

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

CABERNET SAUVIGNON, SLD ESTATE STAGS LEAP DISTRICT, NAPA VALLEY, 2009



- Organic - CCOF Certified Vineyards
- Grown in RSV's SLD Estate Vineyard in the Stags Leap District of Napa Valley
- Cave aged 20 months in 35% new French oak barrels
- "Half-case" packaging, the equivalent of 491 cases produced in 6x750ml packs
- Bottled in 750ml, 1.5L, 3L & 6L

WINE GROWING NOTES - by Jeff Virnig

Lately, if you don't like the weather in California, just wait a few days....

January through February of 2009 was quite dry with just 30% of normal rain fall. An early bud break was averted when the March Miracle took it up to 80% of normal precipitation. Another half inch of rain came in April, delaying bud break 10 days later than average.

RSV's SLD (Stags Leap District) Estate Vineyard is an amphitheater-like 4.5 acre property that is steeply sloped with lean, volcanic soils. The Cabernet Sauvignon vines face south-west and receive an abundance of heat and light. The early-ripening Merlot is toward the bottom of the property where it is somewhat protected from the sun for part of the day, allowing it to ripen later. Permanent cover crops keep the terraced soils in place and diffuse the reflected heat that bare soil would otherwise radiate. Water is limited in this region, so for all intents and purposes, the vineyard is dry farmed and usually produces less than 2 tons per acre.

The Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were harvested on September 23... a date selected as the optimum intersection of ripeness, flavor, balance, and structure. This date seems

early compared to modern Napa winemaking, but it has several advantages, the grapes have good natural acidity, they are not raisined, and the lower sugar equates to balanced, moderate alcohol levels. In addition, the grapes were harvested well before the damaging October rains. The RSV winemaking tradition of respect for the fruit is in full evidence. The use of oak is restrained and serves to frame and showcase the fruit without dominating it, allowing for the elegant terroir of the Stags Leap District to shine. The 2009 vintage will be one with those special wines that will continually improve and impress with time.

WINE TASTING NOTES

Elegant and refined, this wine has a quiet power that epitomizes the hallmarks of the Stags Leap District. Aromas and flavors of macerated black cherries, currants, and fresh berries backed by a cool dried herbal note and rich sweet earth. Quintessentially ripe with a nice mid-weight, the wine is full without being cloying. Elegant French oak frames the wine nicely with a touch of vanilla spice and a hint of toast. The wood marries well with the fruit and only reinforces the wine's elegant structure. This is a wine for the ages.

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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Two Grapes

I think all my smart devices are making me dumb. These days, when I sit down to write, I get an irresistible urge to check Instagram for a “like” fix... It’s as though I’ve become a lab rat, choosing cocaine over food, but in this case it’s the instant gratification of a “like” response over the quiet satisfaction of the written word. Sometimes we’re better off with fewer choices... a simplified set of parameters that allow repetition and refinement. The modern world offers up so many options, it’s easy to be intrigued by the next shiny object, distracting us from the inherent beauty of what is and leaving us yearning for what could be.

RSV has a small piece of land behind the winery where, for the past twenty-five years, we’ve been growing Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. We farm it organically with biodynamic principles. All input choices are natural and revolve around cover crops, compost, or what’s left behind by the sheep. We have no reservoir,

so the vineyard gets very little water. Here, there is no instant gratification, but a long term investment: we observe how each year imprints itself on the fruit as well as the finished wine and, if necessary, make adjustments for the current season and a mental note for next year’s improvements. On harvest day, the grapes will travel from the hill to the cellar where they are transformed from fruit to wine. Decisions are made based on observation, with a focus on expressing what is there... not someone else’s ideal of what a Napa wine should be, but what’s best for this piece of land and the unique weather of the vintage.

One vineyard, two grapes, and the same winemaker for twenty five years - these three things allow a rare degree of focus and a consistency to pursue a pure, distinct expression of Cabernet Sauvignon - a refined wine of simple elegance that is unlike any other “New World” wine. It’s a wine that deserves some attention.

