



# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, CAPA VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2016



# SIZE MATTERS

By Rob Sinskey

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## *When little is big*

Few aspire to be small when they set out in business. It's more efficient to be big they say. Makes better economic sense they say. When it comes to farming, bigger is not necessarily better. Though it might look better on paper, there is usually an inverse relationship to size when it comes to the quality of the produce and the farms' impact on the the health of the planet.

Since the 1970's, farms of all types have grown in scale and have become more industrialized. Large tractors, that look as though they would be more at home on a freeway construction project, tower over sprouts as they spray herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers. Soils are worked so they no longer have the tilth to support natural processes and, instead of being the worlds greatest carbon sink, carbon is released from the soil only to escape into the atmosphere.

We run a small farm. We also run a winery but it starts with a farm. We can't forget that. It is what defines us and gives us purpose. We feel that being intimate with our land and the rhythms of nature will guide us in crafting a more interesting wine and allow us to feel good about our chosen craft. We feel we can be part of the solution if we allow natural processes to be our guide.

The Capa Vineyard is Maria's and my home. We developed this vineyard from the ground up as an organic farm. The vines were planted to follow the contours of the land instead of cutting terraces. Trees were left intact. Hawk perches, owl and bird boxes were added. Sheep graze the permanent cover crops. An heirloom fruit orchard was planted and has been artfully pruned by Maria who has mastered "pajama" pruning - where she crawls out of bed and throws a jacket on over her pajamas as she goes out to prune the trees and the vines. A chef's garden and a quail pen is out back behind the house where Maria picks the fresh produce and collects the most beautiful little eggs that she will turn into unique dishes for guests at the winery to enjoy with the wines. All while a worm composter helps process garden and kitchen waste so the cycle can continue as the naturally nutrient rich compost is the secret ingredient in the potting soil for the greenhouse that will provide the starts for next year's garden.

Then there are the hedgerows that provide a buffer from the neighboring vineyards and habitat for beneficial insects, bees and wild animals - the last two don't directly benefit the vineyard but deserve to have a place to live and thrive - and the soil; a living, thriving, nutrient rich soil that feeds our vines and sequesters carbon.

A diversified farm managed in a regenerative way looks like hell to an accountant but has something an industrial farm never will have. It has character - and that character is embodied in The Capa Vineyard Pinot Noir that grows in that small farm.



## ***Winegrowing Notes***

A great vintage for the south facing, organically farmed Capa Vineyard Pinot Noir. The 2016 growing season had all elements for the creation of a great wine: ample rain during the winter, mild weather in the spring and a long growing season for an expressive, classically structured wine with exquisite balance.

## ***Tasting Notes***

The 2016 Capa Vineyard Pinot Noir is a purebred racehorse of a wine - the embodiment of powerful elegance. Rose, lavender, cherry plum, warm spice and a touch of herb/earth aromatics jump out of the glass while flavors of blood orange, pomegranate and sour cherry hard candy leave a fresh and juicy impression across the mid-palate. Elegant use of French oak barrels elevate the wine with a subtle hint of toasty vanilla and spice. Firm, finely-woven tannins are balanced by a mouthwatering brightness that drive home a lasting finish. The wine takes you on a journey, opening and evolving as each nuance is revealed. This is a vintage that shows the best of the Capa vineyard's generous sunshine and meticulous, organic farming for a classic Pinot Noir with an attitude. *(Phil Abram and Jeff Virnig 10/2021)*

388 - six pack (6 x 750ml) cases produced



# GROUNDED

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Lentils and spaetzle was one of my favorite childhood comfort dishes. For me, the two were one and the same. When we had one, it was always attached to the other. A warm chewy jagged piece of spaetzle, freshly scooped out of a pot of boiling water and plopped in a bowl with a little butter and salt, was pure joy and the only time the spaetzle was eaten without the lentils. For the lentils and spaetzle to be served together, we would wait until dinner.

Dinner was when the lentils were ceremoniously spooned over the top to be enjoyed with gusto by five hungry children. Why a simple dish such as this would enchant my memories escapes me, but I would start to anticipate the meal the moment my mother put lentils in a bowl for me to pick through for tiny stones before cooking.

Lentils and Spaetzle was a budget meal for our large family. A large pot could easily be stretched for a couple of meals and the flavors got better as it sat. There was something about the texture and sweet earthiness of the lentils that was captivating and the cloves that we poked into the onion that melded perfectly with that sweetness.

