

1001 WINES

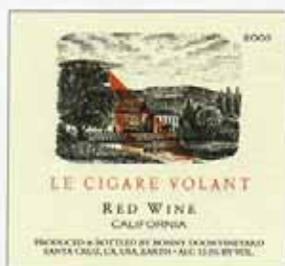
YOU MUST TASTE BEFORE YOU DIE

Preface by Hugh Johnson • Selected and Reviewed by Leading International Critics



GENERAL EDITOR
NEIL BECKETT

UNIVERSE



Bonny Doon

Le Cigare Volant 2005

Origin USA, California, Santa Cruz

Style Dry red wine, 13.5% ABV

Grapes Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre

In the mid-1980s, Randall Grahm, presiding genius of Bonny Doon Vineyard, elected to shun the pseudo-Burgundian obsession with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and strike out into relatively undiscovered French-inspired territory. If Grahm did not invent the California taste for Rhône blends alone, he was certainly one of its leading lights.

His principal Rhône-style red is named for an obscure bit of Gallic lunacy whereby, in 1954, at the height of UFO hysteria, the growers of Châteauneuf-du-Pape secured the passing of a by-law that forbade flying saucers (*cigares volants*) from landing in their vineyards.

The composition of the wine changes from year to year, with Syrah and Mourvèdre sometimes edging out Grenache. The result is usually a wine of astonishing levels of extract and spice intensity, as is the case with the wondrous 2005 vintage. It throws a fistful of black pepper in your nose, before following up with violet-tinged blackberry and black plum fruits. The tannins are elegant but fairly severe, ensuring that the wine will unwind in its own good time, perhaps over fifteen years or so. **SW**

☞☞☞ **Drink: 2010–2020**



Bonny Doon

Vin Gris de Cigare 2006

Origin USA, California, Santa Cruz

Style Dry rosé wine, 13% ABV

Grapes Grenache, Mourvèdre, Pinot Noir, G. Blanc

Bonny Doon's dry rosé wine is modeled on those of Provence, where *petits rosés d'été* are known as *vins gris*, or gray wines. But there is nothing gray about the personality of Bonny Doon's Vin Gris. The grape blend has altered with the years, sometimes foregrounding Mourvèdre, sometimes Grenache, but now bringing in some Grenache Blanc. The last ingredient adds aromatic vigor to the wine, conferring an infectious peachiness on the wine's aromas, from which a young pink richly benefits.

The wine is impeccably dry, avoiding the overly evident note of residual sugar that is often thought to help a rosé along. It has whistle-clean aromas of rosehip and watermelon, opening to more substantial peach and raspberry tones on the palate. There is more than a touch of savory spice to it as well, reflecting the peppery, clovelike aromatics of those southern Rhône grape varieties, together with a generous pinch of *herbes de Provence*. Though intended for drinking relatively young, it holds up well for a couple of years after the vintage. Always fairly priced, this is one of the great value rosés in all of California. **SW**

☞☞ **Drink: latest vintage**



Bonny Doon

Le Cigare Blanc 2004

Origin USA, California, Santa Cruz

Style Dry white wine, 13.5% ABV

Grapes Roussanne 73%, Grenache Blanc 27%

The white blends of the northern and southern Rhône are not among the most conspicuously lauded of French white wines. Too often, they have a lumpish quality, a stone-dry, inelegant weightiness that does not give much away aromatically, or appear to do anything interesting if aged in bottle. Trust Randall Grahm to rewrite the book.

In the Cigare Blanc, the stark minerality of Roussanne is used to form the backbone of the wine, while the proportion of Grenache Blanc adds an unexpected dimension of softening aromatic fruit and spice. There is a waft of white peach in the wine and a scattering of honeysuckle, together with a subtle hint of saffron. Significantly, the 2004 vintage produced a notably successful wine, almost certainly as a result of its higher than usual proportion of the Grenache Blanc. In previous vintages, it has been as low as 3 percent—why not let it allow the wine to sing thus more often?

Low yields contribute to the wine's extraordinary textural concentration—there is a viscous, clinging mouthfeel, buoyed up by 13.5 percent alcohol, that can divide opinion. **SW**

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