

CABERNET FRANC VANDAL VINEYARD





THE PLEASURE PYRAMID...

Drink Real!

Our benevolent overlords released yet another food pyramid, gently instructing us to “eat real food” while also suggesting more red meat and less alcohol. Which is... interesting. I’m fully on board with real food, especially when it’s conscientiously farmed, humanely raised, and grown with some humility toward the land. But I’m equally committed to something else: guilt-free, conscientious hedonism. Quite simply - Enjoy yourself. On purpose. Without apology. Because if you are drinking RSVnapa Cabernet Franc, enhanced pleasure is derived from a natural beverage that does no harm to the farm and planet.

It’s not exactly news that happy people tend to be happier. I don’t have a white paper to cite, but I bet they’re also healthier. What we do know is that stress is a killer. Loneliness doesn’t help either. Which makes me wonder if what we really need isn’t another nutritional diagram, but a Pleasure Pyramid. One that includes long meals, shared bottles, laughter, and the profound act of sitting down with people you actually like.

I recently saw Scott Galloway make the case that one of the most damaging trends of modern life is the collapse of everyday socializing, especially among younger people. His advice was refreshingly analog: stop isolating, get out of the house, and have drinks with friends and coworkers. He argued that the benefits of social drinking far outweigh the risks. I’m inclined to agree.

Wine, after all, isn’t just calories or chemistry—it’s culture. It’s agriculture with a social life. It’s how humans have gathered, celebrated, argued, reconciled, and relaxed for thousands of years. Remove the joy, and you’re left with rules. Add the joy back in, and suddenly things start to make sense again.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ROBERT SINSEY". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long, sweeping underline.

Cabernet Franc 2019 — Vandal Vineyard

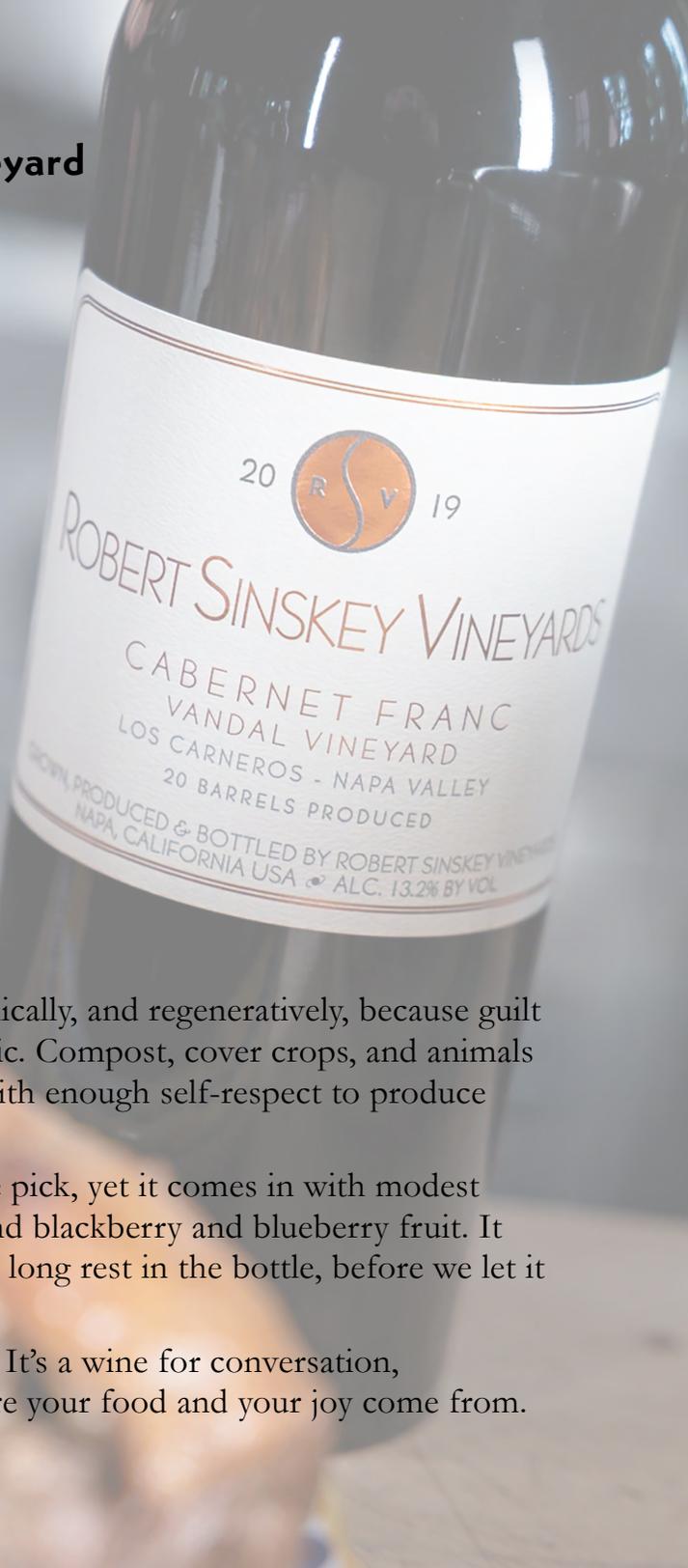
With aromas of blackberry and bramble fruit, hints of violet and black pepper, and the kind of wild, savory herbs you find along a garden path, the 2019 Cabernet Franc feels natural and unforced. It has a freshness that makes your mouth water before you even take a sip thanks to the cool Northern Carneros climate around the Vandal Vineyard, where the grapes were farmed organically, biodynamically, and regeneratively—living soils, balanced vines, and nothing synthetic, ever. Compost, cover crops, and animals do the heavy lifting, and the wine carries that vitality in the glass. Nearly two years in French oak and a long rest in bottle give it a calm confidence and a savory, lingering finish. This is a wine for the table—meant to be shared, enjoyed with real food, and opened without overthinking. (1/2026)

