



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

PINOT NOIR, CAPA VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2018



BRINGING IT HOME...

By Rob Sinskey

Love, Loss and Pinot Noir!

RSVnapa will celebrate the fortieth harvest this year, and though my business card optimistically reads “Daydream Believer,” it has been an unlikely journey. During those forty vintages, wine and life happened. I made the Capa Vineyard home. I stubbed my toe on a few trial relationships before finding the one: a talented young San Francisco chef named Maria. We raised two beautiful children and sent them off to college. We watched our parents grow old and lost one of them.

Like life itself, each vintage has been shaped by the vagaries of a year, a visceral time stamp captured in a bottle. When a cork is popped, we are not only reminded of the physical weather patterns that imprinted the grapes with a unique upbringing: the rare “ideal” vintage, the wettest or driest winter, the hottest or coldest summer, the year of the earthquake or fires; but what happened in our lives: the loves and losses, the birth of a child, a marriage, a first home, a new career, or any first that benchmark our lives. When we open a vintage aligned with a touchstone moment, memories flood back as we share a beverage as complex and baffling as life.

This fortieth crush brings us home to the Capa Vineyard. It has been a serendipitous arc that started with a 15-acre Carneros vineyard, building a Stags Leap District winery, saying goodbye to the winery only to find a Carneros farm, the Wilding Farm, and merging it with the Capa Vineyard for 84 contiguous acres of rolling terrain with different exposures, soils and micro-climates—an inspiring palette of pigments for the next forty years of life.



Capa Vineyard early '90s

Winegrowing Notes

Decades of work transformed the Capa Vineyard into a beautiful organic/regenerative vineyard. What was once a neglected junkyard is now a crown jewel with sturdy old Pinot Noir vines where year-round cover crop is grazed by sheep to naturally increase the organic material in the soil, providing nutrients to the vine and sequestering carbon. Hedgerows provide beneficial habitats for insects and birds while creating a buffer zone from neighboring vineyards. The vines were retrained to be less vigorous, prolonging the growing season for increased flavor development while keeping the sugars in check for a wine that is lower in alcohol but high in complexity.

Tasting Notes

Sacré bleu, a New World Pinot Noir with 12.9% alc. and fully developed flavor...c'est impossible! This stunningly elegant and complex Pinot Noir from the organic/regenerative Capa Vineyard is everything a great Pinot should be. It sits on the razor's edge of ripeness with a vibrant character rarely seen in a New World Pinot Noir.

Aromas of rose, cedar, sage, and bright red cranberry/raspberry fruit are a pure expression of the 2018 Capa Vineyard Pinot Noir. It is a wine of high-wire balance; ripe flavors like black cherry and tart Santa Rosa plum, meet vibrant red berries, pomegranate, and citrus peel. The wine has an energy that suggests it is at the beginning of a wide time window of deliciousness. (2/2025)

697 - six pack (6 x 750ml) cases produced



THE GARDEN

*What wondrous life in this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine...*

Andrew Marvell (1621-78)

"The Garden" is one of my favorite poems. This quote has stuck with me since I first read it some 40-plus years ago. The thought of ripe apples dropping about my head makes me giddy, and please do hand crush those sweet, delicious grapes and let the juice dribble into my mouth!

What does this have to do with our Capa Pinot Noir? The grapes, of course, play a part, but the apples do too. Mainly because they drop on my head not around it, when I'm trying to pick them off the multitude of trees in the vineyard orchard. What better way to harness them than in the recipe that follows?

There's something about the Capa Vineyard Pinot Noir that embraces the roasted apples and the pleasant heat of the crushed peppercorns frizzled in duck fat. Perhaps it's the spice and earth notes found in the wine, or its perfume. The recipe is amazing in its simplicity, although you will need to flex your culinary prowess in the butchering of the duck.

And while you're preening and prepping the duck, think of Marvell's poetic words of the solitary pleasures of the garden. Revel in the belief that alone, in the garden, a person can truly enjoy what's best in life: an unhurried, untroubled, sensuous creativity that mirrors the garden's own.

Until the next wine...

Maria



BLACK PEPPER CRUSTED DUCK BREAST AND BRAISED LEGS WITH ROASTED APPLES

This dish has few ingredients, but together, they make for a delicious marriage. Serve simply with the roasted apples for a meal that hits all the notes. Serves 4 to 6

4 medium duck breasts, 2 pounds

4 medium duck legs, 2 pounds

Kosher salt

4 teaspoons coarsely crushed black peppercorns

½ cup dry red wine, Pinot Noir preferred

2 cups chicken or duck stock

2 bushy sprigs of fresh thyme

Roasted Apples, recipe follows

Note: *You can clean the duck breasts up to two days in advance. Wrap well and store in the refrigerator. The apples can be prepared one day in advance and stored in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator. Reheat in the oven while the duck breasts are cooking.*

