



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT BLANC, LOS CARNEROS 2017





JUST BLANC IT...

by Rob Sinskey

Pleasure vs. perception!

You know the feeling... you walk into an elegant restaurant with your significant other, best friend, associate or potential business partner. As you take your seat, the maitre d' hands you the leather bound wine list. Beads of sweat form on your brow. Thoughts race through your head: "Do I pick a known show dog wine with a high price... what message will that send? Are they going to think I am extravagant if I pick an expensive wine or cheap if I pick a wine of good value? What if it's not as cool as I think? What about the food... what are they going to order and how am I going to pick a wine that will work with their food? Should I throw myself at the mercy of the somm?"

I say "Blanc" it all... that's right, forget about the "rules" and the expectations. Take that novella of a wine list and flip off - I mean, flip back a few pages to where the "other white" selections live and pick a Pinot Blanc. Forget about those expensive, unsatisfying Chardonnays and instead opt for a surprising selection that will not only start a conversation but will actually be a pleasure to drink with almost any dish on the menu.

The point is pleasure, not perception. Don't let the wine get in the way of a good time... let it elevate the experience with the pure, unpretentious pleasure that is Pinot Blanc.



Winegrowing Notes

The vintage of 2017 will be known as the year when the predicted erratic effects of climate change became a reality. The season began with abundant rain, 27.74 inches when the average for Carneros is 19-21 inches. There was another 1-3 inches of rain in April, along with an unseasonably cool winter-like weather pattern. A heat wave started on August 24, launching an early harvest and night pick of all white varieties and Pinot Noir from August 29 to September 9. Then, winter like conditions returned... so much so that the Sierras were dusted with snow!

The early ripening variety of Pinot Blanc was one of the first grapes harvested in 2017 in what seemed like a stellar harvest. However, after all the Pinot Blanc was harvested, the Atlas fire had other designs. The 60 to 90 mph winds blew down power lines, igniting a historically fast-moving blaze the night/morning of October 9th. The winery was threatened and RSV's Stags Leap Estate Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard was lost to the flames. Unable to access the winery until October 12th, we feared the worst but we were relieved to find the building standing and the fermenting Pinot Blanc unharmed.

Tasting Notes

Each release of RSV's Pinot Blanc illustrates how cool-climate, organic farming and bottle aging can coax delicious complexity from a grape that is unfairly cast as an underdog among other better-known white grape varieties. The result is an abundantly versatile white wine with depth, intrigue and deliciousness.

Hints of honeysuckle, chamomile and almond blossom lead into satsuma orange, key lime, Meyer lemon, honeydew melon and golden apple aromas and flavors. The finish hits firm, with a clean citrus-driven backbone. Ready to drink now, this well crafted wine will continue to evolve for years, especially the beautiful, party-friendly magnums. (02/2022)

TRIED AND TRUE

I love talking about Pinot Blanc and all the foods that make a great match for it, but my most favorite thing with RSV's Pinot Blanc is this salad. I've verbalized this recipe a million times but never wrote it down. Most people don't think of salad as a wine dish but here is proof that a salad can go with wine. It just has to be the right wine and the right salad.

The toasted nuts, salty, tangy, blue cheese and apple are perfectly matched to the nutty, apple notes in the wine. I made this version with delicious, buttery, avocado oil that adds another layer of deliciousness. Bite after crunchy bite, this combo puts a smile on my face.

I hope it puts one on your face too.

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*



ENDIVE SALAD WITH CRISP APPLES, BLUE CHEESE, HAZELNUTS AND A SIMPLE VINAIGRETTE

I love the crisp freshness of this salad. If you prefer, substitute pear for apple and almonds or walnuts for the hazelnuts. All will work well with the Pinot Blanc. Serves 4

½ cup toasted hazelnuts, as much of the brown papery skin removed as possible
1 large sweet crisp apple with vivid acidity such as Pink Lady or Cosmic Crisp
1 teaspoon minced shallot
¼ cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons apple balsamic vinegar or sweet balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper
4 large heads Belgian Endive
¼ cup to ½ cup avocado oil
4 ounces crumbled blue cheese such as Point Reyes Original Blue or Roquefort

1. Crush the hazelnuts coarsely and reserve.
2. Quarter and core the apple. Slice each quarter thinly crosswise. Place in a medium bowl. Add the shallots, the vinegars, salt and a few grinds of black pepper. Toss well to coat the apples.
3. Add the hazelnuts and toss again.
4. Slice the brown root end off of the endive heads and remove any brown or bruised leaves. Slice crosswise into 1 inch thick pieces. Separate the cut leaves as you scatter them in the bowl containing the apples.
5. Drizzle the salad with ¼ cup of oil and toss with a pair of salad tongs/servers to coat and mix ingredients evenly. Taste for seasoning and tang. Add salt, pepper and oil to taste.
6. Sprinkle the blue cheese over and serve.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.



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