



# ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS

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PINOT GRIS, LOS CARNEROS 2019





# LIBERATED PINOT GRIS...

By Rob Sinskey

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## *Food and Wine in the New World!*

I grew up with a burrito in one hand and chopsticks in the other. It was just the way it was in '60's SoCal and '70's Central Cal.; Mexican food was fast and omnipresent and, since my parents were married in Japan after WWII, Japanese food was my comfort food. That early "culinary" experience continues to influence the way I think about food and wine to this day.

Most people in the U.S., if they thought about food and wine at all back then, saw it through a filter of intimidating pretense reserved for special occasions with service rituals and pairing rules. Sommeliers in upscale dining establishments would look down their nose with silver tastevin dangling, impatiently waiting for you to decide which wine you were going to select from the ten-pound leather-bound carte du vin while you attempted to impress your date with the perfect selection to go with her scampi and your duck à l'orange. Then, once you made a choice, you had to nervously pronounce "Puligny Montrachet" with a not-so-perfect French accent. Not much fun and not the way most of us want to eat and drink today.

Tacos go with beer or margaritas. Japanese food goes with beer and saké. It's traditional but it's also as restrictive as the tyranny of the fine dining rules. American food is the result of the melting pot. We incorporate ingredients from all parts of the world and our wines are liberated from Old World traditions - which is our strength and our weakness... but that's another story. This freedom allows us to make unconventional choices. If I want, I can have Pinot Gris with my tacos. It is particularly good with fish tacos. I can also have it with my sushi or ramen. It works, it tastes good, it enhances the experience and it makes everything a little more pleasurable - and that's all that really matters.

## ***Winegrowing Notes***

Growing wine grapes has become more challenging everywhere. The predicted symptoms of climate change have impacted growing conditions in all major wine regions. Extremes have become the norm, whether fires, heat spikes, cold snaps, hail, floods or wind storms. Agriculture is always challenging, but over the past few years it has become an extreme sport.

RSV's organic farming model was created to not only make better wine but, in the words of Rudolph Steiner, "to heal an ailing earth" through regenerative farming practices that sequester more carbon than is released or produced. These methods not only reduce our carbon footprint; they produce better wine from healthier, more resilient vines.

RSV's Pinot Gris thrives in this farming model. The vines access the nutrients they need naturally from the decomposing cover crop and compost. The grapes ripen slowly in the cooler Carneros region, developing deep and complex flavors while maintaining natural acidity. The grapes are hand harvested at night to retain freshness, whole cluster pressed and cool fermented in a method that only enhances the deep, complex flavors while maintaining a vibrant mouthfeel. The wine is delicious.

## ***Tasting Notes***

There's a buzz when it comes time to crack into a fresh vintage of RSV's Pinot Gris. It's a pure reflection of its source, as organically farmed grapes from RSV's Carneros vineyards are harvested at quintessential ripeness to deliver layers of fresh aromas and flavors. Lemon zest, tangerine, white peach, honeydew melon and bartlett pear feel deliciously crisp, while inviting almond, chamomile and soft herbs like tarragon are balanced by a line of slate-like minerality that drives a long, mouthwatering finish. The wine is incredibly diverse with a wide range of foods from oysters and seafood to light meat dishes of chicken and pork. However, this wine shines with foods of the world and will find a home on a table with Indian, Japanese and Mexican cuisines. This wine was made to expand culinary horizons. (03/2021) 383 cases produced.





## FOOD = COMMUNITY

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There is something profane about bringing anger to a table when you're about to break bread. Maybe, if we could just sit down and share a meal with people who think or are different than ourselves, there would be a little less hate in the world; perhaps even a little less war.

I've been watching a show that centers around gathering, eating and sharing stories. Many of the stories include missed opportunities, regrets and painful memories but the takeaway is that people from all walks of life can come together to share food and comfort; maybe that's all we need to make the world a better place. There is a lesson learned during each episode as well as a theme centered on a dish cooked and enjoyed by the characters.

The opening credits always show the main character cooking Pork Miso Soup. I watched this intro so many times that I began salivating every time I saw the pork and veggies hit the hot oil in the pot. I thought that with a little added fresh ginger it would be a delightful accompaniment to RSV's Pinot Gris. The body of the Pinot Gris holds up well to this hearty miso soup and the flavor of ginger lifts the pear-scented fruit of the wine. The chilled wine with the warm soup is a nice juxtaposition between hot and cold, bright and bold. It's a nice combination.

The show is called *Midnight Diner*. Give it a peek. It will make you hungry.

