



# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

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PINOT NOIR, ARIES, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2018





Pinot Noir, Aries, Los Carneros, Napa Valley 2

## *Three Decades Later!*

It was just our fourth year of making wine when we debuted the Aries label with the 1989 vintage. Back then, the sub-ten dollar beverage was adorned with a fun, illustrated label drawn by a friend from art school that depicted a dancing ram with grapes and leaves flying about. The wine was a response to a vintage that challenged the young winemaking team with the rare rainstorm during harvest that resulted in a more straightforward iteration than we would have liked. We felt it was the honest approach to not put it out at the full price of the RSV Pinot Noir.

We named it Aries, not just after the mascot of the Carneros region, but a nod to the silliness of some well known wineries of the era that named their wine with the first letter an "A" to win the pole position on alphabetized wine lists. So was the sophistication of wine marketing in the '80's. And, since we trademarked the name, we saved the world from horror-scope wines! Thank you very much.

Never the one to be comfortable with the pretense of wine, I wanted to have some fun. So we decided to poke fun at the silly merging of languages (English and French or Italian) on some American wines and the lengthy back label descriptions that said a lot of nothing. So I put as many words of different languages on the front label and wrote a nonsensical back label with each sentence in a different language. It was my dadaist punk middle finger salute to the wine elite. Needless to say, we did not win label approval and had to redesign it to the point of concept dilution.

Like us, the Aries label would grow up over time and, over the past three decades, it would make its appearance sporadically as we developed young vineyards or if an anomaly, like a heat wave, occurred during harvest that produced a tasty wine but was a departure from the RSV style. The current vintage has evolved into a much more serious wine than those early iterations. The label now adorns an ancient illustration of a ram and comes from our organically farmed vineyards with selections that are stylistically more friendly with earlier drinkability than our other Pinots... Oh, and it does go with Lamb!

## *Winegrowing Notes*

Farming became a contact sport in the late teens. We were still recovering from the shock of the 2017 fire season and approached 2018 with trepidation. Fortunately, nature gave us a respite with a mild summer and moderate fall that created ideal ripening conditions for Pinot Noir. The season offered long “hang time” that allowed sugar and physiological (flavor) ripeness to develop in sync for a quintessentially balanced wine. Hand picked at night, fermented on “native” yeast and aged in the caves in thirty percent new French oak barrels for a year before bottling and then aged in bottle before release for optimal drinkability. In the past, the Aries label was considered “entry level” - this is no longer the case and the wine is crafted to the same standards as the rest of the RSV family of wines - with just earlier drinkability. This wine satisfies the goal of inclined evolution from first sip to last pour.

## *Tasting Notes*

Bright and youthful, this classically proportioned Pinot Noir is adorned with effusive aromas that chase the cork out of the bottle with layered notes of Santa Rosa plum, bright cherry, blood orange peel, lavender, rosemary and a subtle frame of spice. The first sip expands upon the theme with a pure expression of fruit reminiscent of a basket of ripe summer berries. The interplay between the wine’s juicy texture, bright character and fine tannin is seamless. The wine has just begun to show it’s potential and will continue to evolve gracefully.





## WELL-PRESERVED

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Like many of the delicious things we eat, pâté was born out of the need to preserve highly perishable items. When a farmer slaughtered a whole pig or flock of ducks way back in the old days, he couldn't just hang them in the refrigerator but he could enjoy them for weeks or in some cases many months by salting, cooking and preserving them in their fat. I worked for a French chef that never refrigerated his duck confit. He left it on the counter buried in fat. For each order, we had to dig into the fat with a spoon, pull out a leg and then carefully rebury any legs that may have been dislodged by our rooting. I don't think we ever killed anyone, but that was before the internet... so who knows?

Fatty, salty things taste good. This pâté is one of those tasty foods. It's packed with flavor and is perfect for a light lunch with toasted bread, mustard and pickled things. If you're not up to a spread, slice it thinly and eat it plain. It makes a delicious, delicately spiced accompaniment to Pinot Noir especially when joined with unctuous, potted mushrooms, slowly roasted and preserved in the olive oil they were cooked in. The fat in the pâté surrounds and amplifies its delicious duckiness that quickly seduces the Aries Pinot Noir. The mushrooms add a rich earthiness that has a natural affinity for the vibrant, mouth-watering nature of the wine. A little slice of pâté, a forkful of mushrooms, a sip of Pinot, and you'll soon be on your way preservation bliss.

We don't make Aries often, but when we do, we have a deep appreciation for its uniqueness. You might say each vintage of Aries is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Until the Next Wine....

