



# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

---

MARCIEN, PROPRIETARY RED, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2015





Marcien, Proprietary Red 2

## ***Better With Age!***

The raccoon thrust her paws into the algae filled water trough, snatched a frog from the depths and gleefully bit its head off. Within seconds, she devoured every slimy bit. If this raccoon could express ecstasy, she was in that moment.

The year was around 1971. I was in 7th or 8th grade and my mother, recently divorced, wanted to live in the country. She found an old ranch house on Santa Rosa Creek road about five miles east of the town of Cambria on the central coast of California. It was a stunning place... the land, not the house. It was an old cattle ranch with bands carved into the rolling hills; scars left from generations of steer and heifers following the path of least resistance. The namesake creek was a wondrous place for a young boy to spend weekends, attempting to catch the elusive steelhead trout, throwing rocks and getting wet.

Friends my age were in short supply. I found solace in the animals, dogs, cats, cows and the pet raccoon that lived with us for about two years and played like any other domestic animal... with just a hint of danger. Mandy, we called her, was given to my sister by a cowboy who had shot her mother after she had attacked his dog. It was only after he killed the mother that he found out she was just protecting her newborns. We raised Mandy from before her eyes were open until she wandered off to have a litter of her own.

The old man up the road noticed that I was spending a lot of time alone on the ranch so he would ride his Honda 90 down to our place after school and on the weekends. He saw that I had an old Honda 50 and he invited me to join him for rides up the trails and fire roads back into the hills where he would share his knowledge of the history and geology of the place while we explored the long abandoned mercury mines littered with rusty tools, mine cars, Model A trucks and horse-drawn wagons.

Mr. Curti was the old man's name. I don't know if I ever knew his first name but I think it was Henry. He didn't ask for anything from me. He seemed happy just to have someone to listen to his stories and to be able to pass on his common sense wisdom acquired from decades of living on the ranch, observing nature... and I drank it up.



### ***Winegrowing Notes***

There is wisdom in an aged wine. It tells the story of another time and place; an echo of a vintage and the people who crafted it. Sometimes it takes years, even decades, for a well made wine to express itself; to share its story; to transcend being just another wine; to become a classic. Marcien has always been a bit of a Napa Valley outlier. Grown in RSV's organically farmed vineyards in the relatively cool Carneros region whose northern reaches are what we think of as the "Right Bank" of Napa Valley; a micro-climate where Merlot and Cabernet Franc naturally thrive to fully realize their potential. The cuvée is complete with the additional backbone of Cabernet Sauvignon. Marcien was never meant to be showy young. That is why it is held back for many years before release. It needs time to mature before it reveals a complexity that harkens back to a simpler, more elegant time.

### ***Tasting Notes***

Marcien is sublime... no protruding tail fins or gaudy chrome bumpers on this classic. Function and form interweave into complete deliciousness. Delightfully deep aromas and flavors of red and black berry, currant and fresh plum fruits. Enticing savory herb notes of bayleaf with hints of Kalamata olive, lavender, star anise, mocha and leather. It all comes together with tightly-woven, supple tannins for excellent age-worthy structure and a driving, persistent finish. The 2015 Marcien is sterling proof that Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon thrive in RSV's organically farmed Northern Carneros vineyards - The Right Bank of Napa Valley. Crafted with an eye toward structure and freshness, the wine has a mystifying complexity that comes from New World precision balanced by an Old World soul.

*Jeff Virnig & Phil Abram (11/2022)*

## D.W.Y.F. (DIP WITH YOUR FINGERS)

---

Let me state the obvious - wine can be filled with a lot of pretentiousness and a formal dinner can make it seem even more so. When I feed a crowd, I like to have food that is interactive; which, in turn, makes my guests interact and sets the tone for the evening.

Marcien, at first glance and taste, is a very serious wine that deserves respect. You can read about its wonder and beauty in the tasting notes; but after that first sip, it's ready to party with these panisse - a perfect food for all who like a delicious bite while enjoying a wine that keeps on giving to the last drop.

The olivey goodness of the tapenade is a perfect foil for the dried herb, bayleaf notes of the Marcien and also its deep plum and sour cherry nuances. We have to remember that olives are fruit too. We often taste its fruitiness in the oil we press from them so when you choose an olive oil for this recipe, choose a good one that reflects its fruitiness but also has some pepperness. I find it brings out a lot of hidden notes in a wine like Marcien.

That's all for now. Feed a crowd. Feed your soul. Panisse on earth.

Until the Next Wine... *Maria*



## PANISSE

***Crisp and salt-flecked on the outside, custardy on the inside, these French Fry-like panisse hit all the notes. They can be cut into any shape that suits your fancy, though I prefer to shape them into fingers if you're going to dip. These Panisse are GF and vegan so everyone can dig in. Yield: About 60 pieces***

3 cups cool water	¼ cup extra virgin olive oil plus additional to fry
1 tablespoon kosher salt	2 cups chickpea flour
¼ teaspoon ground cumin	Flaked sea salt

1. Whisk together water, salt, cumin, ¼ cup olive oil and chickpea flour in a large saucepan until smooth. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium high heat, whisking constantly until the batter is very smooth.
2. Switch out the whisk to a wooden spoon, reduce heat to a simmer, and continue to stir constantly until the mixture thickens, lower the heat and continue to cook for 3 to 4 minutes until the batter is consistent in texture and pulls away from the side of the pan.
3. Turn out into a 9x13x2 inch Pyrex dish or 12x9 inch sheet pan and quickly press to ½ inch thickness with the back of the wooden spoon or damp hands. The batter will set up quickly so move fast. Cool to room temp and then place in the refrigerator unwrapped for a minimum of 1 hour. After the Panisse is thoroughly chilled it can be wrapped well and refrigerated for up to 3 days before cutting and finishing.
4. Cut into ½ inch x 3 inch “fingers”, about the size of a thick French fry. Heat a 10-inch cast iron or non-stick skillet over medium high heat. Add olive oil to cover the bottom ½ inch deep and then the Panisse.
5. Cook until golden on 1 side and then turn over and cook until golden on the reverse. Drain on a rack or paper towels. Sprinkle with sea salt. Serve warm with tapenade or the dip of your choice. They are also delicious served plain on their own.

## TAPENADE

***This tapenade is delicious as a side sauce for lamb, beef and fish. Spread it on sandwiches in place of mustard or mayo or use it as a zesty dip for vegetables. For vegan tapenade omit the anchovies. If you like a smooth sauce-like tapenade, make it in a blender and add olive oil to sauce consistency. Yield: 1 ½ cups***

1 packed cup pitted Nicoise or Calamata olives	3 anchovy filets (optional)
2 small garlic cloves	Kosher salt
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice	Freshly ground black pepper
1 medium shallot, coarsely chopped	¼ cup extra virgin olive oil plus more to thin
2 tablespoons capers	¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
½ teaspoon finely grated lemon peel	

1. Place all the ingredients except the olive oil and the parsley in a food processor. Chop coarsely by pulsing the machine.
2. Drizzle in the olive oil and pulse until olives are like coarse cornmeal. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If you are sensitive to salt, you may not want to add more.
3. The tapenade is best when made a day in advance, so flavors have time to marry. Fold in the parsley just before serving.





## 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

