

ROBERT SINSKEY VINEYARDS

Pinot Blanc

LOS CARNEROS, 2009



- True Pinot Blanc, Not an Impostor!
- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Demeter Certified Biodynamic Vineyards
- Elegant Glass Stoppered Half Bottles
- Cork Finished Magnums
- Delicate Whole-Cluster Pressed Fruit
- Fermented Dry
- Clean, Pure and Focused - No Oak, No ML
- From RSV's Three Amigos, OSR and Scintilla Sonoma Vineyards

Cases Produced: 1253 TA: 5.9 g/l pH: 3.34 Alc: 13.7%

WINEGROWING NOTES

Purity begins in the vineyards. RSV rejects an alliance with chemical companies in favor of a partnership with nature; employing only organic and Biodynamic techniques to maximize both quality and character of fruit. But it is not all technique! RSV's vineyards are ideally situated for the cool-climate loving Pinot Blanc. These vineyards dot the coast of the San Pablo Bay in the Carneros growing region at the southern ends of Napa and Sonoma Valleys; a place where sheep graze grass, natural products and wind keep mildew at bay and fog and sunshine provide yin and yang. Each vineyard has a slightly different take on the expressive Pinot Blanc grape: the Three Amigos Vineyard with its cooler weather and clay loam soil; the OSR Vineyard with its inward looking aspect and warmer days; the Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard with its Alsace-like climate and windy afternoons. Each vineyard makes a contribution of character to the final wine.

Two thousand and nine enjoyed a gentle growing

season that allowed the grapes to gradually reach their full potential. At harvest, the beautifully expressive fruit, ripe with promise, was hand-picked at night, sent to the winery, whole-cluster pressed and put in tank before the sun wiped the sleep from its eyes. The juice then fermented in stainless steel at a relatively low temperature for about thirty days. No oak, no induced malolactic fermentation, no tweaking, just pure, real Pinot Blanc!

TASTING NOTES

RSV's Pinot Blanc exhibits Old World personality contrasted with New World precision. It is elegant, balanced and racy! Aromas of apple and ripe white nectarine leap from the glass. The wine is zippy on the palate with a medley of citrus flavors: orange, lemon and kaffir lime, with pippin apple, nectarine and an intriguing almond note; it strikes a balance between rich, persistent mouth feel and a refreshing, crisp edge. You can start with it and you can party with it!

FINE WINES FROM ORGANIC VINES

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IT'S THE REAL THING...

or is it: Weissburgunder, Blanc Vrai, Pinot d'Alsace, Melon de Bourgogne, Klevner, Fehér Burgundi, Rulandské Bílé or Pinot Bianco?

Pinot Blanc is an enigma. Though grown and enjoyed throughout the world, some growers and vintners confuse it with similar grapes, others manipulate it to resemble other varieties, and most banish it from the best growing locations. In one part of the world, winemakers blend it with other varieties, or leave it out altogether, yet still call their wine Pinot Blanc. It just doesn't get any respect!

In Germany, where more is planted than anywhere else in the world, Pinot Blanc is known as Weissburgunder" or "White Burgundy." There, it produces a vibrant beverage of mineral and delicate floral notes that make it well suited for local cheese and sausage. Though the German plantings are large compared to the rest of the world, the numbers are still dwarfed by the noble Riesling grape. There is hope, though, as many German producers consider Pinot Blanc an up and coming "hip" variety.

You probably guessed from the homage to Burgundy in the German name that France has a long history with the grape. Pinot Blanc is a clone of Pinot Noir originating from a point mutation of Pinot Gris, itself a mutation of Pinot Noir, whereas one cane bears different colored fruit than the rest of the canes on a grape vine. Growers often confused it with Chardonnay, which it resembles, propagating it and blending it with Chardonnay for a classic white Burgundy. Today, however, few Pinot Blanc vines exist in Burgundy and only a handful of producers still make a wine with the two grapes. Instead, in France, the grape grows predominantly in Alsace and Champagne.

Alsace has done the most to make a name for Pinot Blanc, yet at the same time confused the issue by allowing Pinot Blanc, Auxerrois Blanc, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir to be blended into a wine called "Pinot Blanc" or "Pinot d'Alsace." And buried somewhere in the sparkling "Cremant d'Alsace" is Pinot Blanc. Not too far away in Champagne, Pinot Blanc was historically, if ironically, known as "Blanc Vrai," or "True White" and is slowly becoming extinct in favor of Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir.

In the New World, when it comes to Pinot Blanc, confusion reigns. Until recently, growers and nurseries confused Melon de Bourgogne with Pinot Blanc and some producers continue to label it as such. It wasn't until about 20 years ago that a Frenchman, studying rootstocks, discovered the mistake. So, most people who thought they were making and drinking Pinot Blanc were drinking Melon. To make matters worse, the vines had a resemblance to Chardonnay, yet produced a much leaner wine. Winemakers felt they needed to get more out of the grape and chose to lower the acidity through malolactic fermentation and fatten the wine with barrel fermentation and aging to the point where the wines became low acid and woody. The delicate nature of the Melon did not hold up well to such treatment and people began to get the impression that American Pinot Blanc was a clumsy wine, kind of a poor person's Chardonnay.

However, Pinot Blanc, when done well, can make for one pleasant cuisine centric white wine. It is naturally fruity and floral in an understated way, and has great, mouth watering acidity. Perfect for anything from fish to fowl and figs to pigs -- or figs and pigs, as in prosciutto wrapped figs. It has a natural affinity with cheese and works equally well with vegetarian and ethnic dishes. Pinot Blanc's culinary versatility is what attracted us to the grape, as we had grown tired of clumsy American white wines, particularly overdone Chardonnay. Once I learned that certain white Burgundies were a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc, I realized that maybe we too could blend the grapes to make a brighter, more cuisine centric wine. However, when it came time to blend the wines, Maria tasted the Pinot Blanc and threatened to divorce me if I put the two together.

I hate to admit it, but she made the right call. Pure, unadulterated Pinot Blanc grown in prime locations in the Carneros is the real thing! It makes for an elegant white that works as a go-to wine for all occasions. You can start with it (thus the half bottles) or you can party with it (hence the magnums).

-Rob Sinskey

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