



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, VANDAL VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2017





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CRAFTING PLEASURE!

by Rob Sinskey

We are in the pleasure business. Our simple goal is to make your culinary experience more enjoyable; but just like good comedy, there are often serious truths behind a punchline. Pure pleasure is tricky. It means we have a sense of well-being associated with whatever we are enjoying. To create this level of comfort, we need to be assured that the object of desire did no harm. A true fine wine can't be a blood diamond.

We need a new pleasure principle; a definition of what makes a luxury item. In the past, luxury was based on fine craftsmanship, but technology and accessibility changed the concept of craft. Modern technology encourages manipulation behind the scenes. In the wine world, industrial farming methods and manipulative winemaking practices are often employed with the end product presented as a finely crafted beverage. The contradiction is that it does not contribute to our well-being. Industrial farming employs potentially toxic products while chemical and heavy mechanical tillage releases climate change inducing carbon into the atmosphere. Then, many times, the grapes are manipulated with laboratory created products. Wine produced this way is like a science experiment passed off as a luxury item.

If we want our moment of pleasure to contribute to our sense of well-being, a great wine should do no harm and should actually undo the harm done by others. Ideally it should improve the environment. It starts with the soil, improving its tilth and carbon sequestering capacity. Then the farm should provide habitat for beneficial insects, birds and animals with respect for the dynamic processes of nature.

Farming is where the fine craft of wine begins but it doesn't end there. "Do no harm" continues with the power used to run the winery being offset by solar. Biodiversity is preserved to promote healthy ecosystems. No toxins or manipulative practices are used at any point, anywhere.

Purity is key. No compromise farming and clean winemaking practices are your assurance that an RSV wine is truly a finely crafted beverage for pure pleasure with no guilt.



Winegrowing Notes

The magical Vandal Vineyard Pinot Noir is back! Originally planted in the 1980's to heirloom selections and French clones, it was replanted in 2012 with the loose clustered, late ripening clone 943. It now joins the Pommard selection that has been growing since 1992, while the original heirloom "S" selection is being propagated to be planted on an additional block in the near future.

The Vandal Vineyard was the second vineyard in the RSV portfolio. Its rolling hillside provides several exposure opportunities for diverse characteristics. The fruit exhibits a darker berry character that some would say is more brooding compared to the more southern sites, yet it still maintains a vibrant, living-wine characteristic.

The 2017 vintage was the first year of the climate change driven mega-fires, but this Pinot Noir was picked before the fires started. Any fruit still on the vine after the fires began was abandoned. RSV's total production from 2017 on was dramatically reduced, as we will not try to fix a smoke tainted wine. We will only make wine from grapes that were harvested before the fires.

Tasting Notes

Back after a five year hiatus, the 2017 Vandal Vineyard Pinot Noir presents itself as a pure, elegant Pinot Noir. Violet, sage and bright red fruit dance atop the glass with an enticing aroma. A sip reveals an unexpected depth and intensity, with ripe, red raspberry, black cherry, Santa Rosa plum and tamarind flavors bolstered by a luxurious feel across the front and mid-palate. The finish rides a line of youthful tension marked by leather, forest floor, star anise and black tea, with tightly woven tannins that open up the possibilities for a plethora of food pairings. The equivalent of 248 cases produced for 496 - six bottle cases.

CLASSIC

Hasselback potatoes, if you haven't made them before, provide a new and delicious outlook on the common potato. The little ruffled fans of the thinly sliced potato capture the butter, olive and truffle salt splendidly. Leaving the barest wisp of potato attached at the bottom of the slices, holds everything together in a nice tidy package.

I like to serve them with a mountain of crème fraîche or sour cream. You can also sprinkle them with cheese during the last 15 minutes of baking to reach potato-cheese nirvana. These Hasselback renditions make the perfect match for a classically styled pinot noir such as RSV's Los Carneros Pinot Noir.

For those of you who are bold and decadent, add a large dollop of caviar on top of the crème fraîche. There are some quality American Paddlefish caviars that have just the right amount of earth and salt that match nicely with Pinot Noir. Add a little chopped chives to send it all home.

Go for the classic or create a new classic. Either way you won't be disappointed.

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*



HASSELBACK NEW POTATOES WITH TRUFFLE SALT AND CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Fingerlings work well with the Hasselback treatment, but you can Hasselback all shapes and sizes of potatoes. Adjust the cooking time accordingly. When the potatoes are fanned, golden and tender throughout they're done! Serves 4

12 medium fingerling potatoes
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Truffle salt
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
¾ cup crème fraîche or substitute sour cream

1. Preheat your oven to 425 degrees F.
2. To Hasselback your potatoes place two square wooden chopstick either side of the potato. You can also use two dinner knives. This helps prevent you from slicing all the way through the small potato when you are slicing them, although you can do it freehand if you have a steady hand.
3. Using a very sharp knife, make a dozen or more parallel cuts almost all the way through the potato. Transfer to a roasting pan. Repeat with the remaining potatoes
4. Heat the butter and olive oil over medium heat until the butter is melted.
5. Brush the potatoes well with the butter mixture. Season generously with truffle salt and place in the preheated oven. Roast for 20 minutes then brush again with the butter mixture. And continue to roast until potatoes have fanned out and edges are golden and crispy about 20 to 30 minutes more. Place in a serving bowl and toss with parsley, season with salt to taste.
6. Serve with crème fraîche or sour cream on the side.







FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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