

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

# PINOT GRIS LATE

LOS CARNEROS, 2006



- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Demeter Certified Biodynamic Vineyards
- Produced in .375's only
- Delicate whole cluster pressed fruit
- No barrels for a bright, pure and true wine
- 530 Cases of half-bottles produced
- Not too sweet... just right for cheese, spicy foods and light desserts

## WINEGROWING NOTES:

A Carneros VdT? A growing number of young winegrowers herald Pinot Gris as the classic variety of Alsace. Pinot Gris grabs sugar more easily than Riesling, retains nearly as much acidity, and carries a golden richness and enticing spicy character that intensifies with age. Furthering its case, Pinot Gris, because of its brisk edge and relatively reserved aromatic demeanor, serves as a phenomenal food wine. Amongst the best expressions of Pinot Gris are those harvested late. In Alsace, it is referred to as Vendange Tardive (VdT). The Vendange Tardive category denotes wines made from grapes left to hang long on the vine. The grapes must reach a minimum natural potential alcohol by law, and in principle should display the complexities gained from extended hang time.

After taking most of the Pinot Gris from RSV's Scintilla Vineyard on the Sonoma side of Carneros, the harvest crew left a few select rows to hang for a Carneros rendition of VdT. They came back for the

fruit on October 12, 2006. It came in at 27.5° Brix, well above the minimum requirement for VdT in Alsace. After a gentle whole-cluster press and a three day juice rack at low temperature to settle solids, the must fermented in stainless tank for 24 days to 5.2° Brix.

## TASTING NOTES:

You couldn't call RSV's Pinot Gris Late a dry wine, but it's not all that sweet either. The aroma reveals spiced white peach and nectarine with traces of citrus zest and white flower. A sip feels ripe, gold and luscious, but bright, like very ripe stone fruit. After a few years in the bottle, the spicy exotic notes that lurk just behind the fruit, will come forward. Sure, it's great with dessert, but nothing too sweet, and to limit this wine to non-savory applications would be a shame. Pâté comes immediately to mind, as do many cheeses. 12/08 (530 cases - 375ml) produced. **Recommended Recipe:** Try Maria's Almond Pistachio Biscotti or Caramel Roasted Pears. Full recipes at [robertsinskey.com](http://robertsinskey.com).

## FINE WINES FROM ORGANIC VINES

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# NOSTALGIC SUGAR TRIP!

A little bit about a little bottle of Pinot Gris Late...

I can still feel the headache, even though it occurred almost thirty-five years ago. My buddies and I were riding our Stingrays through our small home town of Cambria when one of them came up with a bright idea involving a key member of our posse that had just landed a boxboy position at Soto's market. His ingenious plan was to have Joe acquire a few bottles of wine from Soto's for a little "picnic" in the hills.

Now I don't want to incriminate anyone or slander any brands, so I won't go into detail about how he "acquired" the wine. The selection? Let me just say that instead of Chateau or Clos, they had cute names like Annie, Boone's and Strawberry.

Into our backpacks the bottles went, along with bags of chips, cheese puffs and beef jerky; an ideal food and wine pairing for fifteen year old boys.

Cambria in those days was a sleepy little tourist village on the coast. A long time ago, a real estate developer coined the name "Cambria Pines by the Sea" and the quaint label stuck. It was a beautiful place to grow up. The rolling hills (emerald green in winter, golden in summer) were capped by crooked Monterey pines. The cold water of the Pacific crashed onto beaches of moonstone and jade. It was an outdoor lover's paradise with fishing, surfing, hiking, hunting, rock collecting and biking. On this day none of that mattered though, as we were on a mission to experience our first drunk.

Up into the hills and down a dirt road we peddled until we found the perfect spot for our picnic. We dropped our bikes into the tall dry grass, excitedly dumped our stash onto the ground and enthusiastically embarked on our first food and wine pairing.

With typical boy-like bravado, we dared each other to take large swigs from the bottles, chasing them with fistfuls of orange powder covered cheese puffs and tortilla chips. The wines were sticky sweet, resembling fruit punch, but with a chemical aftertaste. It was challenging drinking, but the sugar helped the medicine go down. At first we were having fun, telling dirty jokes, laughing, enjoying the numbing effect of the alcohol. That lasted for about



an hour or two before a hush came over the group. "Mully" was the first to go. He looked up at me, his face a little green and twisted. "I don't feel very well" he muttered. It was a chain reaction after that. We each went down one at a time, and spent the rest of the afternoon sleeping it off under the towering pine trees.

The sun was setting as we awoke. My head was pounding and my mouth was dry. My friends and I gathered our possessions and silently peddled off in different directions toward home.

It's a story we could all tell... how our first experience with cheap, sweet wine stamped an indelible negative imprint on our psyche. When someone asks, "Do you like sweet wine?", it elicits a Pavlovian response of nausea and headache. The reality is that we order dry but drink sweet. Many wines are sweet and we don't even know it. Some supposedly dry Chardonnays and Cabernets have a good dollop of sugar that makes them feel fleshy and full. Done well, sugar can help balance the harsher notes of acid and tannin. Done poorly, they make a wine seem like hard soda pop.

I'm not a big fan of excessively sweet wine. Many lack the balancing acidity that provides a refreshing break from the sugar. I like my sweet wines to resemble tree or vine ripened fruit. Like a perfectly ripened peach or nectarine, sweet and refreshing at the same time.

-Rob Sinskey

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