



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, THREE AMIGOS VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2018





THE TEACHER...

by Rob Sinskey

the slackers and the school farm!

He was imposing for a little guy. His no-nonsense, 1960's suit filled out with a sturdiness that not only hinted at his powerful physique but revealed his personality. He appeared to have just visited the barber before class - high and tight, not a hair out of place. His blue eyes twinkled as he addressed the room. "My name is Mr. Dodson and I am your new ag teacher." he said with confidence. I had no idea that my life was about to change forever.

The year was 1975 and I was part of the "dazed and confused" generation... We did not identify with the Boomers but we were too old to be Gen X'ers. We were sort of the lost ones; the latchkey kids who embraced the hippie aesthetic of long hair, jeans and flannel shirts, the ethos of self-sufficiency, back to nature and indulgence, mixed with the nihilism of growing up with war, the bomb and the degradation of the environment. It would be two more years before the punks came on the scene and "No Future!" would become anthemic... but the die was cast.

Mr. Dodson replaced an old dupe who had earned a reputation of being clueless. Most students signed up for the ag class so they could "work the back farm" and either use it as an opportunity to smoke something or, if it was the last class of the day, blow it off and walk into town. Dodson was the opposite. Sharp, impassioned, disciplined, he had been the state champion wrestler. Now he faced a true challenge as he stood in front of a class of disenfranchised youth, looking like everything we railed against. "Agriculture can save the world!" he declared. Everyone shut-up and listened. "No matter what happens, everyone needs to be fed. Life happens on the farm!" He then went to the chalkboard to illustrate biodiversity, the linkage between crops and animals and soil health. He taught with contagious enthusiasm and he infected the whole class. He became my favorite teacher and, though he was only in my life for two years, his impact lasted a lifetime.

We could use a few more Mr. Dodsons. I wish that every school would have mandatory agriculture classes and every student have a Mr. Dodson. The world is in a similar situation today. War festers in far away lands, human-driven climate change degrades our environment and heat records are being set on a regular basis. It is easy to resign and feel there is "No Future" - but we can do something. We, as farmers, can embrace regenerative farming techniques to "heal an ailing earth" and sequester carbon. We, as consumers, can choose to purchase from local farmers who operate a biodiverse organic farm. We can make choices as a community to value our environment and choose leaders who recognize that human activity must change for the benefit of all.

Industrial farms, fossil fuels and energy production must evolve as well as the way we, as individuals, use these items. Freedom means we have choice and sometimes we need to choose to move in a new direction and recognize that just because we did it one way in the past, it doesn't mean we need to continue to do it in the same damaging way.

We grow grapes, make wine, raise animals and grow food crops. The reason we are able to make a beautiful wine - like the Three Amigos Vineyard Pinot Noir - is because we embrace biodiversity and have planted grapes in places where the climate is conducive to growing grapes that produce classically structured Pinot Noir. However, we can only control what is on our farm. Others, who are not farmers, must also help heal an ailing earth or the farm will not be able to keep up with rapid change and agriculture will not be able to "save the world." Whatever your politics, please prioritize the health of the planet. We should have learned from the past as a cautionary tale and choose leaders who are committed to the future, accept the science of climate change and are willing to do something about it.

Winegrowing Notes

We took a deep breath after the nail biting vintage of 2017 and were rewarded in 2018 with less drama and a slow, even-ripening growing season. The certified organic Three Amigos Vineyard is a stone's throw from the Napa Marina and benefits from the cooling winds off the bay. The vineyard is planted to a mix of heirloom selections and a couple of French clones. The French clones ripen earlier and offer phenomenal aromatics, while the heirlooms ripen much later to bring depth and structure that work together to form this stunning wine.

