

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

THREE AMIGOS VINEYARD, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY, 2013
A PERFECT CIRCLE PINOT NOIR



- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- RSV owns and farms all vineyards
- No purchased fruit, RSV planted every vine
- 100% Pinot Noir
- From the cool Three Amigos Vineyard - a stone's throw from the Napa Marina
- Heirloom selections and French clones
- Barrel aged 12 months
- 100% French oak barrels, 30% new

Winegrowing Notes - by Jeff Virnig

The complex nature of this wine makes sense. Though it is from three contiguous vineyards (The Three Amigos) there are ten individually fermented lots of wine, each harvested separately at quintessential ripeness. Each lot is defined by what makes it unique: clone or selection, soil or block and its aspect to the sun. The small French oak barrels used for aging the wine frame the flavors without dominating... like a fine Samurai sword where pommel, hilt, and steel are as one. The wood compliments, and is part of, the wine. Then, after aging, each lot is analyzed for its individual characteristics and blended with complimentary lots to make the whole. A beautiful wine that grows on you and continues to get better as you enjoy.

Tasting Notes - by Jeff Virnig

Is there any other wine variety that evokes such emotion as Pinot Noir? Done well, it is the most interesting, thought provoking, and emotive wine variety there is. As winemaker, working with this vineyard and variety for almost three decades, my expectations differ from manufacturers and marketers whose experience is limited to the "power over restraint" New World style of Pinot Noir. Subtlety, persistence, grace and elegance are descriptors I look forward to when tasting this sophisticated beverage. I've written these words over a one hour time span as I continue to come back to the glass — swirling, sniffing, tasting. The wine is ever changing, improving, amazing. Like a Japanese Haiku, flavors, aromas and senses become juxtaposed and intermingled.

The Three Amigos Pinot Noir in Haiku:

**Scent of red berries
River rock and forest floor
Emotion fills me**

What more needs to be said? Initially, the wine feels like a Bonne Mares, tight and restrained. With time in the glass, it busts loose with red berries, graphite, and stone.

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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Three Decades in Wine!

It's been thirty years since we made that first wine in rented space at a winery near St. Helena. Most of the grapes from that premiere vintage came from RSV's Three Amigos Vineyard with a little purchased fruit from our Carneros neighbors. Man, was I wide eyed and naïve that first crush in 1986!

Wine is not an athletic event - Rob

I entered the wine world to assist my father, learn the ropes and hire staff for the as yet unbuilt winery. Though I was familiar with drinking wine, I had no formal education and I knew nothing about making and selling it. The only solution to my naïveté was to work with an established winemaker. Though invaluable working side-by-side with a veteran of the industry, I also had no choice but to believe what the master wanted me to believe — even though some of his concepts didn't make sense to me at the time. But I knew what I didn't know and had to trust in his practical wisdom.

Acid (in wine) is your enemy in a blind tasting but your friend at the dinner table. - Jeff

Since our first vintage was delicate and translucent, that consulting winemaker did what other "professionals" of the era did: he fixed it by blending a little Petite Sirah to give that feminine Pinot Noir "cajones." He made sure that brilliant ruby Pinot Noir would present with a more masculine, opaque purple hue. Now, some would say he was correct in his decision because the wine was well received by the media and it sold quickly — but to me, something felt impure and manipulated. It didn't seem right because I had enjoyed red Burgundies before and, though some were dense in color, many of the more enjoyable ones were pretty and delicate, with color ranging from light garnet to deep ruby red. That was their unique charm. Most of my favorites were see-through with only the outliers so dark that light could not pass through them. (We all suspected those dark ones were blended with Rhone varieties to appeal to the American Wine media.) So I questioned: why does the color of Pinot Noir matter? Now, I understand that if a wine is oxidized and brown, something is amiss, but who said good Pinot Noir needed to be dark purple? Isn't color just a function of vintage and winemaking technique? Don't the normal vintage color variations further the idea of distinctiveness and character?

One can only make the best wine from the highest quality fruit. - Debby

I learned a few things from this first vintage. Though the experts might know how to make a marketable wine, it doesn't always mean they know what makes a great wine. I also developed a healthy cynicism for the wine media with the realization that they were making snap judgements based on pre-conceived notions of what they thought a wine should be... easy handles like color, tannin and alcohol, became indicators of "quality" that could be judged quickly instead of taking the time to perceive the unique qualities a more delicate wine could offer, like cuisine compatibility and age worthiness.

Don't bend nature to your needs, you will lose. - Maria

They say as you grow older you gain wisdom, but maybe you just become more stubborn as you get set in your ways. Regardless, we seem to care less what others think. We've learned a few things over the past three decades. So, scattered throughout this piece are nuggets of wisdom from Winemaker Jeff Virnig (who has been with RSV for all but the first vintage), Debby Zygielbaum, Maria Helm Sinskey and yours truly.

Farm the soil and the vines will take care of themselves. - Debby

Classicist - by Maria Helm Sinskey

Pinot Noir and duck are a delicious and historic match at the table. The beauty of Pinot Noir is that it can handle a bit of sweetness in a dish. The apple balsamic provides sweetness and tanginess to play off the bright acidity of the Three Amigos Pinot Noir. The Three Amigos is always packed with cranberry notes, complemented by a floral perfume and earthy base note, perfect for a dish that includes mushrooms along with the meaty richness of pure duck goodness. **Visit www.robertsinskey.com/kitchen for the *Roasted Duck Breast with Chanterelles, Apple Balsamic and Pickled Mustard Seed* recipe and other tempting originals by Maria Helm Sinskey.**