

SLD

CABERNET SAUVIGNON, SLD ESTATE
STAGS LEAP DISTRICT, NAPA VALLEY 2013
Grown, Produced, and Bottled by Robert Sinskey Vineyards



- A “Left Bank” of Napa wine
- Grown in RSV’s SLD Estate Vineyard in the Stags Leap District of Napa Valley
- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Cave aged 2 years in 35% new French oak barrels
- Bottle aged an additional 2+ years in the RSV cellar before release
- Bottled in 750ml, 1.5L, 3L, and 6L

Winegrowing Notes

Stunning vintages make stunning wines. The 2013 vintage was another drought year, but the growing season was close to perfection. The steeply terraced SLD Estate Vineyard produces very little fruit of extremely high quality that takes little to craft into a memorable wine. Harvested early in the morning, the grapes only have to travel a few yards to the cellar where they are destemmed and fermented on native yeast before being put down to barrel in the RSV caves for a little shy of a two year rest. They then spend about another three years in bottle before release. This rare creature is one of RSV’s most coveted wines for its ability to be enjoyable young yet have an uncanny ability to age with grace.

Tasting Notes

Fruit-forward aromas of cassis, blueberry and blackberry form the first impression, but first impressions don’t tell the whole story! Any great young wine needs time to open and evolve in glass, bottle or decanter. Earthy tones expand as the wine swirls in a glass to underpin the primary fruit notes with forest floor, olive, bay leaf and thyme. A sip reveals the brooding character of hillside Cabernet Sauvignon balanced by a lively suppleness bestowed by Napa Valley sunshine with fresh, ripe black plum, currant and black cherry that evolve into mocha, cigar box and rosemary with a sleek graphite backbone. This wine loves lean, meaty cuts like skirt steak and tri-tip, or game like lamb and venison, but if there were ever a Cab that could work with veggies, this is it.

FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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but he's not forgotten!

This is the story of Cabernet Sauvignon. Though we came to Napa to grow Pinot Noir in the cool southern reaches of the valley, Cabernet was (and still is) king in the warmer up-valley regions, especially the Stags Leap District.

I was a young man, just a few years out of college, when I first set eyes on the steep amphitheater-like triangle of land. My father had plans to build our winery at the base of the hill with vines planted on ascending terraces to overlook us like silent sentries. Little did we know at the time how admirably they would perform their duties.

We've nurtured this vineyard for thirty years, over half my life. When Jeff Virnig became winemaker in 1991, we converted the vineyard to organics and planted cover crops. We repaired slumping terraces. The vines struggled but produced excellent fruit as the roots reached deep to find water. This vineyard survived earthquakes, droughts, bugs, floods and played witness to climate change. It saw the Napa Valley evolve from a sleepy agrarian community to a thriving, world class wine growing region and culinary mecca all the while producing small amounts of delicious fruit for elegant, age-worthy wines.

The 2017 vintage was harvested just two weeks before the fires ravaged Napa and Sonoma Valleys. The flames raged in the hills, fueled by an excess of undergrowth from record rain the winter before and dried by the warmest summer in memory. The warm Diablo winds howled and pushed the destruction from Atlas Peak to the Stags Leap District in a matter of hours. The old house in the hills behind the winery didn't stand a chance. As the flames found their way into the vineyard, it slowed but gained purchase in the permanent cover crop. The relentless wind pushed the flames up to the winery walls but, since there is less fuel in the cover crops compared to the hills, the fire did not burn as hot, allowing fire fighters to make a stand and protect the winery. The wind stoked and sent the flames up through the vineyard and into the hills. Vines are normally resistant to fire, but this one was just too hot and most of the sentries were sacrificed to the god of fire, short-sightedness and our failure to act on climate change.

The vineyard may be a total loss. We won't know for sure until spring bud-break reveals if any vines can be saved. It would be nice to maintain continuity and be able to taste history. Regardless of how many vines we save, we will not produce a significant amount of wine from this vineyard for some time. If we replant next year in 2018, we will get our first significant harvest in 2021 or 2022, then we will have to wait another five years for cave and bottle age. By then, around 2027, I will be a satisfied old man.

DIP IT GOOD by Maria Helm Sinskey

I love a good French dip sandwich but I always find myself clutching the bread so tightly to prevent the sliced beef from falling into the bowl of jus, that my hand starts to ache after a few dips. I usually say heck with the dip and pour the broth over the sandwich to bath the meat in the flavorful juices and allow time for the bread underneath to soak up all the juicy goodness. It makes for a less stressful dining experience.

Less stress and more time to sit back and reflect on the beauty of the SLD Estate Cabernet Sauvignon. A beauty of a cabernet, it captures the intensity of the vintage. Small berries and thick skins make it a wine for the ages but there is so much charm to be had in its youth. Beautiful aromas of cassis and plum, backed by dried herb and bramble laid over a sleek frame of acid and spice captivate the senses. My mouth waters at the thought. It's the perfect beverage to quaff with this delicious sandwich made even more so by the flood of umami flowing from the nicely sautéed mushrooms!

Take a deep breath, then a bite and a sip to find out what it's all about.

Visit www.robertsinskey.com/kitchen for the 'New Style' French Dip recipe and other tempting originals by Maria Helm Sinskey.

