

ABRAXAS
VIN DE TERROIR
SCINTILLA SONOMA VINEYARD
LOS CARNEROS, 2007



ROBERT SINSKEY VINEYARDS
R S V
NAPA, CALIFORNIA

A JUNG WINE

Abraxas, 365 days captured in a bottle...

*D*amn, the wind machines are on again! It's four in the morning and the mercury has dropped below thirty degrees, cold enough to destroy the delicate early spring shoots that define the crop. The meteorologist's calling for the seventies later in the week. So it goes, nature places its distinct mark on another vintage.

"That is terrible Abraxas ... It is the delight of the earth and the cruelty of the heavens." - Carl Jung

The vintage shapes Abraxas. Appropriately, the Greek letters of Abraxas, ΑΒΡΑΞΑΞ, sum to 365 in alphabetic numerology. In ancient times, the Basilideans believed that Abraxas ruled the 365 heavens, each one with its lesser god and a virtue for every day of the year.

Gnostic tradition further held that Abraxas encompassed both good and evil, god and devil in one being. Jung applied this concept more broadly and suggested that the dogged pursuit of the one could instead lead to the other.

"When we strive after the good or the beautiful, we thereby forget our nature, which is distinctiveness." - Carl Jung

Whatever the year brings, be it cold or hot, wet or dry, windy or calm, or anywhere in between, Abraxas represents



Abraxas Refracted



Maria's Secret Ingredient

the whole by telling the story of the forces that came before.

"When, however, we remain true to our own nature ... we distinguish ourselves ... from the evil and ugly." - Carl Jung

Abraxas is a salute to distinctiveness and a reaction against homogeneity. Born of the idea that four classic grapes of Alsace (Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Gewurztraminer), planted in the same Carneros vineyard, would respond distinctly to the unique weather patterns of each year. Then, the four varieties could be blended, in ratios determined by each variety's unique response to the vintage, making the wine whole while avoiding the manipulations often found in a more industrialized cellar. Abraxas does not aspire to be anything but true to vintage.

Accepting the strengths and weaknesses of the vintage is liberating. You take the good with the bad and allow distinction to reign. The alternative, to force our will on the wine in pursuit of a commercial or stylistic ideal, would be to work against the rhythms of nature, obscuring the inherent character of the wine.

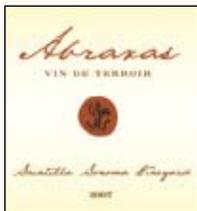
"The operation of the whole is Abraxas ..." - Carl Jung

The meteorologist was wrong. By the time I finished writing, the thermometer blew past the seventies and hit the nineties. Looks like the vintage of two thousand and eight will be distinctive, indeed.

Rob Sinskey



Halibut, prepared with fennel pollen, sea salt and parsley



WINEGROWING NOTES

Back-to-back bumper crops the two previous autumns and a very dry winter combined to severely limit yield in 2007, but quantity is not the goal at RSV. Nature is about balance and endows short harvests with intensity.

The tidal sloughs of the Carneros ferry dense, cool maritime air into RSV's certified organic and biodynamic Scintilla Sonoma vineyard, keeping things comfortable for the four traditional Alsatian grape varieties that come together to form Abraxas. RSV harvests each vineyard block at the optimal point where ripeness and structure intersect, then whole-cluster presses and ferments the juice in stainless steel tanks. Each variety and vineyard block contributes its individual character to the final Abraxas cuvee, helping to form a distinctive and honest retelling of vintage.

TASTING NOTES

Dense and floral aromas of spiced apple, mandarin and lime tempt and tease. A sip unleashes a persistent mouthful of apple, lychee, bright lemon, stone fruit, honeysuckle and jasmine, to name just a few. The wine carries ample texture and body, yet the crisp edge keeps things refreshing and food friendly. Abraxas is delicious now, but has the sort of concentration and structure to warrant a long-term relationship. If cellaring Abraxas is the game plan, RSV recommends drinking the glass topped 750 ml bottles in the near term and aging the natural cork finished magnums. (4/2008)

