



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

MERLOT, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2018





QUIET CONFIDENCE...

By Rob Sinskey

Of a Cool Merlot!

What makes a wine “cool”? We’ve watched wine trends come and go over the past 40 years, from the early days when all white wine was “Chablis” (though there was little resemblance to the original) to “buttery” barrel-fermented Chardonnay and back to minerally high-acid Chard. Then there was the rise of “unctuous” New World Pinot Noir and “Cult” Cab. The latest trend has been funky “natty” wines. However, one thing that never changes is respect for well-grown and well-crafted wines that deliver deliciousness. These wines have a quiet confidence when they join the table. They don’t need to shout that they are cool because they are unpretentiously cool in a way that Cary Grant was cool.

RSVnapa grows and makes Merlot from the cooler Northern Carneros region of Napa Valley. It’s not just the climate that makes this Merlot cool. It’s cool because it’s conscientiously farmed using organic, regenerative practices in a place that allows for a long growing season, enabling the grapes to develop flavor at lower sugar levels, resulting in moderate alcohol in the finished wine. Once the grapes are harvested, they are treated with respect and nurtured for their natural qualities instead of being manipulated into what a winemaker desires. RSVnapa produces an honest, pure Merlot that instills confidence for pairing with a wide range of cuisines, allowing you and your guests to enjoy a wine that exists solely to enhance the gathering and make everything more pleasurable... and that is cool!



Winegrowing Notes

There are few places in the world where Merlot is elevated to greatness. These regions have an ideal combination of climate, weather, and soil, allowing the grapes to develop flavor over a long, cool growing season while maintaining a fresh, lively brightness. The northern Carneros region is one of those rare places where RSVnapa grows beautiful, organically farmed Merlot on two ridgeline sites.

The ideal weather of the 2018 vintage produced elegant fruit that deserved respect with a light hand in the cellar. The grapes were hand-harvested at night and brought to the cellar door cool and fresh, where they were destemmed and allowed to slowly ferment with native yeast. The wine was laid down to rest in mostly aged French Oak barrels and blended from several select lots to craft this beautiful cuvée.

Tasting Notes

From RSVnapa's organic/regeneratively farmed Carneros Vineyards comes an elegant Merlot from the ideal 2018 vintage. This pure, lively, cellar-aged wine has a striking, bright, crimson red hue, a clue to the craftsmanship behind this wine. A first pass at the glass reveals enticing aromas and flavors of rose petal, black cherry, summer plum, pomegranate, with a hint of savory herb and black tea. The wine strikes a chord with the bass notes from warm California sunshine, harmonized by the high notes of the cool climate of the Carneros. Lush red fruit feeds into the lengthy structure, marked by fine tannins that carry through to a mouthwatering finish. Delicious now, this 2018 vintage of Merlot will develop complexity as it continues to age. (05/2025)

388 (12x750ml) cases produced



THE QUEEN OF WINES

Merlot, when crafted well, is so delicious. Most think Merlot is a thick-skinned grape like Cabernet Sauvignon, but it has a thin skin that, if handled well and gently coaxed, will produce a modicum of silky tannin. These silky tannins, combined with a punch of acidity and depth of fruit from thoughtfully farmed Napa/Carneros grapes, make for a wine that is quite heady and versatile at the table. If Cabernet is King, then our Merlot is the beautiful Queen. Its subtle aromas of dried herbs and intense sour cherry and Santa Rosa plum are swoon-worthy. It's not heavy on the palate, with just enough baking spice from a hint of fine French oak to seductively underlay the fruit. The result is a wine with a balanced structure, quaffable now but destined to mature beautifully in your cellar. It's not hard to cook for a wine such as this.

Sour cherries are an easy match for our Merlot. I'm trying to grow them on Wilding Farm, but they are a finicky fruit. If the ones on Wilding fail, we have a beautiful 75-year-old backup tree in Oregon. I'm determined to preserve as many cherries as possible, as they're heaven with a good pork chop or roast, not to mention cherry pie. If you find sour cherries in the market, from May through early July, preserve them by dehydrating or canning them in light syrup. If you can't find fresh sour cherries, dried ones work almost as well.

Pour a glass of Merlot, swirl it, and breathe deeply. Sip it while you're cooking. The wine's headiness, combined with the cooking aromas, will be the perfect preview of your meal to come.

Until the next wine...

Maria

ROAST PORK CHOPS WITH SOUR CHERRIES

I love the combination of roast pork and sour cherries. The combo is equally delicious with duck, quail, squab, and game hens. The sauce technique below captures all the caramelized juices and flavors from the roasting pan. I like to transfer the pan sauce to a small saucepan to finish and then hold it for dinner. Serves 4 to 6

3 large shallots	½ cup sour cherries
4 thick-cut bone-in pork chops	1 cup red wine
Kosher salt	3 tablespoons unsalted butter
Freshly ground black pepper	2 2-inch sprigs fresh rosemary
Extra virgin olive oil	1 cup rich chicken stock

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Slice 1 ½ shallots into one-eighth inch thick slices. Reserve. Mince the remaining ½ shallot and reserve.
3. Season pork chops on both sides with salt and pepper.
4. Heat the pan over medium-high heat. Add a drizzle of oil and then the pork chops.
5. Sear for 3 or 4 minutes until golden. Turn the chops over and top with sliced shallots and rosemary sprigs. Drizzle with oil and sprinkle with salt and a few grinds of pepper.
6. Place in oven and roast for 15-20 minutes until pork chops are cooked through.
7. Place a small pan over medium heat while the pork chops are roasting. Add 2 tablespoons of butter and cook until bubbly and starting to brown. Add the 1 tablespoon minced shallot and the cherries. Sauté, stirring constantly, until the shallots are golden. Turn off the heat and reserve.
8. When the timer sounds, remove the sliced shallot from the top of the chops and leave it in the pan with the rosemary sprigs. Remove the rosemary stems and discard them. Place the pork chops on a cutting board to rest before slicing.
9. Place the roasting pan with the shallots over medium heat. Cook until shallots are soft and golden. Deglaze with red wine and reduce at a full boil until almost dry, about 5 minutes.
10. Add chicken stock, bring to a boil, then strain into the cherry shallot mixture. Bring the mixture to a boil and stir in 1 tablespoon of butter. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Reserve the soft-sliced shallots to serve with the pork.
11. Debone and slice the pork chops. Serve the pork over sautéed spinach, rice, or whatever you fancy. Spoon the cherries and sauce over the pork and arrange the roasted sliced shallots on the plate.



FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.



Robert Sinskey Vineyards & Wilding Farm
4059 Old Sonoma Road
Napa, CA 94559
707.944.9090
robertsinskey.com

Winemaker: Jeff Virnig
Chef: Maria Helm Sinskey
Photos and Text: Rob Sinskey
gluttons@robertsinskey.com