*Maria*



## DUCK PÂTÉ

*I love to cook this pâté in smaller vessels such as round or square ramekins. The pâté can be vacuum sealed and frozen then pulled out as needed for small gatherings or an impromptu Banh Mi sandwich. I like the look of a petit whole pâté on a small board with all the fixings. You can also make a large terrine and then cut it into pieces, vacuum seal and freeze. If you can't find pork fatback, substitute fatty bacon. The finished pâté will have a bit of smoked flavor from the bacon but it will work out just fine. Serves 12-14*

2 duck breasts (about 1 ½ pounds), cut into ½ inch pieces  
3 small garlic cloves  
2 tablespoons brandy or Armagnac  
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
½ teaspoon orange zest  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
6 fresh or dried bay leaves  
Kosher salt  
1 pound boneless pork shoulder, chilled  
¾ pound pork fatback or bacon chilled

2 large eggs, beaten until uniform  
1 tablespoon chopped thyme leaves plus 3 sprigs  
½ teaspoon ground cloves  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon piment d'Espelette or paprika  
⅓ cup shelled pistachios  
3 tablespoons dried green peppercorns  
12-15 pieces thinly sliced bacon

1. Use a sharp knife to cut the duck breasts, meat and skin into ½" cubes. Transfer the meat to a medium bowl. Add 1 finely chopped garlic clove, brandy, black pepper, orange zest, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 3 torn bay leaves and 1 teaspoon salt. Mix well to coat the duck pieces. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 day and up to 3 days, to allow the flavors to come together. (The longer the duck marinates, the tastier the pâté.)
2. Season the pork and back fat with 2 teaspoons kosher salt. Coarsely grind the pork shoulder and backfat together. If you don't have a grinder call your butcher and have him grind it for you in advance, you can mix in the salt after it is ground. Transfer ground meat to medium bowl and set aside in the refrigerator chill.
3. Finely chop the remaining garlic and add to a large bowl. Add reserved pork and fat.
4. Add eggs, chopped thyme, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, piment d'Espelette, and 2 teaspoons salt. Mix the ingredients together with your hands until well combined.
5. To taste for seasoning make a small 1 inch patty of the mixture. Heat a small skillet over medium-high heat and then add a little olive oil and the meat patty. Brown on one side flip and brown on the other side until cooked through, about 3 minutes.
6. Cool to warm, taste; adjust seasoning accordingly and test again. You need the meat to be well-seasoned otherwise the pâté will taste bland when it is served chilled.
7. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 day and up to 3 days, to allow the meats to cure and the flavors to come together.
8. To assemble the pâté, remove bay leaves from duck mixture and discard. Use a spoon or gloved hands to fold the duck and any juices from marinade into the pork mixture.
9. Add the pistachios and peppercorns and mix until evenly distributed; set aside in the refrigerator.
10. To assemble the terrine, line the bottom of a 1 ½-quart rectangular terrine mold with 4 evenly spaced thyme sprigs and 3 bay leaves. Place bacon crosswise along the bottom and up the sides of the mold, covering the herbs. You can also use several smaller molds.

11. Spoon the meat-duck mixture into the terrine mold and gently smooth the top with the back of a spoon. Lay 4 strips bacon lengthwise across the top of the pâté.
12. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Position a rack in the middle of the oven.
13. Cover the top of the pâté with 2 sheets of aluminum foil; crimp foil around edges of the mold to form a tight seal. Place terrine mold in a 9" x 13" baking dish. Transfer dish to oven rack.
14. Pour in enough boiling water that it reaches ½" up the sides of the terrine. Bake the pâté until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center reads 145°, about 1 ½ to 2 hours. Transfer baking dish to a rack; remove foil. Smaller molds will take about 1 hour 15 minutes so check after 1 hour.
15. Cut a thick piece of cardboard to fit inside the rim of the terrine mold. Cover with aluminum foil so it doesn't get soggy with fat and juices. Weight the pâté to compact the terrine and make it easier to slice. Place three 15-ounce soup cans atop cardboard; let sit in water bath for 1 hour; remove. Refrigerate pâté (in its mold) for at least 1 day and up to 4 days.
16. To serve, slide a knife along edges of pâté to loosen it. Invert the pâté onto a cutting board and slide a butter knife along one short edge to free the pâté from the mold. Cut into ¾" slices and serve with baguette, Dijon mustard, and cornichons.

## POTTED MUSHROOMS

***Spoon the mushrooms and their scented oil over toast, pasta, roasted birds or meats. Stir with a kiss of vinegar to add a little zip to the mix. Yield: 1 ¾ cups***

Extra virgin olive oil	8 whole black peppercorns
1 pound any kind of mushroom, cleaned and sliced	2 sprigs thyme
1 medium shallot, minced	1 bay leaf
Kosher salt	

1. Heat a medium pot over medium high heat. Add a generous amount of olive oil to coat the bottom of the pan and then the mushrooms.
2. Sauté the mushrooms until they are golden and their juices are almost dry.
3. Reduce the heat, add the shallots and stir until they are evenly combined with the mushrooms. Cook for 1 minute to allow the shallots to soften. Season to taste with salt.
4. Add the black peppercorns, thyme and bay leaf to the pan. Reduce the heat to the lowest setting and barely cover the mushrooms with olive oil. Let them cook in the oil for 30 minutes then turn off the heat and let them rest until oil is at room temperature. Store in the olive oil in the refrigerator.



## FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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