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09

ROBERT SINSEKEY VINEYARD

PINOT NOIR

LOS CARNEROS - NAPA VALLEY

276 BARRELS PRODUCED

BROWN, PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY ROBERT SINSEKEY
NAPA, CALIFORNIA USA ALC 14.5%

PINOT NOIR, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY ~ 2009



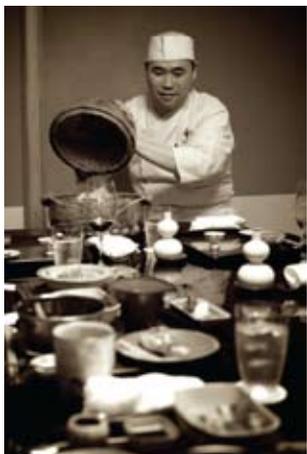


Like Father, like Scion

Bad and beautiful and strange!

— by Rob Sinskey —

Fat Man and Little Boy unleashed their fury on Nagasaki and Hiroshima just six short years before my father received the orders that would change his life. He spent the tail end of WWII in the Navy, but instead of battles at sea, he was assigned to Duke Medical School. And just when he thought he had dodged the bullet and could start his civvy career, his orders came down. The Navy wanted payback!



Save for a childhood summer trip to Europe, my father had spent little time outside this country. Now he was packing his bags for a cruise on a rusty attack cargo ship headed for Yokosuka to join the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. Their mission: treat the victims of the atomic bomb and study the effects of radiation on the human body.

Japan left an indelible impression. Not only did he bear witness to the horrors inflicted by and upon fellow humans, he also experienced the contradictory nature of humanity. He found both natural and created beauty in the devastated country and learned to appreciate its rich culture. He grew fond of the cheerful, tireless nature of his Japanese nurses, the precision of his fellow doctors and the generosity of its citizens. And then

the food... whether it was a conscious decision or just a welcome respite from the tedium of military food, he absorbed the adventurous cuisine of Japan.

Fast forward to Southern California in the early sixties. My father is now married with three children, I being the youngest. Some of my fondest early memories are of our routine Thursday night dinners in Japanese restaurants. I loved everything about them.

The humid air with its stimulating melange of conflicting aromas: the sweet smokiness of teriyaki and yakitori, the gassy, earthy, vinegary smell of daikon and pickles, the fry oil aroma of tempura, the pungent umami of sukiyaki and noodle dishes and the distinctive aromatics of fresh fish and sea urchin. It was an olfactory explosion of sea meets earth, repulsive and delicious at the same time.

My father taught us to be adventurous eaters, not by force of will, but through an exhibition of contagious enthusiasm. He loved good food with such passion that you could not help but want to be a participant. However, he had his rules. It had to be the absolutely freshest and the best quality ingredients you could find... even if you had to travel or find a way to get it yourself!

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Weekends were spent as hunter-gatherers, either in a boat, on the beach or in a field with a bird dog. If on the water, my father would disappear into the sea (in later years, I would join him) only to return with a smile on his face and a goody bag full of treats: clams, abalone, lobster and the occasional octopus or fish on a spear. Many of these were opened, cracked or sliced on the spot and tasted raw before becoming part of our next meal.

One morning, after a dawn surf casting session and a particularly satisfying breakfast of fresh Buttermouth Surfperch, my father proclaimed that the American diet would be changing and becoming healthier by embracing the cuisines of other cultures. With this change in diet would come a desire for lighter-bodied red wines. He further predicted that Pinot Noir would become the wine for the new American way of eating. He was right, but we had to wait another thirty years for his vision to be realized.

Without the stint in Japan, I doubt he would have made the leap to grow Pinot Noir in California. This idea may seem like a non sequitur, but it makes sense to me. Pinot Noir is kindred with Japanese food. This is not to say that Pinot Noir pairs perfectly with Japanese cuisine. To the contrary, it only works with but a few select preparations. It does however share the balancing contradictions that make Japanese food so beguiling. Good Pinot Noir can have the umami, or savory flavor profile that was first identified by Japanese chefs. Like uni (sea urchin), Pinot Noir is difficult and challenging, yet delicate and sublime. It is earth and fruit, sweet and tart, plush and grippy. As it ages it takes on a gaminess that is at first off-putting but then becomes seductive, some would say sexy. Pinot Noir is bad and beautiful and strange. It is perfect in its imperfection because together, the good and bad creates the beauty that defines character.



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Tasting Notes

—Eric Sothern—

The color filters light down to a beautiful translucent ruby, brilliant and pure. The aromas could not come from anything other than Pinot Noir, reminiscent of cherry, tea, pie spice and a forest in autumn. The cherries burst red, ripe and zingy on the palate, the tea persists, as does the earthiness, all joined by a touch of clove and vanilla. The flavors live on a silken sensual texture brought into balance by invigorating brightness. Food brings out the best in this wine, tempering its vibrancy, while deepening and focusing its cascade of flavors.

