

# MARCIEN

PROPRIETARY RED, LOS CARNEROS NAPA VALLEY, 2006



- Marcien represents RSV's best effort given vintage and vineyards
- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Demeter Certified Biodynamic Vineyards
- Right Bank inspired blend - St. Emilion with a suntan
- Three classic Bordeaux varieties: Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon
- From RSV's Vandal, OSR and Three Amigos Vineyards
- Cuveé changes to express the character of each vintage
- 18 months in 35% new French oak barrels
- "Half-case" packaging, six bottles per case

TA: 6.2 g/l pH: 3.55 Alc: 14%

## WINEGROWING NOTES

Marcien c.1386, "of the planet Mars" (originally in reference to astrological influence), from L. Martius "pertaining to the planet Mars," from Mars (gen. Martis). The noun meaning "an inhabitant of the planet Mars" is attested from 1883.

Online Etymology Dictionary  
Douglas Harper, Historian - Dictionary.com

This wine might as well be from Mars. RSV likes the path less traveled, like planting Bordeaux varieties in the Carneros, dismissing the warning of fellow vintners that these varieties would not ripen in the windy, cool region by the bay.

Marcien, RSV's Biodynamically grown, Right Bank inspired wine is stylistically light years from the typical Napa wine. Perhaps it's best described as a bridge between Old and New Worlds; a Saint-Émilion with a suntan!

Marcien is a small production wine from RSV's cool Carneros vineyards. Though made of the classic Bordeaux varieties, the actual constitution of the cuvée does not appear on the label. This would create limitations as the final blend is not pre-ordained

from year to year. Marcien is blended to taste as late in the game as possible. By printing the blend on the label, RSV would be printing itself into a corner and, instead of making the most expressive wine from a given year, compromises would have to be made to accommodate production. Marcien is RSV's best effort given the vintage and vineyards.

## TASTING NOTES

Dark glossy color, more red than black, gleams from the glass. Aromas announce youthful bright fruit, laced with earth, olive and herbs. Cassis and plum arrive on first sip, resplendent on a mouthful of silky tannins and kept from excess by the bright cut of acidity. Marcien boasts a seemingly incongruous combination of power and lightness that forces you back to the glass to ponder such a coexistence.

By all means, pull a cork now, swirl the glass and enjoy Marcien as it opens before you. However, the savvy will recognize that all the elements are in place to reward those interested in a long-term relationship. Best practice is to get to know the wine in its youth and continue to check in as time rolls by.

## FINE WINES FROM ORGANIC VINES

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# BACKWARDS THINKING



WITH A NOD TO THE RIGHT...

We have things backwards... and we like it that way! When Chardonnay was still the top selling white wine, we quit making it. As science and technology began to dominate the wine industry, we chose to pursue organic and Biodynamic certification. When fashion dictated super ripe fruit, high alcohol, low acid, and heavy oak, we resisted temptation and continued to make balanced, elegant, cuisine-oriented wines. While most wineries took aim at the 90+ point bullseye, we chose not to send samples to the two major publications, opting instead to make wine true to place, not deconstructed and remanufactured to hit a predictable target of flavor and texture. And as the Carneros gained fame as a Pinot Noir region, we continued to plant Bordeaux varieties in pockets where we felt they would thrive.

We have role models, regional mentors so to speak. Each variety and blend we grow and make is inspired by an Old World wine region that has been working with those grapes for hundreds of years. Our Abraxas, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris and Muscat wines find inspiration in Alsace, our Pinot Noir in Burgundy and our Bordeaux varieties and blends in, well, Bordeaux! We are not trying to emulate them so much as to take inspiration from them... kindred souls searching for an expression of terroir by matching variety, clone and rootstock to soil and micro-climate. If we can grow it well, we can do less to it in the cellar to make a naturally balanced and elegant wine. No need to pick overripe grapes or cover up the flaws with too much oak; instead, we can showcase the inherent complexities of the fruit.

Bordeaux's many sub-appellations are split by the Gironde. If you were to look downriver toward the Atlantic, the major regions on the right (bank) are Saint-Émilion and Pomerol while on the left (bank) are Margaux, Pauillac, Saint-Julien and Saint-Estephe. Though all of Bordeaux is influenced by the Atlantic, the Right Bank is a bit cooler, less protected and generally boasts dense clay soils, in contrast to the famous gravel of the Left Bank.

In Bordeaux, nature and experience inform winegrowers what to plant where. Merlot, followed by Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, dominate the Right Bank. Merlot loves the clay soil which retains much needed moisture well into the growing season and, since Merlot is an early ripening variety, the cooler climate allows the clusters to hang longer, develop flavor and maintain structure.

Cabernet Sauvignon thrives on the Left Bank (our parallel would be the Stags Leap District) as the slightly warmer climate, and better drained soils allow the sluggish variety to achieve optimal ripeness.

Similar to Bordeaux, Napa is affected by the maritime influence of the San Pablo and San Francisco Bays, as well as the Pacific Ocean, and it too has a river running through it. If you look down the Napa river, the Right Bank equivalent would be the Carneros, complete with a clay loam soil and cool climate that is comparable, heat summation wise, to that of St. Émilion. It does not take a leap of faith to realize that Merlot might thrive in this location. Now, Carneros doesn't naturally want to give up a monolithic fruit-bomb style of Merlot (you know, the style that became the butt of a joke in the movie *Sideways*) but rather a wine with naturally elegant structure, bright acidity, evolved tannin and subtle, persistent and complex flavor.

Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon thrive in the warmer pockets of the Carneros and, when subordinated to Merlot in a blend, make for a wildly complex wine that can be consumed relatively young but has the structure to age gracefully.

Now, in our instant gratification culture, making wine that can age might be backwards thinking, but we never said we were making wine for everybody... just for those who appreciate age-worthy, classically-proportioned wines that open as they swirl in the glass. But most of all we make wine for those who enjoy it, not as a points-driven athletic competition, but as a culinary journey, paired with the right foods and shared with the right company.

-Rob Sinskey

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