



ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

POV, LOS CARNEROS, NAPA VALLEY 2019





Demetrius (Demi) and Nicolai (Nico) - Wilding Farm, September 2024

THE GUARDIANS OF WILDING...

By Rob Sinskey

5,000 years in the making!

It was a deceptively quiet morning. Kari, RSVnapa's farming operations manager, noticed the sheep clustered in the corner of the paddock. They didn't run over to greet the truck as normal. Instead, they stood there, stunned. As she dismounted the truck, she saw the reason. Carnage! Seven Bodies of our best breeding ewes and lambs lay strewn across the field. It was a crime scene.

The temporary paddock had been defined by an electric fence that followed the creek bank. This was a fatal mistake. Unbeknownst to us, mountain lions were using that creek as their stealth highway. The "CSI" folks at Fish and Game developed a theory that two juvenile male mountain lions had just left their den on their way to claim their own territory and happened to stumble upon a food source. Since so many sheep were killed, they assumed the lions were young and undisciplined and killed for fun instead of for food.

Our first reaction was revenge... but that was misguided. Our point of view (see, I got that in!) is that Wilding Farm is a place where nature is to be embraced as a farming partner. As long as I have been in Napa, almost forty years, I have never seen an indication of mountain lions in the Carneros region. However, I have seen an increase in other animals and birds. Wild turkeys were almost unknown in the early days but now run in flocks of as many as seventy birds. Deer have their way with the vineyards and gardens. Jackrabbits, ground squirrels, coyotes, and other potentially destructive animals have all overpopulated. If we are to partner with nature, we need to help it find a balance, and alpha predators, like mountain lions, have been the missing counterweight.

We considered several options to safeguard the sheep. One was hardening the paddocks with tall, permanent fencing, but that would turn Wilding Farm into a prison instead of open land. We want wildlife to thrive and be able to move through the land and find habitat while we also maintain the ability to move sheep and other animals to prevent overgrazing.

Lacking permanent tall fencing, we then turned our attention to guard animals. Donkeys would be a fun addition to Wilding, and they would provide some comic relief. Though they aggressively protect their territory, they aren't compatible with the forage preferred by sheep and can suffer from bloat. Llamas are cool and are more compatible, and they, too, are very protective but they turn mean as they age with bites, kicks, and spit directed at their handlers.

We settled on the age-old solution of working dogs, but which breed? The ideal breed would not herd the sheep but instead live with and proudly protect them. This led to the oldest breed on record, not created by humans but by natural selection, dating back over 5,000 years, evolving to be the guardians of their family's most vital treasure... their animals!

We have added two Central Asian Shepherds, Demetrius (Demi) and Nicolai (Nico), to our menagerie. They will grow to between 100 and 150 lbs and will work together to fend off any known predator. Their funny-looking cropped ears and tail are practical in that their adversary has less to grab in a scuffle, but hopefully, their presence alone will avoid conflict. Central Asian Shepherds have evolved to compensate for their cropped ears with thick, wiry hair protecting their ear canals. The loose skin around their neck allows them to move and counter even when something has latched on. They are formidable yet lovable creatures that, from our point of view, are the best solution to a natural problem.



Winegrowing Notes

It was a rare year of “above average” rainfall, with 27 inches, six inches above the Carneros average. A dry April allowed for an even bud break and nice fruit set. Then, more rain in May set the stage for a great vintage. The moderately long growing season allowed for beautiful flavor development and fruit-forward aromatics.

The organically farmed vineyards in the Carneros region’s northern boundary rise to meet the foothills of the Mayacamas Mountains. This magical vineyard has a red band of volcanic soil running through the clay loam and a similar heat summation to the Right Bank of Bordeaux. The three classic varieties of Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon ripened slowly and hung late for optimal flavor development and depth of character while Merlot from RSV’s vineyards to the south provides a vibrant, mouthwatering crispness and cuisine orientation... a rare treat for a wine from Napa.

Tasting Notes

From the Right Bank of Napa, in the northern hills of the Carneros region, comes RSVnapa’s organic, biodynamic, and regeneratively farmed POV. A beautifully balanced cuvée of Merlot Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2019 vintage of POV is a pleasure with aromas and flavors of luxurious black cherry, Santa Rosa plum, cassis, and blackberry, a heady rush of red and black fruit flavors! Patience and a few swirls in the glass bring out secondary notes of bay leaf and mocha backed by subtly elegant French oak notes of cinnamon and vanilla. Pair with bold flavors when young and put some in your cellar or wine cabinet... because there is nothing like a vertical of POV to expose the unique character of each vintage and the graceful evolution that only time in the bottle can reveal. (09/2024)

DEPTH OF FLAVOR

I love to eat simply, and simple to me means two or three main ingredients prepared in a way that brings out the greatest depth of flavor. For a tomato sauce, it is important to choose high-quality tomatoes to achieve the ideal balance of sweetness and tanginess. A good tomato also gives you a beautiful, pulpy, and silky sauce. Add a dash of good olive oil, complimentary aromatic spices, and some garlic, and you have created a simple sauce with great depth of flavor. A long cooking time is essential to marry the flavors, bring out the sweetness of the tomatoes, and provide the perfect sauce consistency. A few good ingredients for handmade pasta are also key.