Winegrowing Notes

—Eric Sothern—

RSV's Pinot Noir vines enjoyed a relatively balanced and calm year in 2009 that resulted in beautiful fruit and good yields; a welcome circumstance after drought, frost pressure and poor fruit set made the previous two vintages low-yielding and challenging.

The October rain was no problem as RSV brought in all the Pinot Noir long before the storm. The grapes were perfectly ripened, with excellent flavor development at a very reasonable brix (sugar) level, making for flavorful wines with lower alcohol levels than prior vintages.

(2/2012) 276 barrels produced



PURE COMFORT, PURE FLAVOR

Asian noodles signal comfort. We like them so much that they have been a staple in our house for as long as I can remember. They have even invaded the kids' lunch boxes. Whether tucked, New World style, into a rich broth or tossed cold with a tangy Asian inspired vinaigrette, they always satisfy.

That is how I think of Pinot Noir, comforting and satisfying! It is a prime pairing candidate for soy, mushrooms and sesame. Pinot Noir has a complimentary juxtaposition of aromas and flavors, difficult to discern, that sing with these ingredients. Perhaps it is the mysterious umami or the delicate berry fruit and slight earthiness of the wine. I can't quite identify it, so I let it be and let the flavors carry the wine and the wine carry the flavors.

Until the next wine,

— Maria

SESAME SHITAKE SOBA

This cold soba noodle salad gets better as it sits. It makes a great lunch salad to go. Finely shredded carrots or Napa cabbage can also be added for more crunch.

Serves 4 to 6

1 package (9.5 ounces) soba noodles

8 ounces extra firm tofu, drained and patted dry

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons canola oil

1/4 teaspoon toasted sesame oil, divided

Kosher salt

6 ounces baby shitake mushrooms

1/2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

2 teaspoon mirin (sweetened Japanese rice wine)

1 teaspoon soy sauce

1 1/2 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

3 green onions, trimmed, green and white thinly sliced

1. Dice the tofu into 1/4" cubes.

2. Heat a medium non-stick sauté pan over medium high heat. When the pan is hot, add 1 tablespoon canola oil and 1/8 teaspoon of sesame oil. Quickly add the tofu and cook until golden on one side. Toss and continue to brown until all sides are golden.

3. Add 1/4 teaspoon ginger and season with a little salt. Turn the tofu out into a bowl and cool.

4. Wipe out the pan used to sauté the tofu and place over medium high heat. Add 2 teaspoons of canola oil and 1/8 teaspoon sesame oil to the hot pan, then the mushrooms. Sauté until juices are almost dry and the mushrooms are golden.

5. Add 1/4 teaspoon minced ginger, mirin, soy sauce and sesame seeds. Remove from heat and add the mushrooms to the bowl with the tofu. Cool all to room temperature and toss with the sliced green onions. Mixture may also be refrigerated to cool.

6. Fill a large bowl with cold water and ice. Cook the soba for 4 minutes, drain in a colander over the sink then add the noodles to the prepared ice bath. When the noodles are chilled, return to the colander and allow to drain well.

7. In a large serving bowl toss together the cold soba and 1/2 of the sesame vinaigrette. Add the tofu-shitake mixture and toss again. Add more vinaigrette to taste. Serve the noodles at room temperature or chill in the refrigerator.

SESAME VINAIGRETTE

Yield: About 1/2 cup

1/4 cup seasoned rice wine vinegar

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1/2 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

In a medium bowl, whisk all ingredients together. Reserve. May be prepared 2-3 days in advance and stored at room temperature.



THIS COLD SOBA NOODLE SALAD GETS BETTER AS IT SITS

SMOKED DUCK UDON

The smoked duck adds a nice smoky element to the soup. If smoked duck breast is unavailable, substitute smoked chicken or unsmoked cooked duck or chicken breast. Serves 4

4 cups rich duck stock or brown chicken stock

2 teaspoons soy sauce

1/2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

Kosher salt

1 package (9.5 ounce) udon noodles

2 baby bok choy, ends trimmed, thinly sliced across leaves & stems

1 six ounce smoked duck breast, thinly sliced

2 green onions, ends trimmed, white and green thinly sliced

1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds

1. In a medium sauce pan, bring the stock to a simmer. Add the soy sauce and minced ginger; season to taste with salt. Keep the broth hot while you cook the udon noodles.

2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Lightly salt the water. Add the udon and cook for 4 minutes, until just tender, drain. Divide amongst 4 large bowls.

3. Place the sliced Bok Choy on top of the hot noodles and top with sliced duck breast.

4. Pour the piping hot broth over the top and garnish each bowl with a sprinkle of green onion and sesame seeds. Serve immediately.





PINOT NOIR, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY ~ 2009

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