Winegrowing Notes

This Cabernet Franc is grown organically, biodynamically, and regeneratively, because guilt is overrated and living soils matter. Nothing synthetic. Compost, cover crops, and animals do the real work, building soils that support vines with enough self-respect to produce fruit with natural balance and character.

Cabernet Franc is always one of the last varieties we pick, yet it comes in with modest sugars, bright acidity, and a savory herbal edge behind blackberry and blueberry fruit. It spends nearly two years in French oak, then another long rest in the bottle, before we let it out into the world. It's aged to be opened.

This isn't a wine for competitions or muscle flexing. It's a wine for conversation, connection, and the quiet pleasure of knowing where your food and your joy come from.



Time to Gather

These uncertain times can leave us feeling disconnected from those closest to us. What better way to reconnect than around the table with close friends and family, enjoying a delicious, lovingly prepared meal? A good meal not only sustains—it grounds us and draws our focus to what matters most: those right in front of us.

This lamb agrodolce, like life itself, is bittersweet. It's fragrant, warm, and deeply delicious. Though perfect for a crowd, it also makes a satisfying and romantic dinner for two, with the added bonus that leftovers freeze beautifully and taste even better reheated.

For your next shindig, take the day-of pressure off the cook by making it ahead, freezing, and reheating. Add some roasted potatoes or thick-cut noodles, pop the cork on a bottle of Cab Franc, and you have a party. It'll be hard to wipe that smile off your face all evening long. The sweet-sour notes, rosemary, and touch of cinnamon sing with the wine. Perhaps you'll even find yourself humming along.

Until the next wine... *Maria*



AGRODOLCE LAMB SHOULDER

This classic Italian dish features slow-cooked lamb shoulder in a rich, tangy sweet-and-sour sauce, traditionally served with vegetables. The agrodolce sauce reduces to a glossy finish that beautifully complements the depth and richness of the lamb. The meat is first seared to lock in flavor, then gently braised at a low temperature until tender and nearly falling from the bone. Serves 8–10

5–7 lb bone-in lamb shoulder	¼ cup granulated sugar
1 large bulb garlic, cut in half horizontally	1 cup agrodolce vinegar*
4 fresh rosemary sprigs, about 5 inches long	1 cup red wine
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper	½ cinnamon stick
Extra-virgin olive oil	¼ cup chopped parsley, for garnish
2 large yellow onions, sliced into thin wedges	

1. About 30 minutes before cooking, remove the lamb from the refrigerator and allow it to come to room temperature. Butterfly the lamb shoulder by cutting beneath the shoulder blade and above the rib bones, leaving one edge connected so it opens like a book.
2. Season the inside generously with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with rosemary. Smash the top half of the garlic, remove the skins, and spread the cloves over the cut side of the lamb. Close the lamb and season the exterior well with salt and pepper.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
4. Heat olive oil in a large, heavy pot or Dutch oven. Sear the lamb, fat side down and bones up, until deeply golden. Remove the lamb to a sheet pan. Add the onions to the pot and cook until wilted and beginning to brown. Add the sugar and cook until caramelized. Deglaze with the vinegar and red wine, bring to a boil, and reduce slightly.
5. Nestle the remaining half bulb of garlic into the onions. Add the cinnamon stick and sprinkle the leaves from one rosemary sprig over the mixture. Place the lamb on top.
6. Drizzle a little olive oil over the lamb and sprinkle with the leaves from another rosemary sprig. Cover the pot tightly with a lid or foil.
7. Transfer to the oven and cook for 1½ hours. Turn the lamb over and cook for another 1½ hours, until the meat is tender and nearly falling off the bone. If the pan looks dry at the halfway point, add 1–1½ cups of water. The bottom of the pan should never dry out. Remove the lid or foil for the final 30 minutes of cooking.

8. Remove the pot from the oven and let rest for 15 minutes. Using tongs and a large spoon, transfer the lamb to a serving platter. Cover loosely with foil and rest while preparing the sauce.

9. Strain the braising liquid into a saucepan using a fine strainer. Skim off excess fat. Reduce gently until slightly thickened and well balanced. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

10. Sprinkle the lamb with parsley and serve. Accompany with crisp roasted potatoes, thick cut noodles or rice and vegetables.

*If agrodolce vinegar is unavailable, substitute red or white wine vinegar and increase the sugar to ½ cup.





CABERNET FRANC

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