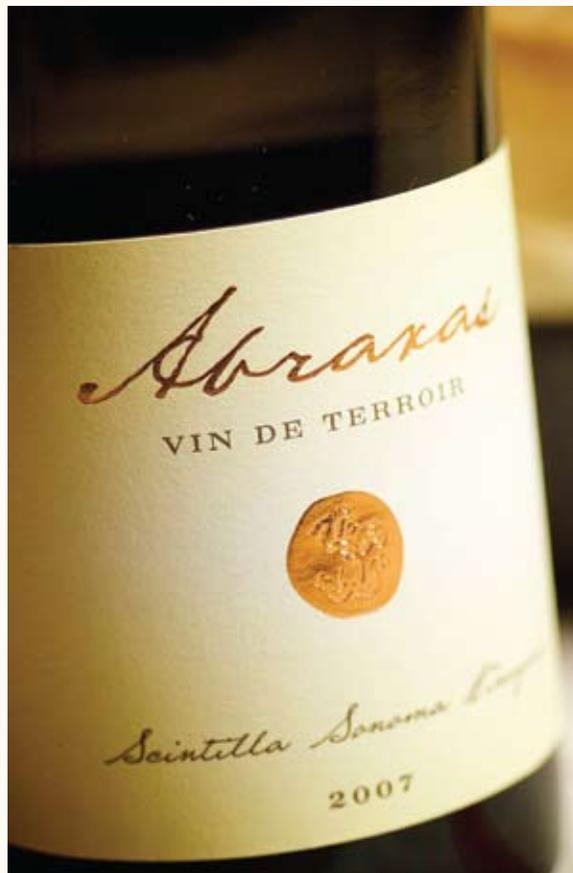
Abraxas,

Vin De Terroir,

Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard, 2007

33% Pinot Gris, 29% Riesling,

23% Gewurztraminer, 15% Pinot Blanc







MAY THE LIGHT SHINE...



Most people think the best way to prepare fish is to grill, broil, pan fry or poach it. One of the most simple and classic methods, Poisson en Papillote, is easily forgotten. Fish really shines when it's tucked into parchment paper and baked in a hot oven. The paper cocoon locks in moisture and flavor... and when the packet is opened, the aromatics are heavenly. One of my secret ingredients, fennel pollen, captures the essence of fennel, only with more intensity and a lot less work. No washing, drying and chopping odd-shaped bulbs. Just sprinkle on a pinch or two of the fennel pollen and you're golden! Fennel and halibut are seamless together and contrast nicely with their earthy bed of potatoes - a perfect match for the aromatics and brightness of Abraxas.

Until the next wine...

Maria



HALIBUT IN PARCHMENT WITH POTATOES, FENNEL POLLEN AND EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL (Serves 4 to 6)



1 1/2 pounds 1-inch-thick halibut fillet without skin
1 pound small Yukon gold potatoes, about 8
2 teaspoons kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 teaspoons fennel pollen
Sea salt - Fleur de Sel, Malden or similar
Extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped chives
1/4 cup flat leaf parsley, leaves only
2 large 17 x 11-inch sheets parchment paper
Lemon wedges to serve

1. Preheat the oven to 425° F.
2. Trim the halibut of any bones or debris. Divide into 2 equal pieces. Reserve in the refrigerator until ready to assemble.
3. Wash the potatoes well and slice each into 4 to 5 slices, 1/4-inch thick. Reserve the slices in a small bowl filled with cold water.
4. Bring a small 4 quarts of water to a boil in a sauce pan. Add 4 teaspoons of kosher salt and return the pan to a boil. Add the potato slices, reduce the heat to a simmer and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes until the potatoes are firm but tender. Drain the potatoes and cool under cold running water.
5. Place one sheet of parchment on a large flat work surface. Drizzle the center of the parchment lightly with olive oil. Layer the potatoes, overlapping slightly in 4 rows of 4 to 5 slices per row. Drizzle the tops of the potatoes with olive oil and then sprinkle half the chives over the potatoes. Sprinkle evenly with 1 teaspoon of sea salt and a few grinds of pepper.
6. Place the fish squarely on top of the potatoes and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle the fish evenly with half of the fennel pollen and then 1 teaspoon of sea salt. Sprinkle half the parsley leaves over the top of the fish. Repeat with the second sheet of parchment and the remaining ingredients.
7. Fold the parchment up so that the edges match at the top over the fish. Start at one of the lower corners and roll the parchment edges over to seal. When you get to the opposite corner, press and flatten the rolled edges firmly.
8. Lift the packet and place it in a cast iron pan or sheet pan. Use 2 pans if both packets won't fit. Bake in the pre-heated oven for 15 to 20 minutes until the parchment is browned and you can hear the fish juices bubbling inside.
9. Remove the pan from the oven. Slit the paper and serve from the pan, dividing up the fish and the potatoes evenly. Serve with fresh lemon wedges on the side.



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LOS CARNEROS, 2007

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Printed on 100% recycled paper using soy based ink



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