Pinot, reminisced about our "adversarial" days and enjoyed each others company. Instead of making the world go away, maybe we need more Pinot diplomacy.





Winegrowing Notes

The Four Vineyards Pinot Noir is RSV's most elegant Pinot Noir. It is a macrocosm of RSV's organically farmed Carneros vineyards. RSV has collected heirloom selections and French clones of Pinot Noir over the years, each producing a unique expression in each location. All are night harvested by hand and delivered to the cellar in the wee hours of the morning. Anything that makes a vineyard "block" distinctive is fermented and aged individually then blended by taste to create this elegant cuvée.

Tasting Notes

An elegant and refined RSV Pinot. The Four Vineyards is a select Pinot Noir from RSV's four organically farmed Napa/Carneros vineyards. It maintains exceptional focus from the first sip to the last, as delicate aromas and flavors are bright and fresh throughout. Hints of rose, violet, blood orange peel and sage lead to an explosive mid-pallet, rich with raspberry, black cherry and red currant or tart Santa Rosa plum. The finish reveals a harmonious frame of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg, rounded out by a touch of vanilla and earth notes that reflect Los Carneros terroir. The wine is generous now in its youth, but has a pristine energy to suggest it will age gracefully in the cellar for a decade and beyond. (01/2021)

The equivalent of 487 (12x750ml) cases produced for 974 (6x750ml) cases



DIGGING IN THE DIRT

People swoon over black truffles. I swoon over black trumpet mushrooms! They have the earthy, soft mushroom notes of black truffles and, when chopped finely, resemble truffles in a dish of risotto or pasta. I call black trumpets the poor person's truffle since they have the *je ne sais quoi* of a truffle with the intensity of a wild mushroom. Black trumpets are a beautiful thing.

Pairing mushrooms with Pinot Noir is a no-brainer. It is a revered and delightful historical pairing. The umami earthy notes of the mushrooms are perfectly in sync with the slight forest floor notes of RSV's Four Vineyard Pinot Noir. What the Four Vineyards delivers on top of all that is beautiful sour cherry and plum fruit with a hint of soft red berry and bright acidity that's tops it all off and brings everything together in a pile of delicious goodness. It doesn't get any better!

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*

Risotto is a great medium to showcase wild mushrooms. The muted flavors of the rice provide the perfect backdrop for the earthy flavors of the mushrooms. It is always wonderful to use fresh wild mushrooms; however fresh, wild mushrooms are pricey and, because they're expensive, they tend to sit at the market past their prime. A cure for this is to use dried mushrooms instead of fresh. Since they are dried at peak ripeness, they are naturally packed with flavor and the process of drying only intensifies that flavor. This intensity of flavor more than makes up for what you might lose in texture. Dried mushrooms can also be stored for a long time standing ready in the cupboard whenever you need them. If you miss the meaty texture of fresh mushrooms, you can always add sliced white or crimini button mushrooms.

You will find two main types of rice for risotto at your market, Arborio and Carnaroli. Arborio is a standard short-grained Italian rice with a high starch content that makes it very good for risotto. It cooks faster than Carnaroli and has a softer texture. Carnaroli is the finest aged Italian short-grained rice for risotto. It is known for its superior silken and creamy texture when cooked. The grains of rice are very round, almost barrel shaped. Carnaroli is the preferred rice for making risotto. Arborio rice can be substituted but, as mentioned above, requires a shorter cooking time.

Leftover risotto can be cooled on a sheet pan and then formed into small balls, breaded and fried for Arancini. Add a nugget of cheese to the center of the ball if you desire a nice gooey cheesy bite.

A cautionary note: As the rice begins to thicken it has a tendency to spit hot starchy liquid, which can be painful. Use a long thick wooden spoon or paddle to take your hand as far away from spitting range as possible.



BLACK TRUMPET MUSHROOM RISOTTO

Serves 4 as a main course

1 ½ ounces dried Black Trumpet Mushrooms or other dried mushroom, reconstituted per note below
Extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon minced shallot
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon chopped thyme leaves
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

2 cups reduced mushroom water + 4 cups chicken stock or water
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 small yellow onion, peeled and finely diced
½ cup dry red wine
1 ½ cups Carnaroli or Arborio rice
2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley
½ cup finely grated Parmesan plus more on side for sprinkling

1. Heat a large sauté pan over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and then the rehydrated mushrooms. Sauté the mushrooms until they are tender and the pan is almost dry, about 3 minutes. Add the shallots, garlic and thyme and stir well. Cook until soft and golden. Season the mixture with salt and pepper to taste. Reserve them at room temperature until ready to be used or, if you prepare them in advance, cover and store them in the refrigerator.
2. Bring the mushroom liquid plus stock or water to a boil in a medium pot and reduce to a bare simmer.
3. Heat a large heavy bottomed saucepan over medium high heat, add the butter and cook until it is lightly browned and bubbling. Add the diced onion and sauté until it is translucent and golden, 3 to 4 minutes. Season with 1 teaspoon of salt and a few grinds of black pepper.
4. Add the rice and stir until it is thoroughly heated and starting to toast. Add the mushrooms and stir well. Add the wine and bring to a boil while stirring constantly. Stir until the wine is completely absorbed by the rice. Set the timer for 18 minutes.
5. Using a 6-ounce ladle, add the simmering stock into the rice one ladle at a time, stir the rice constantly while adding the stock. Add more stock as the rice absorbs the liquid. When the timer goes off taste the risotto for texture. I prefer my risotto chewy with a little tooth so I cook it a little less. The grains should be silky and slide easily over one another when a spoon is drawn through. If this is not the case, add a little more stock to loosen them up. The rice should have enough liquid so that the texture is creamy. If the rice is not cooked enough the texture will be starchy and crunchy. If the rice is overcooked the grains will be bloated and stick together. Add more liquid until it reaches the texture you desire.
6. Stir in the parmesan and chopped Italian parsley immediately before serving. Serve with additional Parmesan on the side. The rice should be served soon after it has finished cooking otherwise it will continue to cook and become overcooked and clumped together.

Note: *To reconstitute, cover dried mushrooms with 6 cups boiling water and let them soak for 30 minutes. Be sure to lift them out of the water after they are re-hydrated to prevent contamination by any dirt that has fallen to the bottom. Pour the soaking water off the dirt that has settled to the bottom then through a fine cheesecloth and reserve. Trim the rough bottoms of the mushrooms off and pull the mushrooms part to expose any dirty collected inside their trumpet shape. Repeat the soaking process until there is no more dirt at the bottom of the bowl. Usually 2 more times. Combine the strained rehydrating liquid in a medium pan and reduce by half. Save the liquid to make the risotto. Extra liquid can be frozen for later use and is delicious added to chicken stock and soups as it is loaded with umami flavor. Cut the larger mushrooms into bite-sized pieces, smaller mushrooms may be left whole. The mushroom ragout can be made a day or two ahead of time and refrigerated. To use fresh mushrooms, substitute 8 ounces of fresh for each ounce of dried.*



FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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