

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

CABERNET FRANC, VANDAL VINEYARD

LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY, 2013



- From RSV's Northern Carneros "Vandal Vineyard" near the foothills of Mt. Veeder
- CCOF Certified Organic vineyards
- Cool maritime growing region influenced by the San Pablo Bay
- Heat summation comparable to St. Emilion
- Cave aged 18 months in French oak
- 30% new barrels for subtlety
- 38 barrels produced
- TA: 6.2 g/l pH: 3.62 Alc: 13.9%

Winegrowing Notes

Year two of the drought continued to apply stress to the vines but ideal weather patterns contributed to a healthy crop. The cool vintage pushed the Cabernet Franc harvest out to late September, allowing for an unhurried season. RSV's CCOF certified organic Vandal Vineyard has five blocks of Cabernet Franc on diverse terrain with slightly different aspects. This diversity, combined with the cool weather, allowed each block to be picked at optimal ripeness.

The wine was allowed to ferment on its native yeast before being put to bed in small French oak casks for a two year rest, except for being shaken awake at the halfway point by the Napa Earthquake, in RSV's caves.

Tasting Notes

Consistently a fascinating wine, RSV's Cabernet Franc from the 2013 vintage is a classic. The long, cool growing season allowed the grapes to develop flavor at lower sugars for an incredibly balanced wine.

Aromas and flavors of mulberry and boysenberry are backed by hints of cacao, green olive, bramble and lavender, with just a hint of gaminess - think fine leather. The wine has an ideal structure to pair well with a broad range of cuisines and will age better than most of us.

Depth of Flavor - by Maria Helm Sinskey

The sweet scent of fennel seed reminds me of my great-grandmother's coarsely ground pork sausages which she would simmer in tomato sauce for hours until the sweet anise flavor of fennel seeds seeped into the sauce to give it an intense depth of flavor. This memory forever links in my mind fennel with pork. I use it often, roughly chopped and thrown into tomato sauce or ground and added to meatballs of all kinds. I perfume breadcrumbs with it and then use them to crust fish and chicken. The key is to use just enough fennel to scent, but not overwhelm, the dish you are making. When used with restraint, it is a wonderful partner to RSV's Cabernet Franc. The notes of dried herb in this beautifully balanced wine provides a savoriness that plays off the sweetness of the fennel. The fennel also dances with the mulberry and cassis flavors and aromas of the wine. The fat and succulence of a pork shoulder is a perfect foil for the Franc's ripe, but well-managed, tannins and bright acidity. The Cabernet Franc possesses a depth of flavor that makes it a vivid partner for braised and roasted meats, rich pasta sauces and tangy glazes. This is the power of the Franc! Visit www.robertsinskey.com/kitchen for the **Fennel Braised Pork Shoulder** recipe and other tempting originals by Maria Helm Sinskey.

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

6320 Silverado Trail | Napa, CA 94558 | 707.944.9090 | RobertSinskey.com

restaurantretail@robertsinskey.com | distributorsales@robertsinskey.com | consumer@robertsinskey.com

Finding fault in Carneros!

I was weightless for a moment before slamming into the mattress. It wasn't a sleep twitch; rather, the earth convulsed in the wee hours of the morning. I tried to get up but the bed fell away like a roller coaster cresting a hill. Screens popped from window frames, hitting my head as I screamed at least three octaves higher than normal: "EARTHQUAKE - BIG ONE!"

I tried to protect Maria from falling debris and feared for my kids across the hall - my oldest had broken her foot the day before and the younger one had a friend sleeping over - but I was helpless in what seemed like zero gravity. Out on the street, electrical transformers exploded in big, bright flashes, adding a war-like ambiance to the night and giving me notice that we would not have power when I was finally able to climb out of bed.

It was 3:20 am, August 24, 2014. I had been through many earthquakes before but I had never been this close to the epicenter and resultant violent shaking. I should have been prepared for this one, but as the years passed without a rumble, I was lulled into a false sense of security, leaving my shoes, pants and flashlight in the bathroom instead of next to the bed as "they" instruct you to do. Fortunately, I had my ever-present iPhone on the night stand to help me navigate the debris strewn from the cabinets and the shards of glass from that souvenir bottle of wine that we should have tossed years ago.

After checking on the kids and ensuring their safety - one had actually slept through the drama - we went downstairs to assess the damage. Every drawer and cabinet door was open, their contents broken in piles on the floor, including Maria's collection of antique plates, pitchers and platters. The pantry looked like it had been looted; the wine refrigerators had pulled free of their moorings, the smashed bottles forming puddles of lost pleasure. I suddenly realized that my dogs slept in the back of the pantry. I assumed the worst as I could not get back to, nor even see, their beds under the debris. It was then that one walked up behind me, covered in what I thought was blood but turned out to be wine. The other covered in the opposite corner of the house, also covered in wine. They were both able to crawl under the refrigerators and through the broken bottles to escape entombment.

Meanwhile, as we were digging out, Jeff Virnig went to check on the winery. I figured that if my home had sustained this much damage, the winery would be a mess. When he walked in, he found one magnum of Pinot Blanc broken on the floor of the tasting room. Then, as he walked back into the cave, he found that five barrels of Bordeaux varieties had broken free and rolled off their stacks — with only one losing its bung. I believe we lost an angel's share of about five gallons of wine. The 2013 vintage had escaped catastrophe while the 2014 vintage was just beginning.

We learned that the epicenter was just a mile south of The Three Amigos Vineyard. The little known and newly awakened South Napa Fault runs north from the epicenter through our OSR Vineyard, across the street from my house on the Capa Vineyard and then right through the middle of the Vandal Vineyard. We found foot wide surface ruptures, deep cracks in the earth that widened with every aftershock, in blocks of the OSR and Vandal Vineyards.

The presence of that fault helped me understand the forces that created the geography of the region and the formations that define the unique hilly landscape of the upper Carneros compared to the relatively flat, lower Carneros. The earthquake was nature's way of getting our attention and instilling us with renewed appreciation and respect.

Though we suffered damage to personal property, buildings, plumbing and water supplies, no one from the RSV family was injured and that in itself was cause for celebration... and we had a party to throw! That day was my daughter's going away celebration and we weren't about to let a little earthquake get in the way. Guests were to arrive at noon, so we shoveled broken glass and tried to salvage dishes from the pile on the floor. We mopped and I ran to the heavily damaged hardware store to buy the last generator. When I got home I fired up the Big Green Egg and proceeded to welcome guests with a room temperature bottle of wine. Maria did her best to empty the fridge of all perishables that could be served. Understandably, our local friends, some of whom had suffered much more damage than we had, were too busy cleaning up their own messes, but our San Francisco friends were troopers. They were not only determined to see our daughter off but to provide solidarity and moral support. That day was a day to remember as we celebrated life and the joy of being together with a perfectly barbecued pork shoulder paired with a beautifully shaken and aged Cabernet Franc, complete with a wine-stained label. That afternoon spent with friends and family was absolutely the most delicious healing therapy one could have served up.

