

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

MERLOT 2017



Los Carneros, Napa Valley



- Grown, Produced and Bottled by RSVnapa
- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Regeneratively farmed since before there was a name for it
- Cool maritime growing region influenced by the San Pablo Bay
- Heat summation comparable to St. Emilion
- Cave aged 18 months in French oak
- 30% new barrels for subtlety
- 20 barrels produced

Winegrowing Notes

RSV's organically farmed vineyards in the Carneros region of Napa are ideal for the Merlot grape, especially in the North of the region at the base of the Mayacamas mountain range. The long, cool growing season coaxes full flavor development from the grape at lower sugars for a balanced, delicious wine with moderate alcohol.

2017 was a pivotal year in Napa Valley. The vintage ended with one of the most trying times in our history. Climate change driven fires roared through the valley, threatening the winery, vineyards, homes and lives. We were fortunate to have picked this Merlot before the fires began.

The good news: the fruit that came in was gorgeous. Low yields combined with organic, regenerative farming allowed the grapes to achieve full physiological ripeness while a night harvest helped maintain natural acidity.

Tasting Notes

An elegant and delicious Merlot from RSVnapa's organic and regeneratively farmed Carneros Vineyards. The 2017 edition of this wine exhibits lush notes of sun-kissed summer plum and black cherry with hints of black tea and cacao that resolve with a backbone of supple tannin and bright, mouth watering crispness. The additional bottle age of this wine adds to its elegance and showcases the best of the old vines planted in the cool, foggy Carneros region. This wine is drinkable now with a complexity rarely seen in Merlot from the New World yet it has a structure that portends a glorious future for those desiring to stash this wine in their cellar for a later visit. (03/2024)

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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Le Merle, the blackbird, came to me in a dream last night. It said, "If you get out of my way, I will grow into something beautiful." It stared directly into my eyes as it spoke and cocked its head from side to side in the most bird-like way.

The dream baffled me. Was it a subconscious replay of a meeting some two decades ago with the Alsatian vigneron Jean-Michel Deiss? As we ended our visit and saying our goodbyes, he offered these words of wisdom: "Follow nature and the rest will come!" At the time, that statement was just as baffling as those of Le Merle, but I have since learned to take his cryptic advice as gospel. Quite simply, work with, not against nature and plant what is appropriate for your land. Then, get out of its way.

In the dark arts, blackbirds symbolize purification, the underworld or our dark nature. That just seems like a bunch of BS... same as my dream. I was hoping to find some ancient allegory to help me tell a story involving nature, blackbirds and a sense of place - but I could find none... so I fabricated one.

You see, "Le Merle" is the root of "Merl-ot" - the black grape of Bordeaux. It was identified in 1784 as a superlative grape for the "Right Bank" regions of Saint Émilion and Pomerol. From there it spread throughout France and the world with varying degrees of success. Merlot is actually a very forgiving grape and good wine can be made from grapes grown in many different micro-climates, but it is sublime when grown in a region it "likes" - one with a clay-based soil and a long, cool growing season where the grapes can develop flavor at lower sugar levels for an elegant, age-worthy, cuisine-oriented wine.

A little birdie once told us that RSV's organically farmed Carneros Vineyards were the perfect place to let this grape to grow into a beautiful wine. I am glad we listened.

