

Dan Berger's Vintage Experiences

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A Fascinating Wine

It appears that the irrepressible Randall Grahm, Dictator for Life of Bonny Doon, has infected a member of his staff with his own strange sense of the absurd.

A press release from a graphic designer by the name of Lindsey Sonu sounds suspiciously like it came out of Grahm's Underwood. It says Randall himself has lately not been about, although, it adds, "a somewhat suspicious character, calling himself Reginald French-Postalthwaite, or some such fantastic name... has lately (at least since harvest) been camping out in Randall's office."

As a backdrop for this wine, you should know that years back, maybe in a fit of pique, Randall declared his winery a Cabernet-free zone. So the wine we write about this day is called A Proper Claret, a screwcapped (what else?) Cabernet blend that, in the Doon manner (intentionally I believe) assiduously avoids the odious name Cabernet.

Historically, a "claret" was a Cab-based blend. Still, using the term claret here is also an in-joke since 8% of this wine is Tannat—perhaps an allusion to the fact that it has long been alleged that many fine Bordeaux houses in the past used the pitch-black Tannat to add color and weight to Claret in the poorer Bordeaux years (or all years?).

The text of the press release looks distinctly like the usual footnote-spattered anti-prose of Grahm himself, the master of the conceit.

In any case.

Bonny Doon's 2012 **A Proper Claret** (\$16) is an excellent red wine, an utterly distinctive wine that's worth trying if only for the great Grahm-esque back-label.

It *appears* that Randall had nothing to do with this Cabernet-based wine. I'm sure that was his intention.