This dish is an able match for the Capa Vineyard Pinot Noir. Our Capa Pinot Noir has an underlying earthiness sprinkled with a nice layer of bright berry fruit on top that blends beautifully with the lentils, root vegetables and hint of clove. I thought of Capa Pinot Noir the minute I had my heart set on a meal of lentils and spaetzle.

I hope this dish provides comfort for you the same way it has for me all these years. Enjoy this humble dish with the Capa Pinot Noir and think of the good, simple meals you've enjoyed over the years.

Until the Next Wine... *Maria*



## TINY LENTILS WITH SPAETZLE

*I love tiny plump lentils. Brown lentils from the Umbria Region of Italy as well as green ones from Le Puy France in the Auvergne Region are my favorites. Unlike the widely known brown lentil in America, these tiny brown and green lentils don't lose their shape or their texture unless they are badly overcooked. Be sure to wash the lentils and pick through them to remove any stones or debris to avoid any unpleasant surprises. Serves 8*

1 medium yellow onion, peeled and cut in half	Salt
3 whole cloves	Freshly ground black pepper
2 strips apple wood smoked bacon, cut into thirds, optional	2 cups dry lentils
2 celery stalks, trimmed and diced into ¼ inch pieces	1 bay leaf
2 medium carrots, peeled and diced into ¼ inch pieces	½ cup tomato puree
3 cloves garlic, peeled, trimmed and left whole	5-6 cups water or chicken stock

1. Dice one half of the onion into ¼-inch pieces. Stick the cloves into the remaining onion half.
2. Heat a medium pot over medium high heat. Add the bacon and render until it exudes fat and starts to brown. Turn up the heat and add the diced onion, celery, carrot and garlic. Sauté the vegetables until they start to brown, season with salt and pepper.
3. Add the lentils to the pan and sauté until the lentils are warm to the touch. Add the bay leaf and the onion half with cloves. Add the tomato puree and 5 cups of liquid. Bring the pan to a boil then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Taste the broth for seasoning and add more salt and pepper if necessary.
4. Cook until the lentils and vegetables are tender, 30 to 40 minutes. Add more liquid as lentils absorb it. Finished lentils should have some liquid but not be too soupy. Remove the bay leaf and the onion half with the cloves. Lentils can be served immediately or stored in the refrigerator for a few days before serving. They can also be frozen for up to 4 months.
5. To reheat: gently warm the lentils over low heat adding enough water to loosen to stew like consistency.

**Note: The lentils can be made a day or two ahead of time. Store them in their cooking liquid under refrigeration until ready to use.**



## SPAETZLE

*The uneven shape of these noodles grabs onto whatever is spooned over them. They can be drained thoroughly to remove the moisture and then browned with butter in a non-stick pan for a pile of crunchy buttery deliciousness. Serves 6 to 8*

4½ cups all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon kosher salt

¾ teaspoons double-acting baking powder

pinch freshly grated nutmeg, optional

6 eggs

1 ½ cup water

1. Combine the flour, salt, baking powder and nutmeg in a large bowl. Make a well.
2. In a medium bowl beat the eggs lightly to break up the yolk and whites. Add the water and whisk until thoroughly combined.
3. Add the liquid to the well and stir with a wooden spoon to gradually bring the flour into the liquid. Keep stirring until all of the flour is moistened and then beat with the spoon until the dough is uniform. Cover with plastic and let rest for 20 minutes.
4. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a simmer. Ready a large bowl filled with ice water.
5. Tilt the bowl over the simmering water until the dough rolls to the edge. Dip a sharp knife into the water and cut the spaetzle dough as it rolls off the edge. Keep the knife blade firmly against the edge of the bowl as you cut. Dip the knife into the hot water after each cut to keep the dough from sticking to the blade.
6. When cooked pieces rise to top skim with a slotted spoon or spider and transfer to the ice water. Repeat until all the dough is cooked. Drain the spaetzle from the ice water into a colander and let sit until the spaetzle is well-drained.
7. Reheat spaetzle in a large sauté pan by frying with a little butter or olive oil and a splash of water. If you prefer buttery spaetzle add a few nuggets of butter to the pan at the end of reheating and toss to coat.





## FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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