



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

LIBRATION BLANC, LOS CARNEROS 2018



SERIOUS FUN...

by Rob Sinskey

a natural balancing act!

The title could be an oxymoron, but in this case it's not. We take our fun seriously and we work seriously hard and have good fun making delicious wines. Though the Libration Blanc is fun, it took hard work to create something so elegantly frivolous.

How you ask? Start with the soil. RSV farms everything organically with biodynamic methodology. The whole idea is to treat the soil as a living organism. If we "farm" the soil by feeding it with cover crops, BD preps and compost, and mow the crops with sheep, we are creating a healthy biome that contributes to a healthy vine. Natural processes can then break down organic material to provide nutrients to the vines in a slow, steady and balanced manner.

Then, when we farm, we look to natural methods to strike a balance with nature. Whereas in the old days we might have used propane cannons and netting to control bird damage, we now use falcons to scare the birds away and place hawk perches and owl boxes throughout the vineyards to naturally control starlings and rodents. We also build bird and bat boxes to encourage natural pest control. No pesticides, herbicides or anything synthetic is ever applied that has the potential to interrupt natural processes or cause unwanted collateral damage to animals, birds or people. Even though bees do not contribute directly to wine grape growing, agriculture has been guilty of using toxins that kill honey bees - so, in response, RSV uses fallow land for bee hives to compensate for the recent decrease in the bee population.

We even take this philosophy into the cellar where most of the energy used to make wine is produced on site with photovoltaics, caves naturally control the temperature of aging wines and water is recycled through engineered wetlands so we can then use the production water (water that is used to clean tanks, the cellar, equipment and barrels) in the culinary gardens.

Remember, the next time you pop the cork on a Libration Blanc, just how much thought and work went into this big bottle of fun for a little guilt-free hedonistic pleasure!





Winegrowing Notes

The night harvested grapes for the 2018 vintage of Libration Blanc were delivered to the cellar in the early hours of the morning in beautiful shape with nice, mouth-watering acidity for a delicate balance between rich texture and crispness. Four blocks of Pinot Blanc were selected - two from The Three Amigos Vineyard and two from the Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard. Where the Three Amigos added weight and texture, the Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard provided beautiful citrus notes and a crisp backbone. The noble selection of Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains contributed a stunningly delicious floral essence that lifts the weightiness of the Pinot Blanc and turns it into a wine you don't want to put down.

Tasting Notes

Perfume-like aromas lift the wine to reveal notes of guava, lemon verbena and spice with a balancing hint of flint. A nice bit of tension in the mid-palate provides a clue that this is a worthy food companion as it finishes with crisp citrus notes. The 2018 vintage hits all the notes as a brilliant year for white wine.

BIG AND BEAUTIFUL

The only thing big about Libration Blanc is the bottle. The wine possesses ebullient aromas and flavors that seem big but, after a sip, you'll find the Blanc floats on a framework of texture and brightness that makes it extraordinarily quaffable. When I breathe in the aromas I think of citrus zest and crisp apples backed by rose petals and lychee. I say to myself "Wow! This is a wine for food!!"

Cod is one of my most favorite of all fish. Where it is abundant, it is treated with disdain. Where it is hard to get, it is revered. What makes cod so wonderful to cook with is its adaptability to other ingredients and its ability to absorb surrounding flavors into its succulent meat. It's like a blank canvas that you could heap on loads of paint but you don't want to because you want the picture to be defined not obscured.

Cod combined with the sweetness of tomatoes and a kiss of saffron is a delicious match for Libration Blanc. The wine carries the acidity of the tomatoes and unique flavor of saffron admirably, but it's those large meaty flakes of fish that handle the texture of the wine beautifully and make it soar. Enjoy!

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*



BRAISED COD WITH YELLOW TOMATOES, SAFFRON AND WHITE BEANS

Think of this as a very light cod stew - perfect any time you can find some really beautifully fresh cod. To make the dish heartier, serve with a pasta shape such as shells or fusilli. I love the brightness of yellow tomatoes but if you can't locate some, it's fine to substitute red ones. Serves 4

2 pounds skinless Cod Filet cut into 2-inch chunks
Kosher salt
Extra virgin olive oil
1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion
2 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
½ cup dry white wine

Pinch saffron threads
1 2 oz preserved yellow tomatoes in their juice
2 cups cooked cannellini beans or similar type bean
Freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons finely chopped flat leaf parsley

1. Place the cod in a medium bowl. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon KOSHER salt and mix well. Place in the refrigerator for a minimum of 1 hour up to overnight. The more you let the fish "cure" the firmer the meat will be.
2. Remove the cod from the refrigerator and drain any accumulated juices. Pat dry with a paper towel and reserve.
3. Heat a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Add the garlic and toast lightly. Add the onions and cook until they start to turn golden.
4. Add the white wine and saffron to the pan and simmer until the pan is almost dry.
5. Add the tomatoes and the beans along with 1 cup water.
6. Bring to a simmer and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook 8 to 10 minutes until tomatoes start to break down.
7. Fold in half the parsley.
8. Add the fish on top of the tomato-bean mixture and cover the pan. Cook for 5-8 minutes until fish flakes when pressed with your finger.
9. Serve from the pan or transfer gently to a serving dish. Drizzle olive oil the top and sprinkle with parsley.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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