

PINOT BLANC  
LOS CARNEROS  
2007



ROBERT SINSKEY VINEYARDS  
R S V  
NAPA, CALIFORNIA

# JUST GIMMIE SOME TRUTH!

## The nature of Pinot Blanc

I'm cranky. I feel like blasting John Lennon's anthem - *"I'm sick and tired of hearing things/ From uptight, shortsighted, narrow-minded hypocritics/ All I want is the truth/ Just gimme some truth."* We search for truth, but the chatter of modern life obscures it. Spin inundates society and we have little choice but to descend into a culture of disconnected cynics.

We long for some truth we can understand, something that came naturally to our predecessors but now requires effort to unearth. This is not a new observation. In the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, "The further we are from a state of nature, the more we lose our natural tastes." Here we are in our ultra-urban society as disconnected from a state of nature as we can get. We have lost our point of reference; we don't know what is real anymore.

Food and wine is particularly confusing for the modern mind. As a non-agricultural society separated from the rhythms of nature, we grapple with concepts that were once part of the daily agrarian experience. In times past, wine grapes grew as part of a rich regional culinary tradition. The food of the region informed and possibly drove the wine industry, creating natural pairings handed down through generations. Muscadet, from the region where the Loire meets the Atlantic, is a brash white that sprung up to accompany diets long on oysters and fish; the robust, garrigue-scented reds of the Southern Rhone are perfect with the rustic, bold flavors of local lamb with olives and herbs; the vibrant zippy reds of Tuscany shine after a hunt, made complete with a satchel of gathered porcini mushrooms and fresh pasta; and in Alsace, pure floral Pinot Blanc enhances the local pork in all its varied and glorious iterations.

We are confused, and rightfully so, because nowadays, wine can be manipulated in so many ways that regional character, or even varietal character, is ignored and often obliterated in the pursuit of high ratings. Since the New World does not have the same wine-

centric agrarian history as the Old World, we have not identified a relationship between our food and our wine. Rudderless, we rely on American ingenuity and muscle to overcome shortcomings with overwhelming technological prowess. We embrace technology, sometimes without discretion, to fix all things. This strategy works in capturing the attention of the wine media, but does the consumer a disservice in that it creates a monoculture of style: wines that are showy at the cost of food worthiness.

Pinot Blanc wants to be a pure wine. It has a natural tendency to be delicate, floral and crisp. Modern winemakers have seen its strength as a weakness; compared to Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc seems wimpy. So they pick it too ripe and leave a little residual sugar, barrel ferment it and then acidulate it. They poke and prod it into a parody of itself, masking its natural beauty and turning it into a self-conscious and awkward dinner companion.

The truth is, Pinot Blanc, handled with respect, is one of the truly great food wines. In Alsace, the vigneron drink it at lunch and dinner whereas they place the other varieties on a pedestal. Pinot Blanc has a natural affinity for starters, with enough acid to cut through cured meats, yet the viscosity and aromatics to work with delicately dressed salads. As you move into main courses, it works with fish, chicken and all things pork, including the famous choucroute garni. And oh, does it shine with cheese! I'll go on record and say it is the best cheese wine made at RSV.

Pinot Blanc is a window into the soul of the vigneron. It is a deceptively simple wine that can play the role of siren, tempting winemakers to play with it and manipulate it. Even the best manipulated Pinot Blanc can't overpower a Chardonnay, and why should it? Pinot Blanc is its own grape and wine is not a competition. In my opinion, a Pinot Blanc is only good if its purity shines forth. Just give me some truth!

(Rob Sinskey)



## WINEGROWING NOTES/TASTING NOTES

*Robert Sinskey  
Vineyards  
Pinot Blanc  
Los Carneros  
2007*

A dedication to purity makes itself apparent as soon as the glass top pops off a bottle of RSV's Pinot Blanc. The vigil begins in the vineyards. RSV employs organic and biodynamic techniques to maximize both quality and character of fruit, rejecting an alliance with chemical companies in favor of a partnership with nature. Nature rewards good farming with beautiful, expressive fruit that does not require remedial winemaking.

RSV's Three Amigos and Scintilla Sonoma Vineyards lie close to the cooling effects of the San Pablo Bay. Both vineyards offer fruit with refreshingly bright acidity, making for classic structure. The OSR vineyard, a couple miles inland in a slightly warmer location, yields complementary fruit with melon notes and a more viscous, rich, mouth-filling texture.

Pinot Blanc begs a delicate hand in the cellar. To minimize contact with bitter skins and stems, and emphasize delicate fruit flavors, RSV pressed whole clusters of grapes brought to the cellar in small lots as each block of vineyard reached the intersection of ripeness and structure. The juice then fermented in stainless steel at a relatively low temperature for a minimum of thirty days. No oak, no induced malolactic fermentation, no tweaking, just pure Pinot Blanc! (Eric Sothorn)



