



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

MARCIEN, PROPRIETARY RED, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2014





THE REGENERATES...

By Rob Sinskey

On the Right Bank of Napa!

Is there such a thing as the “best” or the “greatest” when it comes to wine? Some believe the 1947 Cheval Blanc from the Right Bank of Bordeaux was the greatest red wine of all time. It was great not only because of the vintage but because the vineyard was planted with varieties that thrive in that region’s relatively cool climate with clay soil and it was crafted by vigneron who were perceptive enough to nurture an intensely elegant wine from a powerful vintage. However, some people felt the wine was an outlier in that it had higher alcohol and was more port-like than a typical Bordelaise wine of its time and didn’t deserve the acclaim. It came down to personal taste if the wine was perceived as great or not.

To apply a score in an attempt to anoint the best wine of the year is an absurd exercise. There are many great wines. What is one person’s favorite might be another’s swill. It is subjective based on personal taste. Physical limitations - like the amount of taste buds one has, the food being served, how many wines one has tasted, temperature and even bottle variation - can impact the impression one has of a wine.

Rarely is a wine reviewed objectively. How a wine was farmed and crafted should be considered as important as how the wine presents itself. Can a wine be truly great if its farming employs methods that intentionally harm the environment by using potentially toxic chemicals and tillage that releases carbon? A fine wine - especially a luxury wine - shouldn’t hurt your palate and it shouldn’t hurt the planet.

RSV has been farming with a regenerative model since the early 90’s... long before we had heard the term “regenerative” applied to farming. If all goes well, RSV will soon be 100% ROC or Regenerative Organic Certified. We feel it is our responsibility to farm with methods that heal an ailing earth. But it is not a sacrifice to farm this way; we think these methods help us grow and craft a better wine.

We also have learned to listen to what the land wants and not impose our will or force a fit, discovering that the Carneros has many micro-climates and that the upper Carneros region specifically has a lot of parallels with the “Right Bank” of Bordeaux. It is only natural that it can produce world class Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. In our mind, the Vandal Vineyard is in the “Right Bank” of Napa; a micro-climate where Merlot and Cabernet Franc can thrive in its clay soil to produce elegantly powerful wines like Marcien, POV, Libration, Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

Marcien is RSV’s attempt to craft the most expressive, classically proportioned and age-worthy cuvée from our vineyards and the vintage. Is it the “greatest” wine of the vintage? That is for you to determine. If you consider this wine delicious, it is the greatest wine of the year.



Winegrowing Notes

RSV relies on mother nature to replenish the ponds and aquifers through a wet rainy season. In many years, this refresh does not happen. The 2014 vintage was the third consecutive year of drought. Droughts have a profound impact on grape architecture and cluster morphology - a grandiloquent way of saying “stunted growth with smaller berries and clusters.” It might be counter-intuitive, but the drought vintages - especially in the first few years - can create a superlative wine with intensely concentrated fruit, bright acidity, enhanced tension and incredible longevity. The 2014 Marcien is selected from 12 individually fermented lots from RSV’s CCOF certified organic Los Carneros of Napa Valley vineyards. Grapes are hand-picked at night, fermented on feral yeast and the wine is cave aged for almost two years in fine French Oak barrels. The cuvée has a strong foundation of Merlot, tempered with equal portions of Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon for RSV’s interpretation of the best of the vintage - the most elegant, complex and pleasurable terroir-driven wine possible. *(Jeff Virnig 11/2021)*

Tasting Notes

The 2014 Marcien is sublime. A properly finished cuvée should be greater than the sum of its parts, with each layer integrated in a way that compliments and enhances the individual components. Marcien is a true master cuvée from RSV’s organically farmed Carneros vineyards in the “Right Bank” of Napa.

Aromas and flavors of violet, bramble, tart cherry, blue and blackberry, currant and ripe black plum speak to a seamless marriage of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. The fruit is supported by subtle, enticing hints of French barrel spice while notes of black tea, mocha and bay laurel contribute to its complexity and open up a plethora of food pairing options like roasted winter mushrooms, duck confit, bolognese, or a nicely marbled ribeye to mention a few. The excitement over this wine and this vintage will last for many years to come. *(Phil Abram 11/2021)*

OUT OF THIS WORLD

The past couple of years have been strange, to say the least. As I muddled my way through the unknown, I turned to what comforted me and my family most – a good meal. A lot of other people did the same, both out of necessity and boredom. With extra time on their hands they learned new skills in the kitchen, or rediscovered old ones, and fed both themselves and those sequestered with them.

We've now entered a strange new world where quality of life is near the top of the list and so is comfort. This gratin, stuffed with mushrooms and cheese and wrapped in thinly sliced potatoes, will improve your quality of life and provide comfort in the form of golden bubbly cheese and a house full of delicious aromas.

A good gratin needs a good wine. Marcien delivers out of this world flavors of dried herb, bay leaf, soft plum and sour cherries. Marcien's freshness cuts through the rich cheese and marries beautifully with the earthy mushrooms. It might make you sing, laugh or cry. I know it will definitely make your mouth water and ready it for the next bite of warm gooey deliciousness.

Serve the gratin as a light meal with a side of leafy greens or as a side dish for a roast chicken, beef or pork and enjoy!

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*



GOLDEN POTATO AND MUSHROOM GRATIN

I love the cheesiness of this gratin but if you're vegan or just not that into cheese, omit it and the butter and use a good measure of olive oil to make the potatoes glisten. Chicken or vegetable stock can be substituted for cream. If you desire crunch, sprinkle with breadcrumbs tossed with olive oil towards the end of baking. Serves 8 to 10

2 tablespoon unsalted butter plus more to butter dish
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
2 cups grated gruyere or Comte cheese
3 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, peeled
Kosher salt

1 pound assorted wild or tame mushrooms, washed, trimmed,
drained well and sliced
¼ cup finely chopped shallot
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
1 cup heavy cream

1. Butter baking dish and grind black pepper to lightly cover bottom. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of parmesan evenly in the bottom of the dish.
2. Mix the remaining grated cheese together in a small bowl. Reserve.
3. Thinly slice potatoes by hand or with a mandoline. Place in a bowl and toss with 2 teaspoons salt. Transfer to a strainer and let drain for 20 minutes.
4. Heat a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Add 2 tablespoons butter and heat until edges start to brown. Add the mushrooms and cook until they exude their juices.
5. Add shallots and thyme, season with salt and pepper and sauté until juices are almost dry. Adjust seasoning to taste, transfer to a bowl or plate and reserve.
6. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.
7. Squeeze the potatoes with your hands to remove excess water and transfer to another bowl. Toss with freshly ground black pepper and rosemary to evenly distribute.
8. Line the bottom of the baking dish and sides with 2 layers of potatoes. Overlap slices by 1/3. Sprinkle with 1/3 of the mixed cheese. Top with half the mushrooms.
9. Add another 2 layers of potatoes. Top with 1/3 of cheese and remaining mushrooms. Layer the remaining potatoes on top but leave a small hole at the center so you can see the mushrooms. Pour the cream into the center hole slowly. Grind black pepper over.
10. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 50 minutes. Remove from oven, top with remaining cheese and place back in the oven for 20 minutes to bake until cheese is bubbly and golden. Serve warm or at room temperature.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

Robert Sinskey Vineyards
6320 Silverado Trail
Napa, CA 94558
707.944.9090
robertsinskey.com

Winemaker: Jeff Virnig
Chef: Maria Helm Sinskey
Photos and Text: Rob Sinskey
gluttons@robertsinskey.com

