

Skinner Vineyards, Destiny and Determination Part 2

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7 photos

Two vintages of the Skinner Seven Generations white blend accompanied a mussel over curried risotto, a very good pairing.

Patricia Decker

Carey Skinner traveled to Los Angeles recently to spread the word about Skinner wines, meeting with the LA [Wine Writers](#) for a luncheon at [West Restaurant](#) in the Hotel Angeleno. Executive Chef [Laura Scollan](#) designed small plates to accompany Skinner's wines, and did a great job of pairing flavors and textures.

Seven Generations is a blend of five white Rhône varietals, Roussanne, Marsanne, Viognier, Grenache Blanc, and Picpoul Blanc, with the percentages changing each year, depending on the harvest. This is a rich white wine, fermented in stainless steel, neutral and new French oak, rested on its lees for texture, unfiltered and unfiltered. The 2013 Skinner "Seven Generations" El Dorado is bright, with medium acidity, ripe stone fruit,



apple, pear, a grassy note, and a touch of oak. This is a *Patricia Decker*
good food wine, and accompanied a white wine
steamed mussel on top of curried risotto with Spring peas.

The **2012 Skinner Grenache El Dorado** is 100% Grenache, a blend of five different vineyards, a balanced and structured wine with bright cherry and raspberry fruit, dried herbs, spice, medium body, and high alcohol that plays out over a medium long finish. It's a big, elegant wine with a plush mouthfeel, and was paired with seared Ahi tuna over a vegetable sushi and tempura asparagus.

The **Skinner Eighteen Sixty-One Red Blend**, their flagship wine, combines Grenache, Mourvedre, Syrah, and Counoise from El Dorado County into a juicy, complex wine, named in honor of James Skinner's first year of planting grapes. Two vintages were compared, the 2010 and the 2012, with different percentages of the varietals making up the blend. The 2010 Skinner Eighteen Sixty-One is vibrant and intense, a meaty body with blackberry and dried cherry, dried herbs, tobacco, leather, smoke, and high alcohol. The 2012 Skinner Eighteen Sixty-One is more structured, with dark berries and dusty cherry, medium tannins, and slightly less alcohol. Both wines accompanied the crispy duck breast over coconut bamboo rice with ginger-honey glazed carrots.

The 2012 Skinner Mourvedre El Dorado is 90% Mourvedre and 10% Syrah. It has bright red and black fruit, dried herbs, and a touch of black olive, with a meaty note, good acidity, medium structure and tannins, and a long finish. The 2010 Skinner Syrah El Dorado is perfectly balanced, co-fermented in the style of Southern France with Viognier (92% Syrah, 8% Viognier) to lift the aromatics and set the color. Blackberry and boysenberry fruit, dark chocolate, good acidity, and an extremely long finish are the hallmarks of this well-made Syrah. Both wines were served with Terres Major (a marinated shoulder cut of beef) over truffled potato gratin and roasted romanesco.

The wines are good values, with many priced under \$30, and are available online and in some restaurants.

It's been quite a journey for **Mike and Carey Skinner**, along with their children, from loving and drinking wine as a consumer, to full time wine producers, working to revive their legacy, and unveiling the no longer hidden beauty of the wines of the Sierra Foothills. "Divine intervention" brought them to this place, and passion has carved out their future. They've hit the Mother Lode, creating a rush for California's Rhône style wines.



Patricia Decker

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