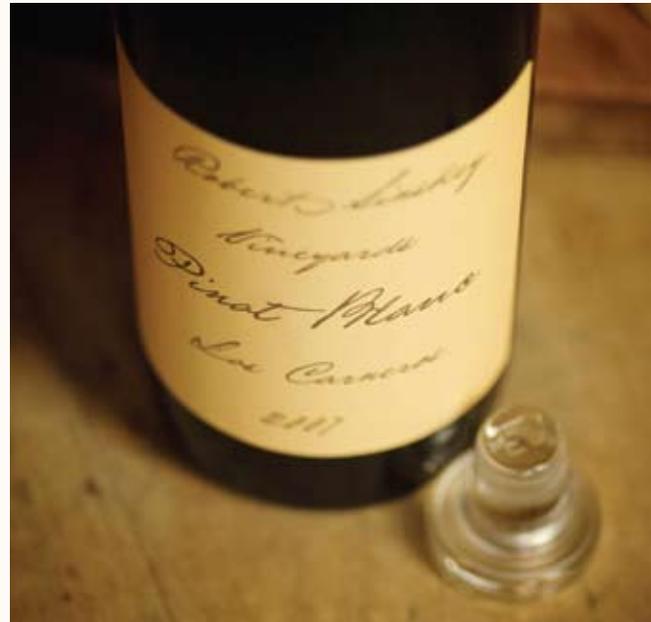


## WINEMAKERS TASTING NOTES:

Picture yourself in a boat on a river where citrus and melon eat marmalade pie... A small crop with intense flavor and nicely balanced acidity. This vintage had a particularly low PH of 3.27- contributing to its crisp character. This Pinot Blanc has a rich texture through the mid palate that gives the wine a little heft without being cloying. The wine exhibits an old world personality. This is one of my favorite vintages! (Jeff Virnig)

## RSV STAFF TASTING NOTES:

The 2007 vintage offered modest yields of exceptional quality, so this release is especially limited. Aromas of citrus blossom, magnolia and pear leap from the glass. The wine is zippy on the palate with flavors of fresh white nectarine, melon, citron pate-de-fruits and an intriguing almond character. The wine strikes a balance between rich and persistent mouth feel and a bright, refreshing crisp edge. You can start with it and you can party with it! (3/2008)



Certified Organic Vineyards, Biodynamically Farmed



## ON THE SPOT ENTERTAINING



Most of my get-togethers are impulsive and last minute whether it's lunch dinner or nibbles with wine. When confronted with unexpected fetes, I start with cheese, charcuterie, roasted nuts, more cheese, a piece of smoked fish, cured meats and some good bread. After many hours of conversation, we find ourselves sated and end up skipping the full meal. I love eating this way, sharing good stories, catching up on life and not having to separate myself from my guests while I tend the stove.

Pinot Blanc is an incredible "full-meal" wine to be enjoyed with hearty salads, grilled sausages, fish, traditional choucroute, roast chicken and pork, but true enjoyment comes when I am relaxed around a tray of perfectly aged cheeses, herb scented almonds and charcuterie thrown together from items I always keep on hand.

There is nothing like an array of fresh, simple and delicious appetizers to put your guests at ease. I like to create a little drama with a large wooden cutting board or a piece of salvaged marble or slate as a back drop for handcrafted cheeses, meats

and their accoutrements. I start with a few local cheeses I always have on hand. Among my cheese staples: Cowgirl Creamery Mt. Tam, Matos Family St. George, Redwood Hill Camellia, Humboldt Fog Goat Cheese and Parmesan from Italy. I grab the herb and olive oil roasted almonds from the winery and some organic olive mix from McEvoy Ranch. I love Fra'mani sausages from Paul Bertolli in all their variations: Salametto, Nostrano, Toscano and Soppressata. Wrap cured sausages in wax paper or parchment, store them in the refrigerator and they will last for a couple of months- as will the cheese. If I have a little advance notice I'll run down to the Fatted Calf at the Oxbow market for some of their wonderful charcuterie and house made pates.

At this point you're probably saying, "That's fine for Maria. She lives in Northern California and is surrounded by these delights." But, I say hogwash! I have provisioned at many different supermarkets and specialty stores during my travels to all corners of the US and I can always find variations of my favorite cheeses and sausages. The producer's names might be different, but their products are wonderful. Online shopping can also make it easier to acquire artisanal products, even if you happen to live 15 miles from nowhere.

So for your next stand-up meal, gather the meats and cheeses, throw on some sliced seasonal fruit, fig or quince jam and have a relaxing soiree. And, just in case you really need to make something yourself, I've attached my favorite marinated white bean with crostini recipe to complete the presentation.

Until the next wine...

Maria



## GIGANTE BEANS WITH SALSA VERDE AND CROSTINI

These giant white beans and pungent salsa verde really perk up your palate with flavor. They reside in harmony atop a crisp crostini scented with extra virgin olive oil. I cook my beans from scratch but you can substitute good quality canned in a pinch.

(Serves 4)

*2 cups cooked gigante beans or other large white bean*

*1 tablespoon minced shallot*

*1 teaspoon sherry vinegar*

*Sea salt*

*Freshly ground black pepper*

*2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil*

*12 1/2 inch thick slices of baguette, drizzled with olive oil and toasted for crostini*

*Salsa Verde, recipe follows*

1. Place the beans in a large bowl. Add the shallot and vinegar, season to taste with salt and pepper. Let the beans sit for 15 minutes then drizzle the olive oil over and toss.
2. Serve the beans on a platter or in a bowl. Drizzle the salsa verde over the top and serve the crostini and extra Salsa Verde on the side.

## SALSA VERDE

(Makes about 1 cup)

*1 cup packed Italian parsley leaves, washed and dried*

*1 medium garlic clove, peeled and trimmed*

*1 tablespoon capers*

*1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel*

*1/4 teaspoon salt*

*Freshly ground black pepper*

*1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil*

1. Place the parsley, garlic, capers and lemon zest in a food processor and chop finely, season with the salt and a few grinds of black pepper.
2. Slowly drizzle in the olive to form a loose paste. Refrigerate if made in advance, up to one day. Bring to room temperature before using. Store up to 1 week in the refrigerator.



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