Tasting Notes

The certified organic and regeneratively farmed Three Amigos Vineyard Pinot Noir epitomizes the superlative nature of the 2018 growing season. This is a Pinot lover's Pinot - elegant, balanced and laced with tension, this wine is kindred with the classic Pinots of the world and fits in comfortably with a broad range of cuisine. It has fresh notes of rose, blood orange, cranberry, raspberry and pomegranate, balanced by savory aromatics of sage, black tea, earth and minerality. The cooler climate of the Southern Carneros contributes to the wine's elegance, while the mix of "heirloom" massal and French clone selections set the tone for depth and complexity. Though this "new release" is, as of this writing, nearly six years post harvest, it is bright and youthful, with a structure to carry the wine for decades of graceful evolution. (07/2024)





A DIFFERENT STROKE

I like to think outside the box when creating a dish for a wine. Seasonality is foremost - I don't like to force ingredients from another season into the recipe just because they're a sure match for a wine. Pairing wine and food is subjective. Many times I break all the rules because I'm in the mood for something fresh and bright that may or may not go perfectly - and that's OK! It makes drinking wine more fun when you can talk about why something goes with the wine... or not.

You may think that this recipe is better suited for a wine like POV. Sure, POV is delicious with this wheat berry salad, but I'm not creating for POV, I'm creating for our Three Amigos Vineyard Pinot Noir and it works with both.

What?!? Peppers with Pinot? The horror! Actually not. In this case, the peppers are sweet, and grilling takes a lot of the "pepperiness" away. Chopped herbs, toasted pine nuts and dressed tomatoes on top provide a little spark. The slightly earthy, wheat berries with grilled vegetables kissed with a bit of smoke and sweet/savory notes work quite well with the little bit of black tea, earth and rhubarb aromas and flavors of the Three Amigos Vineyard Pinot.

Another beautiful thing about this recipe is that you can take the wheat berries and add whatever vegetables suit your fancy. Just foraged mushrooms are wonderful in this recipe, as are leftover vegetables from last night's dinner. Use this recipe as a guide and have fun being creative. After all, that's what food and wine is all about - at least around my campfire!

Until the Next Wine...

Maria



WHEAT BERRY AND GRILLED VEGETABLE SALAD

The sky is the limit for substitutions as far as vegetables for this salad are concerned. Add or take away whatever suits your fancy. Keep the dressing simple so the flavors of your ingredients shine through. Dice the vegetables to be about triple the size of the wheat berries to get a little bit of everything in each bite. Serves 4 to 6

2 cups cooked wheat berries, recipe follows
2 small zucchini and/or yellow summer squash, sliced ½ inch thick and grilled, small dice
1 small red bell pepper, grilled, seeds removed, small dice
1 small yellow bell pepper, grilled, seeds removed, small dice
1 medium ear corn, grilled, kernels cut off
1 tablespoon shallots, finely minced
¼ cup toasted pine nuts

Lemon juice
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Extra virgin olive oil
10 large mint leaves, finely julienned
3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, leaves and stems
¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley leaves
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

1. In a large bowl, mix together the wheat berries through the pine nuts in the ingredient list and toss well.
2. Squeeze the juice of half a lemon over the top and season with salt and pepper. Toss well. Taste the seasoning and adjust.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and toss well. Check for seasoning again.
4. Add the mint, dill and parsley and toss again.
5. Place the cherry tomatoes in a small bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.
6. Arrange the tomatoes over the top of the salad and lightly toss to semi-incorporate. Don't toss so hard so as to pop the insides out.
7. Serve at room temperature or chill in the refrigerator for up to 3 hours to serve later. Remove from fridge 1 hour before serving to allow the olive oil to melt.

WHEAT BERRIES

1 ½ cups wheat berries
4 teaspoons kosher salt

1. Rinse and drain wheat berries.
2. Place in a large bowl covered with 4 inches cool water and soak overnight on the counter.
3. Drain and add to a 4-quart saucepan. Cover with 2 inches of water. Bring to a boil. Add 4 teaspoons kosher salt. Cover with a lid, reduce heat to low and cook until tender about 45-50 minutes until berries are plump and tender inside and a few start to split. Add more water if the water reduces below the top of the wheat berries
4. Drain and add back to hot pan. Cover to allow residual water to absorb while the pan cools. Cool to room temperature before using.

Note: Berries can be cooked up to two days in advance and stored in the refrigerator. For longer storage vacuum seal and freeze for up to 3 months.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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