

PINOT NOIR  
LOS CARNEROS  
NAPA VALLEY, 2005



ROBERT SINSKEY VINEYARDS  
R S V  
NAPA, CALIFORNIA

## IT'S ABOUT TIME

A lifetime is not enough to know perfection. Perfection is an ideal that comes from within, an allusive goal that keeps one moving forward, seeking, almost achieving but never quite realizing. It is the quest of the artisan. When the semblance of perfection is realized, he is done... there is no more.

Sometimes, the ideal of perfection in wine is muddled by fashion, whereas the leanings of style and culture refract the ideal. Historically, the place defined the style. The land drove the selection of variety and clone and determined farming and vinification practices that illuminated the ensuing wine. The very best wines were inimitable products of unique places with parallel food cultures developed in harmony with the wines. These days, with the help of modern technology, style is an end in itself that supplants and obscures place. Unfortunately, to the arbiters of vogue in wine, assessing and ranking is a simple question of brawn. Bigger is better. Varietal and regional typicity are not important, nor is what's for dinner.

Recently, the San Francisco Chronicle ran a troubling story entitled: "Pinot Noir Beefs Up." The article discussed the "new" trend for making the traditionally delicate wine resemble a muscular Syrah or Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines currently "winning" praise and achieving high scores, are overly ripe, jammy confections that sommeliers find challenging to pair with traditional Pinot Noir dishes – forget a delicate Pinot Noir with fish, the new amped up style of Pinot Noir pounds its fists for beef.

An even more disturbing aspect of the article was the connotation that young wine drinkers are ignorant of classically styled Pinot Noirs and have been conditioned to believe a great Pinot should be easy to read, sweet, ripe and overdone. *(continued on next page)*





For every generation, discovering what you like is not easy. Especially when it comes to wine. Youth, particularly American youth, has been weaned on sugar, salt and fat. It therefore makes sense that a young American wine drinker would respond to the viscous texture and sweet flavor of an overdone wine. They are easy to understand and relate to. When I was a novice wine drinker, I was amazed the first time I could confidently identify the characteristics of sweet oak. I was not yet discerning enough to know if it was American or French oak, but it was exhilarating to know that I could identify a component of wine. In those days, I had a simple formula- if the wood in the wine was obvious, I could recognize it, therefore the wine was good. As I tasted more wines, my tastes evolved to coincide with the foods I ate. In time I discovered that the very component in wine that I loved when tasting a wine without food, made the wine clumsy at the dinner table. It took me time to come to this conclusion, and slowly this concept was reflected in the wines that we make.

Winemaking is a slow process that is all about time. Time to learn the land and the farming methods for that land. Time to learn what selections or clones perform best on that land. Time to learn when to harvest the fruit. Time to learn how to make the wine. Time for wine to age in the cellar and bottle.

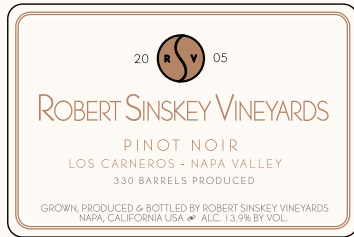
Chasing the market is a shortcut. If I were a better businessman, I might be tempted to cash in on the trend. A classic wine has as much to do with structure as flavor. The new style Pinots are all about in-your-face flavor to the detriment of structure, balance and ability to pair with cuisine. Think Hummer to Jaguar, Pamela Anderson to Kate Winslet, Kiss to the Beatles, Guess to Chanel, trends succeed in the short term, sometimes temporarily eclipsing a classic. A classic has staying power. In our march toward Pinot perfection, time is on our side.



## WINEGROWING NOTES:

Unseasonably warm weather in late February and early March of 2005 raised soil temperatures just enough to rouse the slumbering vines earlier than normal. Early bud break can be risky; however, if the weather cooperates through bloom, then the vine can gain a headstart on a longer growing season. Nailbiting ensued. It rained and got cold, but the weather didn't get nasty enough to hamper an ample fruit set. Relatively cool patterns prevailed through most of the growing season, prompting slow, even ripening. The fruit reached maturity at lower sugar levels over a longer time period as compared to the last few years, yielding wines of beautiful balance, structure and amazing flavor development.

## TASTING NOTES:



A gem-like ruby color emanates from the glass with distinctive clarity and brilliance. By the time the glass is lifted, the aroma meets you halfway with the declaration that it couldn't be anything but Pinot Noir and breeds suspicion of a young Burgundy, but as the glass draws close, the effusive aromatics hint of newer worlds. The flavors and aromatics of the wine lean toward the exotic, reminiscent of a newly opened jar of five spice, backed by flats of raspberries, cherries and tilled earth. A sip wraps these aromas in a taut, silky texture that slowly evolves as the evening lingers over great food and inspired conversation.

## PINOT NOIR AT THE TABLE:

A classically styled Pinot Noir such as this one begs for mushrooms, game birds, soft cheeses and woody herbs. The bright acidity and long tannins of this wine are the perfect foil for cheese soufflés, bacon kissed tarts and the delicate meat of a perfectly roasted bird, rabbit, or pork loin. The trailing earthiness in the finish complements just about any dish made with mushrooms or truffles. This Pinot Noir is a match made in heaven for all cooks, both neophyte and accomplished.

For recipes please see [www.robertsinskey.com](http://www.robertsinskey.com)

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