Chefs and home cooks love to modify their pasta dough recipes. Different kinds of flour, as well as egg, water, and olive oil ratios, all affect the consistency and taste of the finished dough. Playing around with a basic dough recipe provides a great variety of flavors and textures... It is also good fun!

In the recipe that follows, I simply substituted some freshly milled whole wheat flour to give the pasta an earthy, nutty base note as well as provide some weight and texture from the bran in the flour. The little bit of roughness from the bran also helps to grab the sauce. The flavor of the whole wheat marries well with POV.

POV can definitely relate to simplicity, depth of flavor, and texture. We start with good ingredients, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon, organically and biodynamically grown on our estate vineyards. We harvest and bring them to the cellar door where after destemming and crushing, we let native yeasts, in all their glory, take over the fermentation and work with the fermenting grapes to provide a deep depth of flavor supported by maturing in about 30% new French oak barrels that provide structure and texture for a silky fruit overlay.

As a chef, I continually see the connection between cooking and winemaking. Success in both stems from working with the best ingredients possible and then stewarding those ingredients through a process, whether cooking or fermenting, to bring out the greatest depth of the flavors from the ingredients.

That's why I'm never going to stop growing or seeking out the best ingredients for my meals, and we won't stop growing the best ingredients for our wines.

Until the Next Wine... Maria



FRESH TOMATO SAUCE

This deliciously simple sauce uses fresh or canned tomatoes. To turn the recipe into a meat sauce, start with 1 pound of minced or ground meat—beef, pork, or lamb, and sauté in olive oil until browned. Season with salt and pepper, then add garlic and proceed from step 2. If tomatoes lack sweetness you can add a touch of sugar to balance the acidity of the tomatoes. Take care not to use too much as it can make the sauce cloying. Yield: 6 cups

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil	½ teaspoon whole fennel seed
4 large garlic cloves, peeled, trimmed and lightly smashed	1 teaspoon oregano
3 pounds fresh tomatoes or canned tomatoes, pureed and strained coarsely	¼ teaspoon red chile flake, optional
Sugar, optional	1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 bay leaf	Freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a medium saucepan.
2. Add the garlic cloves and sauté until golden.
3. Add the tomatoes, 1 cup water, sugar, bay leaf, fennel seed, oregano, chili flake (opt.) and parsley. Season lightly with salt.
4. Simmer for 1 hour to develop the flavor, adding more water if the sauce gets too thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

PASTA DOUGH (RIBBON PASTA)*

Wheat flour adds a beautiful nutty earth note to pasta. It also adds texture. Ratio of wheat flour can be adjusted to suit your taste and the texture you desire. Yield: 1 pound

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour	1 tablespoon cold water
¾ cup whole wheat flour such as red fife	2 teaspoons kosher salt
3 large eggs	Extra virgin olive oil for tossing
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil	

1. Mix the flours and salt together in a large bowl.
2. Whisk the eggs, water and olive oil together.
3. Make a well in the flour and add the egg mixture. Mix until combined.
4. If the dough is too dry, add a few drops of water a little at a time. If it is too wet add a little bit of flour.
5. Knead until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cut it into three pieces and let them rest, well wrapped with plastic, for at least 45 minutes or overnight in the refrigerator.
6. If the dough has been refrigerated, bring it to room temperature before rolling. Roll the dough out with a rolling pin so that it will pass through the pasta machine. Alternatively, the dough may be rolled by hand as thinly as possible and then cut into shapes.
7. Pass each piece three times through pasta machine before rolling to the third thinnest setting. Dust the sheets of pasta lightly with flour to keep them from sticking. Roll the sheets up and cut into desired width with a sharp knife or use cutter attachment. Cook 3 to 4 minutes in boiling salted water.

***Cutting Fresh Ribbon Pasta**

Fresh pasta dough is easily cut into varying thicknesses with either a machine cutter or by hand. The following ribbon pastas are listed from the thinnest to thickest width. If your pasta machine doesn't have cutters for all widths, cut your pasta sheets into 12-inch lengths, dust them with flour, and roll tightly. Use a knife to cut to the desired width and then unroll the pasta, shake and dust it with flour, and lay it on a tray. Pasta can be cooked immediately or allowed to air dry, uncovered for up to 2 hours. Dry pasta will be more delicate, so take care when sliding it into the pot. Spaghetti cut by a machine or hand will not be round but slightly square in shape.

As a rule of thumb, thinner pastas are more suited to light and delicate sauces while thicker pastas can stand up to rich sauces, chunky with meat and vegetables.

Spaghetti - 1/16-inch-thick

Linguine - 1/8 -inch-thick

Tagliatelle - 3/16-inch- thick

Fettucine - 1/4-inch-thick

Pappardelle - 1-inch thick





FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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