

# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

## ABRAXAS, VIN DE TERROIR 2018



*Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard, Los Carneros*



- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Grown in RSV's Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard
- Delicate whole-cluster pressed fruit
- Fermented dry
- No barrels for a bright, pure and true wine
- Elegant glass stoppered 750ml bottles
- Cork finished magnums

### ***Winegrowing Notes***

Abraxas is a dance with nature. It rejects science-based winemaking and instead embraces the craft of winegrowing. Four grapes - Riesling, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc and Gewürztraminer - grow side by side on RSV's organically farmed Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard. Each variety is hand picked at night at each variety's peak expression, cool fermented separately and then blended to create a wine of character with stunning aromatics and mineral nerve. It is naturally delicious.

### ***Tasting Notes***

It is only natural that Abraxas is a standout wine from vintage to vintage. The Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris and Gewürztraminer are organically farmed in the cool climate of RSV's Scintilla Sonoma vineyard, where RSV's flock of sheep graze the land and falcons patrol the vines. This wine shows brilliant, integrated complexity led by a floral bouquet of jasmine, honeysuckle and spring citrus blossom; followed by fruit flavors of green apple, D'anjou pear, fresh Meyer lemon and tangerine. Focused, riesling-driven minerality is one of the many layers of texture that offer a nod of respect to the great aromatic whites of France, Germany and Austria. It is a deliciously dry wine that is great with the classics - cheese, cassoulet, tarte flambée - but really shines with the foods of the world - Mexican, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Indian - in that it can handle spices and flavors that are usually in beer or saké territory... and it does it with a verve that is rare for a New World wine. (*Phil Abram and Rob Sinskey 12/2021*)

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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## *Is It Natty or Nurture?*

Fruit can ferment and become wine without human intervention. Just observe drunken birds and animals after they eat neglected fruit that has been fermenting on the vine or dropped on the ground. They get sauced and seem to be enjoying themselves - but was the wine good? If it was, it was by luck.

Humans have spent thousands of years actively pursuing the craft of fine winemaking with each improvement a result of some sort of intervention. Advancements in the vineyard include site selection, the improvement of the soil through composting or the grazing of animals, the choice of a rootstock, finding the ideal field selection or clone of a specific variety, analyzing climate to make sure the selections are appropriate for the environment, water management, deciding when to pick - and many more decisions that don't even address pest and weed control as well as conventional (read chemical) farming methods. However, since I think of organic farming as a baseline, I will ignore the latter.

Then there's winemaking. There have been huge improvements in winemaking in just the past 100 years with temperature controlled stainless steel fermenters, clean cellars, the study of native and cultivated yeast strains and small cask barrels. Then there is the dark side - a slew of less than natural remedial methods that alter the finished product of wine... and that has been the problem.

As the technology of wine became more precise, wine became more generic; even at the high end. Some people began to reject "perfect" wine for a wine that was different - not necessarily better, but with unique character... and the "Natural" or "Natty" wine movement was born.

I applaud the rejection of industrial wine for wines of character but I reject the celebration of severely flawed or overly funky wine in the same way that I reject over-priced wine that is manufactured to fit a targeted taste profile. The idea that a natural wine is only "natty" if it ignores the craft of winemaking and is made by a non-interventionist is a flawed concept. Every decision that is made in wine growing and winemaking is interventionist. No wine, that I am aware of, is made of foraged grapes from native vines. Humans interact with the natural process of turning grapes into wine from the beginning; from hybridized rootstocks derived from those that were once native to the US being shipped to Europe to save the French vines from phylloxera, to European vinifera planted all over the world as the identity of fine wine varieties, all the way through to choosing what vessel to ferment or age the wine in. Human intervention is the reason fine wine exists. The trick is to intervene using natural methods to make a well crafted wine of character that ultimately is delicious.