Until the Next Wine.... *Maria*

## PORK MISO SOUP WITH GINGER

*Many of the ingredients can be found at Asian specialty stores. If you find fresh taro, please buy it. While it takes a couple of steps to prepare, its flavor and texture is special and worth the effort. You don't have to add noodles to the soup, but it makes for a heartier main dish if you do. Just be sure to undercook the noodles slightly as they'll cook more when the hot broth is ladled over them. If you can't find yam cake or burdock root you can omit them without detriment to the flavor of the soup. Instead of puffed tofu, slice firm tofu into 2-inch by ¼-inch strips and fry in vegetable oil until golden. Serves 4 to 6*

2 cups ½ inch diced taro, substitute Yukon potato  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon untoasted sesame oil  
12 ounces skinless, meaty pork belly, sliced thinly  
12 small shiitake mushrooms, stem removed cap quartered  
1 cup Yam cake ½ inch dice, optional  
1 cup sliced puffed tofu squares, substitute cubed firm tofu fried until golden  
½ cup peeled and sliced burdock root, ¼ inch slices, optional  
1 large carrot, peeled and sliced ¼ inch thick

1 cup sliced quartered peeled daikon, ¼ inch slices  
4 cups sliced green or Napa cabbage, ¼ inch slices  
8 cups Awase dashi, 2x recipe, recipe follows  
3 tablespoon white miso paste  
3 tablespoon brown rice miso paste  
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger  
Kosher salt  
½ cup thinly sliced green onion, green and white parts  
Ramen, soba or rice or noodles, optional  
Soy sauce to adjust seasoning

1. In a small bowl toss the taro with 1 teaspoon of kosher salt. Turn it out into a strainer and let it drain over the bowl for 20 minutes.
2. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Rinse off the taro and add to the boiling water. Cook for 7 minutes at a simmer and drain. Reserve at room temperature if you are making the soup immediately. Otherwise wrap and store in the refrigerator until ready to use.
3. Heat a large soup pot over medium high heat. When the pot is hot add the oils and then the pork belly. Cook until the pork belly is golden on the edges. Add the mushrooms and continue to cook until the mushrooms are wilted and tender.
4. Add the yam cake, tofu, burdock, carrot, daikon and cabbage and stir until cabbage is wilted.
5. Add the dashi and stir. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer.
6. Place the two miso pastes in a medium bowl. Take a large ladle of soup broth and slowly pour into the miso while whisking constantly to evenly and smoothly combine the miso and broth. Continue whisking in broth until the mixture is easily pourable back into the pot. Pour back into the pot and stir until uniform. Stir in the ginger and lightly season to taste with salt.
7. Ladle into deep serving bowls over noodles if using and sprinkle with green onions. Serve soy sauce on the side if guests would like to adjust the seasoning to their liking.





## AWASE DASHI

*I always keep this dashi on hand. Triple the recipe if you like. It freezes well so you'll never be caught short. This recipe comes from Just One Cookbook blog and website. It is my go to place for all foods Japanese.*

1 piece kombu (dried kelp), (10 g; 4" x 4", 10 x 10 cm)

4 cups water

1 cup katsuobushi (dried bonito flakes), (10 g)

1. Gather all the ingredients. Most Japanese recipes would say to gently clean the kombu with a damp cloth. However, these days, kombu is pretty clean so just make sure it doesn't look musty. DO NOT wash or wipe off the white powdery substance (Mannitol), which contributes to the umami flavor in dashi. Make a couple of slits on the kombu, which will help release more flavor.
2. In a medium pot, put the kombu and water. Turn on the heat to medium-low heat and slowly bring to almost boil, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, clean the dashi by skimming the surface.
3. Just before the dashi starts boiling gently, remove kombu from the pot. If you leave the kombu in the pot, the dashi will become slimy and bitter. Add the katsuobushi and bring it back to a boil again.
4. Once the dashi is boiling, reduce the heat, simmer for just 30 seconds, and turn off the heat. Let the katsuobushi sink to the bottom, about 10 minutes.
5. Strain the dashi through a fine-mesh sieve over a bowl or measuring cup (Reserve the katsuobushi and see below for what to do with it). Awase Dashi is ready to use.

**To Store:** If you are not using the dashi right away, store the dashi in a bottle or mason jar and keep in the refrigerator for 3-5 days or in the freezer for 2 weeks.

### **Optional: Niban Dashi (Second Dashi)**

1. In the medium pot, put 2-4 cups\* of water and previously used kombu and katsuobushi from making the (first) dashi. Bring it to a boil over medium-low heat. \*2 cups would make stronger dashi.
2. Remove the kombu just before the liquid comes to a boil, then lower the heat, and cook for 10 minutes, skimming occasionally.
3. Add an additional fresh ½ cup (5 grams) katsuobushi and turn off the heat. Let the katsuobushi sink to the bottom and strain the dashi through the fine-mesh sieve.



## FINE WINES. ORGANIC VINES.

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