1. Clean the duck breasts of any excess fat and silver skin- the slivery-looking fan of nerves on the underside of the breast. Remove the tenders from the breasts. The tender is a strip of meat with a silver stripe of tendon that can be easily pulled away from the breast with your fingers. Sauté them separately for a snack while you are preparing dinner. Trim the edges of any overhanging skin and tidy them up. Score the skin almost to, but not into, the breast meat in a crisscross diamond pattern. This will help render the fat and crisp the skin.
2. Remove the thigh bone from the duck legs by running your knife down each side of the thigh bone. Cut through the joint where it meets the drumstick with a small sharp knife. Use a towel to grab the end of the bone and twist to free it from the meat. You may need to use the tip of your knife to scrape some of the meat away to free it. Lay the leg skin side down and make two cuts on each side of the drumstick bone to separate the meat a bit and allow penetration of the salt and herbs and spices. Repeat with the remaining legs.
3. Lay the legs skin side up on a cutting board or sheet pan. Sprinkle each leg with ¼ teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of cracked black pepper over the legs. Turn the legs over and salt the meat side with ¼ teaspoon of salt then ¼ teaspoon cracked pepper. Let the legs rest for 20 minutes at room temp before cooking. Or wrap and refrigerate overnight. Bring back to room temp before cooking.
4. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
5. Heat a medium sauté pan over medium heat so that the pan is warm but not too hot. The duck legs should sizzle when they are placed in the pan but not smoke. Place the legs in the pan with the skin side down. Render the skin until it is nice and golden. Turn legs over and brown the opposite side.
6. Flip legs back over and increase the heat. Add the wine and reduce to almost dry. Add the stock to the pan and bring to a boil, then add the thyme sprigs. Cover with parchment paper or with a loosely cracked lid and place in the preheated oven. Cook for 40 to 50 minutes until the legs are tender. Remove the legs from the oven and reserve in the pan while you cook the breasts.
7. Heat a medium sauté pan over medium heat so that the pan is warm but not too hot. The breasts should sizzle when they are placed in the pan but not smoke. Press ½ teaspoon of cracked peppercorns into the fatty skin of each duck breast and season well with salt on both sides.
8. Place the breasts skin side down in the pan and begin rendering off the fat. Be sure that the fat in the pan doesn't smoke. Reduce the heat if necessary. As the pan fills with fat, carefully pour it into a heatproof container so the breasts do not deep fry in their fat (see Note). Hold the breasts in place with a carving fork or metal spatula. Keep rendering the skin side until no more fat is released and the skin is crisp, about 8 minutes.

9. Turn the breasts over and place the pan in the preheated oven to roast for 5 minutes for medium-rare; cook longer for less rare. Remove the breasts from the pan and let them rest for at least 10 minutes to allow the juices to distribute evenly throughout the meat before slicing.

10. To serve, slice the breasts starting at the small pointed end. Slice the meat at a 45-degree angle thinly across the grain. If you see long striations of muscle in the slice, cut it the opposite way or taste a piece. It should be tender, not chewy. If it's too chewy, slice it at the opposite angle.

11. Remove the legs from their pan and place on a serving plate. Add the apples and their juices to the leg pan. Stir to combine the roasting juices and season to taste with salt and pepper.

12. Add the sliced duck to the plate and spoon the apples around. Drizzle the roasting juices over the duck.

Note: The rendered duck fat can be strained and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for one month or frozen for 6 months. Use it in place of butter or oil to sauté potatoes for extra flavor.

ROASTED APPLES

*The flavor principles of the apples are based on the French term **aigre-doux**, meaning sweet and sour. **Aigre-doux** sauces have the **yin-yang** of sweetness and acidity. If not enough vinegar is used to balance the sugar, the effect can be cloying rather than seductive. Think of the classic **Duck à l'Orange**. Taste your apples to make sure that the sweetness and acidity is balanced. If the mix needs more sugar or vinegar, add it until you achieve the right balance.*

2 medium apples, fuji or similar, peeled, halved, core removed

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons granulated sugar

3 tablespoons cider vinegar

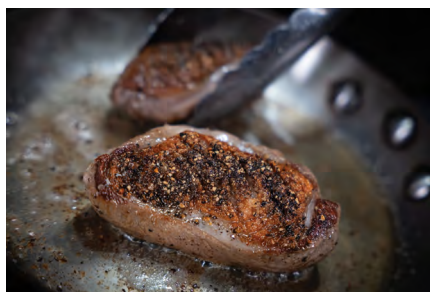
1 ½ cups chicken or duck stock

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

2. Cut the apples into 6 equal wedges. Heat the butter in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat until it begins to turn brown, and then add the apples. Sauté the apples until they are golden on all sides; season with salt and pepper.

3. Add the sugar to the apples and cook until the sugar is bubbly, thick and caramelized to a golden brown. Adjust the heat if necessary. Add the cider vinegar and reduce until the mixture bubbles thickly, about 3 minutes. Add the stock to the pan and bring it to a boil.

4. Remove the pan from the heat and place it in the preheated oven. Roast the apples until they are meltingly tender and the juices are reduced and viscous, about 25-30 minutes. Remove from the oven and check the seasoning. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover the apples to keep them warm. If the compote cools, reheat in the oven while the duck legs and breasts cook.





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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