

ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

POV

NAPA VALLEY, 2008



- CCOF Certified Organic Vineyards
- Demeter Certified Biodynamic Vineyards
- Three classic Bordeaux varietals: Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon
- From RSV's Vandal, OSR and Three Amigos Vineyards
- Cuvée changes every vintage
- 19 months in 30% new French oak barrels
- Labels feature original photography by Rob Sinskey
- Three photos per vintage - Four each case

Cases Produced: 2950 TA: 6.1 g/l pH: 3.6 Alc: 13.9%

WINEGROWING NOTES

POV is a subtle, romantic portrait of place and time, a chronicle of the interaction of site, variety and vintner that occurs each vintage, made from three varieties of grapes grown in RSV's certified organic and Biodynamic vineyards located in the "Right Bank" of Napa, otherwise known as the Carneros. This region is cooler than the rest of the northern lands, lending an elegance that is sometimes obscured by terroir-robbing heat.

The 2008 vintage was a unique season that began with frost at budbreak and episodes of rain during bloom. These two early events conspired together to guarantee low yields. Then distant fires created a smoke-induced shade over the sun and, after a long, cool summer, a heat wave ensured a speedy harvest.

The beauty of being organic and Biodynamic, however, is that the vineyards have the resources to weather the vagaries of each season; even the really challenging ones. RSV's vineyards are even keel. They don't necessarily have bumper crops during big years but they also don't have as much loss in the challenging years. Like thrifty

savers, the vineyards have the resources to support themselves when times are lean and are wise enough not to spend too much when times are easy.

RSV hand picks the three varieties, that include Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, as optimal flavor and structure intersects. Then, after almost two years in the cave, the wines are blended by taste, each variety complimenting the other, to create an elegant, complete wine of balance and finesse.

TASTING NOTES

The color is a deep, ruby-tinged purple, nearly opaque at its core. Bright and intense aromas escape the glass with suggestions of blueberries and cassis. But there is so much more: a blast of wild fennel, a touch of earthy olive, a dash of vanilla, a wisp of violet! The aromas find substance with a luxurious sip as impressive structure underpins the flavors, inviting culinary suitors with hints of a long-term relationship, at least until the end of dinner. Shockingly delicious.

FINE WINES FROM ORGANIC VINES

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EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY, DON'T IT?

AND THEY ALL HAVE A POINT OF VIEW...



A picture doesn't lie, or so they say, but we know better. A wine shouldn't lie either, but again, we all know better. I would like to think that wine is like an old-school photojournalistic document of a place in time - a pure, unmolested representation of a vine's interaction with nature's rhythms. But just as a photographer can choose to approach a subject from a unique angle, or from their point of view, a winegrower must also decide with which point of view to approach the farm and the cellar. But how do we know what is "true" or "pure," or what that even means?

Photography lives at the intersection of technology and art. Even though the craft has suffered from tech temptation, there have always been purists who selectively employed what they considered to be "honest" technology. Historic legends, like Ansel Adams, used technology to realize a pure vision. Ansel knew photographic materials had limitations and, in his pursuit to emulate what the eye could perceive, created techniques to overcome the short dynamic range of film and paper. His goal was to create a pure expression of the landscape, yet he had to intervene in order to express the truth. He created the zone system, compressing the gray scale to maintain detail in both highlights and shadows. But he drew the line at techniques that were dishonest. Just think if "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico" were a composite? Instead of becoming a classic photograph, it would be relegated to postcard purgatory; just another sappy picture of an exaggerated moon artificially imposing its presence onto the landscape. Instead, it is a subtle, romantic portrait of a small town as the moon rises.

Wine must also be approached with a point of view if it is to strike a natural balance between science and nature. There has been a lot of talk about "natural wine" and, though we aspire to minimalism, I am bothered by the idea that one does not intervene. Farming can mimic nature, but it is not nature's natural state. Nature is chaotic. It hates a monoculture and will do its best to destroy it. Even if a farm is organic or Biodynamic, it is, at best, a simulation of nature. Every choice a farmer makes is an intervention, just as every choice a winemaker makes is an intervention. So how do you intervene, yet stay true?

Henri Cartier-Bresson believed in the decisive moment, a convergence as graphic elements meet an emotional peak. He used the then modern technology of a hand held 35mm Leica to express a pure idea. Images were not cropped or manipulated - other than traditional darkroom technique - yet they strike an emotional chord. It was his timing combined

with a clean sense of design and empathy for the human condition that allowed his images to achieve classic status while other, more technologically proficient photographers, were left with a legacy that amounted to little more than a box full of snapshots. Bresson's point of view gave him direction and defined his aesthetic. If Bresson had the technological choices available today, like image editing software, would he use them? Yes, I think so, but only as a modern darkroom (just think - no chemicals or metals to wash down the drain!) not as a manipulative tool, because to do so would be to invalidate his unique point of view, no longer creating an honest image.

Wine has many decisive moments that begin in the vineyard and continue until the cork is placed in the bottle. There is a truth in a vineyard that can be enhanced or destroyed by intervention. The trick is to create methods that allow a wine to achieve balance in a "natural" way... where less is more. No use of synthetics in the vineyard is a start, but an understanding of nature's dance is even more important to create a strategy where the vine can access nutrients in a natural way, with an environment that takes advantage of nature's checks and balances. The most decisive moment, however, is when to harvest. Our point of view is that overripe grapes require intervention to make a balanced wine and should be avoided. If the right grape is planted in the right location, there is a natural convergence when a grape has structure and flavor... maybe not as much flavor as if it were picked later, but it has a natural, honest structure. It is at this moment that a wine will have a natural balance that cannot be put back if harvested late.

Modern winemaking teaches remedial techniques. It's like photo editing - a blemish can be removed, a moon added, colors changed. Everything is correct, but it is no longer right or true. Wine could be fermented with enzymes or concentrates then have colorants or other enhancers added and, if overripe grapes were picked, the alcohol could be decreased - creating the photoshopped equivalent of wine. The wine may be "perfect" yet something of character is lacking.

We are interventionists. We chose to plant Bordeaux varieties in Carneros (the Right Bank of Napa Valley) farm organically and Biodynamically, use tractors, manage our soil, combine grapes instead of chemicals and make a wine that is ideal for the table. RSV has a point of view that you husband, nurture and elevate, but not alter, in pursuit of a naturally pure wine of character. Balance will come naturally... and that is no lie.

-Rob Sinskey