

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS



Abraxas

VIN DE TERROIR, SCINTILLA SONOMA VINEYARD, 2013



- Organic - CCOF Certified Vineyards
- Grown in RSV's Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard
- Delicate whole-cluster pressed fruit
- Fermented dry
- No barrels for a bright, pure and true wine
- Elegant glass stoppered 750ml bottles
- Cork finished magnums

WINE TASTING NOTES

Abraxas is a reaction against homogeneity and a salute to distinctiveness. Born of the idea that three of the four noble grapes of Alsace (Riesling, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer) with a bit of classic Pinot Blanc, planted in RSV's organic Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard, would respond distinctly to the unique weather patterns of each year. The four varieties could then be blended in ratios determined by each variety's individual response to the vintage, making the wine whole while avoiding the manipulations often found in a more industrialized cellar. Abraxas does not aspire to be anything but true to vintage.

Pop the glass top (or the cork on the magnums) to be greeted with fresh pippin and pear with subtle almond and lychee aromas. The structure, texture and style is reminiscent of the Old World with a bright, tight-knit mineral quality. The wine has nice weight in the mid-palate with flavors that mimic the aroma with the addition of crisp peach, lime and a hint of melon rind. The flavors and textures magically come together for a satisfyingly long finish. Delicious!

WINE GROWING NOTES

This year's crop of Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer, from RSV's organically farmed Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard, was beautiful and bountiful. The 2013 crush came early, starting in mid-August with the Gewürztraminer and ending at the beginning of October with the Riesling. It was a picture-perfect harvest, the grapes queuing up to be picked in orderly fashion. Done in six weeks with Sundays off. It was all so shockingly civilized.

The night picked grapes arrived cold and fresh at the cellar door every morning where each variety and vineyard block was delicately whole-cluster pressed and went through a long, cool fermentation in stainless fermenters to preserve the vibrant fresh fruit and citrus character.

The individual wines were then blended by taste to reflect the unique character of the vintage.

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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Never Sell Out!

Sometimes I feel as though RSV is like an indie-rock band. We want you to love our music, but we're never gonna sell-out by making a deal with the devil. It's so tempting to go to the dark side - analyze market trends, hire a famous consultant with a high-score formula resumé, make Chardonnay, chase the money - but that might break up the band. We (Jeff, Debby, Maria, myself and the rest of the RSV crew) need to feel our efforts stand for something.

Until recently, I had this feeling that I should apologize for making wine in Napa. Napa wines, once classically styled, had turned into a gentlemen's club of rich, ripe wines that paired best with cigars - the complete antithesis of everything RSV is about. I feared guilt by association. There were very few classicists left as most departed from the restrained Napa style of the 70's and embraced the excesses of the 80's and 90's. It seemed everyone was ignoring terroir as they grasped for the high score gold ring. It didn't matter if the variety was Cab, Zin, Chard, or Sauv Blanc, most (and I emphasize "most" because there were a few admirable holdouts in each category) were aiming for an overblown style that just didn't make sense, particularly at the dinner table. Winemaker Jeff Virnig describes these wines as, "So good you can't finish the glass!" They were interesting on the first taste in their excess, but rarely were you compelled to come back for more. We wanted to make wines that would not only make you want to finish the glass, but the bottle - and leave you wanting more! We wanted to make pure, living wines with a distinct character and a vibrancy that allowed them to work with the food on your table.

Similar to that little band that came out of nowhere with a sound all their own, no one was looking for a wine like Abraxas, that is until it touched their lips. There were no market trends for this type of wine from California. It had to be a labor of love and a leap of faith for us to pursue this wine. But we were convinced that once people tried it, it would become the wine they never knew they needed.

**ABRAXAS - THE MEANING**

Besides being the name of Carlos Santana's classic album of the seventies, Abraxas has many mystical and philosophical meanings. A few thousand years before the invention of the electric guitar, the Gnostic Basilideans believed in the all powerful Abraxas, the god of the 365 heavens. Abraxas was the embodiment of all things good and evil and the overseer of the year. However, the individual letters of Abraxas were also thought to symbolize the seven classic planets Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. If you apply isopsephy to the Greek lettering of ΑΒΡΑΞΑΞ and add up the number values of the letters (Α=1, Β=2, Ρ=100, Α=1, Ξ=200, Α=1, Ξ=60) the sum is 365. And then there is Carl Jung... who wrote about Abraxas in the Seven Sermons to the Dead where he argues that by chasing an ideal we ignore our true nature which is distinctiveness and only by accepting the good with the bad can we define our character. "It is the delight of the earth and the cruelty of the heavens ... It is the operation of distinctiveness."