



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

POV, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2018



If you had told me as a wide-eyed college student in NYC that I would someday run a winery, vineyard and farm for almost four decades, I would have said you were nuts. I was restless and I needed to move. I had my sights set on becoming a photojournalist, armed with a press pass license to live many lives through my subjects; to constantly put myself in challenging situations while shining a light on humanity's rights and wrongs. I believed one image or one photo essay could change the world. I was inspired by the masters - W. Eugene Smith and his heartbreaking story on Minimata, an essay that forever changed corporate responsibility and the environment. The many war images of Robert Capa that put us on the front lines and changed the way we perceive the human cost of conflict. Mary Ellen Mark, with stories of teenage homelessness in the Pacific Northwest that brought us into the lives of the forgotten and discarded. Dorothea Lange and Arthur Rothstein (who also happened to be my senior thesis advisor) and the indelible dust bowl images that graphically illustrated the cost of ignoring nature's rhythms. Then there were those who celebrated humanity, like the whimsy of Elliot Erwitt, the decisive moment of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Smith's Country Doctor and one of his final images of children walking from a dark forest into the light; "The Walk to Paradise Garden." These icons approached photography, a craft of beauty, with a POV to enlighten; to have an impact and instigate change.

Here we are, at a crossroads with circumstances not too dissimilar to what brought us the dust bowl. Turn on the news and hear scientists caution us that if we do nothing to avert a climate crisis, we will have a similar, if not worse fate. Governments look for grandiose and expensive solutions while ignoring the little things that can make a huge difference. It is under our feet - the soil we trample on, pave over, spray with chemicals, till and farm until we extract all nutrients and life so it no longer has a purpose other than being a sterile medium, exhaling carbon. The soil is the key to life. It deserves our respect.

It is time to celebrate life in all its forms; to take our farm to the next level. We want to go from telling cautionary tales to actively pursuing the solution. RSV has a revitalized point of view. We want to evolve into an incubator of progressive ideas to farm better, make better wine and grow better produce by celebrating the microbe, the fungi, the farm animals and the rhythms of nature to have a positive impact on the planet; to do our part to undo the damage done by past neglect while creating things of beauty and deliciousness. New projects are on the horizon that will slowly be revealed over the coming months and years. Programs that we we can hopefully watch evolve for the next four decades.



Winegrowing Notes

The foothills of the Mayacamas has a band of red volcanic soil that runs through the Cabernet Franc of RSV's organically farmed Vandal Vineyard. This red soil has a cult following among the growers and vintners of the region and is known for producing some of the most expressive, well-balanced Cabernet Francs on planet Earth.

The old Franc vines carry small clusters of beautiful grapes that hang on the vine until late in the season to be picked at optimal ripeness with lower sugar levels than other Napa "Bordeaux" varieties. Blended with the bright and vibrant Merlot from RSV's organically farmed OSR and Three Amigos Vineyards, the grapes are crushed, destemmed and undergo native yeast fermentation. Aged for two years in the RSV caves before bottling, the wine is then allowed to rest for two more years before release.

Tasting Notes

New World precision meets Old World Soul for a "Right Bank" of Napa claret with unparalleled deliciousness, depth and complexity. The 2018 vintage of POV makes its presence known in an emphatic way. Summer-fresh tart Bing cherry, ripe raspberry and blackberry bramble lend a crispness from first sip to last. Secondary notes of rose petal, fresh oregano, forest floor and mocha nod to the terroir of the Mayacamas foothills in the northern reaches of Los Carneros, rich in red soil and farmed with organic, regenerative practices. The wine is framed in elegant, understated French oak with a savory core that will continue to open and evolve as the wine ages. (12/2022)



UNTRADITIONAL

My good friend Emile Jung, the chef and owner of the three-star restaurant Au Crocodile in Strasbourg, introduced me to Tart Flambé at a local winstub. The fire-blistered crust was thin and crisp, coated with a thin slick of crème fraîche and then showered with thinly sliced red onion and a tangle of smoke-kissed ham. The combination was heavenly. I must have consumed my weight's worth of Tart Flambé during the time I worked with him as a young chef. He was a kind and generous man who made me fall in love again with the cooking of my Alsatian grandmother.

Emile often lamented that winstubs were starting to buy premade frozen Tart Flambé dough rounds instead of making the dough from scratch. I thought it a shame as the frozen crust lacked the je-ne-sais-quoi of a fresh one. The frozen ones always seemed dry and floury.

Before I left Strasbourg, he gave me a rough dough recipe that had a list of ingredients but no measurements. I took the list and developed this recipe in my kitchen. I made it over and over to fine tune it until I achieved the texture and taste of the crust I remembered.

