

Now And Zin Wine

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Bonny Doon Vineyard

No Question - Query Cider Is A Great Quaff

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It's fitting that Bonny Doon Vineyard's leader, Randall Grahm, ventured into the hard cider market. Ever the adventurer, Grahm has bravely pursued the elusive magic of wine with the grapes of Burgundy, the Rhône valley, Italy and Spain. The trophies he has amassed for his achievements are numerous enough to fill a pretty fair-sized mantle. His status as the premier Rhône Ranger was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

So when he decides to make cider, people are interested - even if they don't regard themselves as cider lovers. And if they don't, it's probably because they have yet to try Grahm's cider, quizzically called *¿Query?*.



In his email message presaging the sample for review, Grahm explains that with the most recent vintage (2013) of *Query Cider*, the production technique was changed slightly after the previous (2011) bottling. He states that the 2011 *Query* "derived its carbonation from bottle conditioning. This time we've gone with a less labor-intensive methodology, (i.e. bottling @ 30° F. and saturating w/ CO2), enabling us to offer the new vintage at a more accessible price." That low, low price is \$12, in a 750 ml bottle. 7,000 cases were produced. Grahm adds that there is a "slightly wider range of pear and apple varieties in the blend, including a substantial percentage of Gala crabs, which along with the quince, has given the cider a slight bracing astringency, very appropriate to this style." Alcohol stands at 6.9% abv.

In fact, the 2013 *Query* is made up of 62% Pears, 36% Apples and 2% Quince. The pear varieties used are Seckel, Bartlett, Forelle and Beurre Hardy. A host of apple varieties are present: Jonagold, Golden Delicious, Gala, Autumn Greeting, Cripps Pink, McIntosh, Pink Pearl, Gala Crab, Pippin and Braeburn. As for quince, Rosaceae and Pineapple are the two types used.

Query's nose delivers just what the percentages suggest - pears, apples and quince - but in a more complex manner than that description indicates. It's a juicy and real fragrance, with a sweet, green herbal shading adding texture. The quince comes through stronger than expected. The palate is off-dry, not too fizzy and wonderfully fresh. It so clearly delivers its fruit that it invites consumption at breakfast. I don't usually recommend alcoholic beverages with the morning meal - not every day, anyway - but for *Query* I would make an exception. Grahm suggests a pairing with sushi or cheeses, perhaps at a more reasonable hour.

Posted by
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