



# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, THREE AMIGOS VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2017





# THE G.O.A.T.

by Rob Sinskey

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The goat looked me in the eye - a deep stare as though she needed to know my intent; my soul. Was I a friend or foe? I felt as though I was being put to a test; that she needed to accept me into her home; our new farm.

Yes, we did it. We sold the winery in the Stags Leap District (but not the brand or the vineyards) and we bought a farm in the Carneros. Not a vineyard, but a farm. Two goats, a couple of cattle, horses, orchards and a compound of structures that include an old prune processing building turned into an art studio with kilns and woodshop, a barn built in the early 1900's, old houses, an early auto repair garage turned into an office and a cluster of buildings that served as a dining hall and multi-purpose room.

The whole farm is in a state of disrepair and I couldn't be happier. It reminds me of the old Napa, the one I moved to in the mid '80's with a mix of vineyards, farms, orchards and cattle. A time when you could still find pockets where wine grapes were not the only agricultural commodity. However, it also reminds me of the farm I lived on as a kid on the Central Coast of California. It's taking me back in a way that has me excited about the future.

I have been known to say that nature hates a monoculture yet farming grapes is, for the most part, monoculture farming. Sure, we can mix it up with different rootstocks, cover crops, trees and hedgerows but we want more. We want a bio-diverse farm where everything contributes to give back and enrich the soil, sequester carbon and help produce great food and drink again. A perfect circle. A healthy, regenerative farm.

We also want a farm whose produce informs the style of wine. Historically, wine was about the agrarian experience where the regional produce defined the wine; where food and wine grew up together with natural synergy. We hope to discover what wine varieties and style best express our farm and which wines have a natural affinity for the produce, meats and cheeses we will produce on our little piece of planet Earth.

We are just a few days into our journey and we have a lot to figure out. We don't yet know what the County will allow us to do, but we do plan to throw some good parties, grow some great produce and continue to make delicious wines.

## ***Winegrowing Notes***

I suffer a little PTSD every time I hear the vintage twenty-seventeen. It was the year that everything changed and is probably the utmost reason we decided to sell the winery in the Stags Leap District and to consolidate our operations in the relatively cool and fire-sheltered Carneros region.

It is an old story now that 2017 was the first year of a string of devastating fires that overwhelmed the first responders and destroyed large swaths of California. The winery was almost lost that first night, but deep inside the winery, quietly fermenting, was the 2017 vintage of Pinot Noir. All of the Pinot Noir was picked before that fateful fiery night.

The organically-farmed Three Amigos Vineyard, planted with heirloom and french clones of Pinot Noir, is in the Southern Carneros close to the San Pablo Bay and is not as acutely affected as the Northern vineyards during warmer than average vintages. Beautiful fruit was hand picked at night to preserve as much freshness as possible before being brought into the winery where it was delicately fermented and put down to bed for a year in 30% New French oak, then bottle aged another four years before release.

## ***Tasting Notes***

A unique cross section of heirloom and French clones - Swan, S, M&H, 459, 538, and Pommard - make up the Three Amigos Vineyard Pinot Noir. These late-ripening selections allow the fruit to reach optimal flavor without losing natural acidity or becoming overripe... especially in a warmer vintage like 2017. This all adds up to an incredibly complex wine with a seamless cavalcade of aromas and flavors that progress as the wine breathes in the glass.

The opulence of the 2017 vintage is expressed with ripe black cherry, raspberry, pomegranate and red currant flavors, with secondary notes of rose, cedar, forest floor, clove, star anise, orange peel and a touch of dried porcini. Though this wine has been released with years of bottle age, it still shows a youthful, vibrant character with an elegant, round mid-palate and a long bright finish. It is a Pinot Noir for all occasions but is a particularly well suited dinner companion to simple roast meats from chicken to lamb, root vegetables, anything with mushrooms and even richer preparations of fish like cedar plank salmon or a classic turbot. (01/2023)





## TOASTED

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Toast, toasted and toasty means flavor and comfort to me. While toasted might imply that things have been taken a bit too far, I think of it as providing flavor, nuance and texture to something like a slice of beautifully leavened bread or an inviting crunch to what was once a raw nut. Toasting brings out the most of so many ingredients.

Toasting freekeh brings out a smokiness that comes from roasting the green kernels of wheat over a fire. It releases malted caramel notes found in the kernel as it toasts and nicely rounds out the flavor. Toasting chestnuts helps them hold their shape and reveal their sweet nuttiness.

Speaking of toast, we can't forget the toasting that happens in the making of a barrel that contributes an elegant nuance to a wine such as RSV's Three Amigos Pinot Noir. The beautiful, restrained toast of tight grained French oak lends a beautiful spice to the wine and provides an intricately woven foundation for the bright cranberry fruit and hints of rhubarb and black tea.

The subtle spice of the Three Amigos cuvée blends seamlessly with the earthiness of the mushrooms and the sweet nuttiness of the chestnuts. It's a complex combination that goes beautifully with the wine.

You can add pancetta for a bit more richness or leave it out for a vegetarian option. Serve the freekeh on its own as a light supper or as a side to roasted pork or chicken.

Until the Next Wine... *Maria*

## TOASTED FREEKEH WITH CHESTNUTS AND CHANTERELLES

*Any wild mushroom will do in this recipe. If you can't lasso any wild ones, use farmed exotic mushrooms like oyster or maitake and if you can't find them, use cremini. The dish will be tasty none the less. Serves 4 to 6*

Extra virgin olive oil

1 cup peeled chestnuts, broken into chunks

250g Freekeh

2½ cups water

3 ounces pancetta, diced, optional

1 pound chanterelles, washed, cleaned and cut into bite-sized pieces

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 large shallot, minced

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

1 whole lemon, cut in half and seeds removed

**1.** In a large sauce pan, heat 3 tablespoon of olive oil over medium high heat. Add the chestnuts and freekeh and cook until toasted and golden, stirring occasionally and then more frequently as the freekeh gives off its fragrance.

**2.** Add 2½ cups water to the pan and bring to a boil. Cover with a lid, reduce heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes until the liquid is absorbed.

**3.** Note: If you are making a vegan or vegetarian version skip this step. While the freekeh is cooking, heat a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and the pancetta. Stir. Cook until the pancetta is crisp on the edges but still chewy and not hard. Remove the pancetta with a slotted spoon from the pan and drain on paper towels. Reserve at room temp if using within a few hours otherwise refrigerate. Pour off most of the pancetta fat but reserve a nice slick of it in the pan to cook and flavor the mushrooms.

**4.** Heat the large sauté pan over medium heat. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and then the mushrooms. Cook until the mushrooms exude their juices, season with salt and pepper then add the shallots and thyme. Stir well and continue to cook until the juices are dry and the mushrooms begin to caramelize. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**5.** Place the freekeh in a serving bowl. Fold in the mushrooms along with the parsley and cooked pancetta if using. Squeeze the lemon over the top and mix well. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm or at room temperature.







## FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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