I returned to Alsace several years ago on assignment with *Conde Nast Traveler*. I was there to capture the essence of Alsatian food and wine for a feature article. A lot had changed. Tart Flambé was no longer topped solely with ham and onions and other traditional toppings. It had moved outside of tradition. I had Tart Flambé topped with duck confit, mushrooms, and all types of assorted vegetables. Tart Flambé had somehow mated with pizza and had a baby that I didn't recognize. It was a bittersweet moment.

Before this trip, the Tart Flambé we served at RSV respected tradition. The smoked ham and red onion version was my favorite and went perfectly with Abraxas. A match made in heaven. But now a seed had been planted and I was thinking about all of the untraditional flambé I had tasted on my travels.

We had gardens full of vegetables and a quiver of wines that deserved a chance to be served with a different version of Tart Flambé. When I first tasted cruschi peppers I thought of POV. These sweet crunchy dried peppers are grown solely in Basilicata region of Italy. They are harvested once a year and naturally dried. I took a bite of one and their flavor exploded in my mouth. These will be brilliant with the dried herb and graphite notes of POV, I thought. PERFECTION! The first winter squash was coming out of the garden and a light bulb went off. A caramelized winter squash Tart Flambé topped with the sweet crunch of these peppers would be a show-stopper. And there you have it - thin crisp crust, caramelized thyme-scented squash melting into creamy crème fraîche and crisp pieces of sweet pepper coming together in the most perfect way for POV.

Sure, you could serve POV with the traditional ham and onion Tart Flambé but I like to reserve that traditional combo for Abraxas. POV deserved something unexpected that fell outside the lines of tradition... and it rocked it!

Until the Next Wine...

Maria

TART FLAMBÉ

These tarts are very thin and crisp. I like to serve one per person. For smaller appetites divide the recipe in half and have two people share one. Yield: Eight very thin and crisp 8-inch tarts

Yeasted Tart Dough, recipe follows	1 ½ teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves
2 cups crème fraîche, recipe follows	Honey
Expeller pressed vegetable oil	1 teaspoon sumac, optional
1 pound peeled and seeded butternut squash, or other fine grained squash, thinly sliced	½ cup semolina flour for sprinkling on the sheet pans
Kosher salt	2 large eggs
Freshly ground black pepper	1 small red onion, sliced thinly lengthwise
	3 ounces Cruschi dried sweet peppers

1. While the dough is rising, preheat the oven to 425 degrees F and lightly coat 2 sheet pans with oil. Place the butternut squash slices in a single layer and drizzle with oil. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Drizzle with honey and then evenly sprinkle with the thyme leaves and sumac. Roast in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes until squash is tender and caramelized. Remove from pan and reserve until ready to assemble the Tart Flambé.
3. After the dough has risen, preheat oven to 500 degrees F. Lightly sprinkle 2 or 3 sheet pans with semolina flour.
4. In a small bowl, beat the eggs well and fold in the crème fraîche. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Divide the dough into eight equal pieces (2-ounces each). Roll each round of dough as thinly as possible and place them on the sheet pans. Let them rise covered with a cloth for 10 minutes then prick them well with a fork.
6. Use the back of a spoon to spread ¼ cup of the crème fraîche mixture on each circle, leaving a ¼-inch border. Sprinkle each tart liberally with the onions and top with slices of squash, dividing them equally among the tarts, season with salt and pepper.
7. Bake in the preheated oven until the crust turns golden and crème fraîche is set, about 10 minutes.
8. Remove the Tart Flambé from the oven. Crush the peppers in your hand and sprinkle evenly over the top. Serve immediately.

YEASTED TART DOUGH

3½ cups all-purpose flour	8 ounces water
1 tablespoon dry yeast	4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, softened
2 teaspoons kosher salt	

1. To prepare the tart dough, whisk together the water and yeast in a small bowl.
2. Combine the flour and salt in a large bowl.
3. Add the yeast mixture to the flour mixture. Mix together until combined-- the dough will look dry; add the butter. Knead to a smooth and elastic dough and let rise, covered, for 1 hour until doubled.
4. Punch dough down. It is now ready to shape. Proceed to Step 3 of the Tart Flambé recipe.

CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Substitute this delicious homemade crème fraîche for the more expensive commercial variety. Yield: 2 cups

2 cups heavy cream

4 tablespoons cultured buttermilk

1. Combine the cream and the buttermilk in a very clean glass container.
2. Cover with cheesecloth secured by a rubber band or a piece of plastic wrap that has been perforated with a toothpick 20 times or more.
3. Let the mixture sit at room temperature overnight or for up to two days. If you prefer a mild crème fraîche with just a bit of tang, stop the culture by refrigerating the crème fraîche after one night. If you prefer more tang, let the cream sit for one more night. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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