

2013 A PROPER CLARET

CALIFORNIA RED WINE

Some cautionary words: Bonny Doon Vineyard is, as we all know or should know, a strictly *cabernet*-free zone, at least it has been for the last twenty-nine years.^{1,2} Randall Graham, owner and winemaker, has expressed amused disdain, occasionally bordering on amused disdain, for this popular grape variety.³ We are not really at liberty to say how Bonny Doon Vineyard has come to be entrusted with the distribution of a wine made from such improbably alien grape varieties, but suffice to say that the deal was doon grudgingly and harumphingly.

So, with these caveats, the sentiment at Bonny Doon Vineyard is that if we ever *were* to drink a *cabernet*-based blend, this would be one that would serve quite well. It is lean, neither overly alcoholic (weighing in at 13%) nor overly extracted, nor overly oakèd; it is precisely what one would imagine A Proper Claret to be. The wine contains a substantial dollop of *petit verdot* (13%), adding a silky note of violets and textural elegance, in counterpoint to the lead-in-the-pencil firmness offered by the inclusion of the virile *tannat* (15%).⁴ Comparing this wine with the 2012 APC, the inaugural vintage, the '13 version is a bit plusher and posher, with softer tannins, not unreminiscent of the overstuffed chair at one's Club. There is still a lovely minty, cedary aspect to this wine, reflective of its perfect balance, with nary a prunish note to be found.

Now, as to the label. What can we say? We are just scandalized, sputteringly unable to countenance the opportunistic wine marketers who would stoop to using lurid imagery merely to sell a bottle of wine. Has it really come to this? It is only because we enjoyed the wine so much that we are willing to put up with the tasteless monstrosity that is this label. "Proper" (!?) Claret? Indeed.

FOOD PAIRINGS:

Proper (British) mutton, proper leg of lamb, (ideally served with proper Yorkshire pudding).

¹ This commonsense dictum is as easy as A,B, C.

² The last "Claret" nominally produced at Bonny Doon Vineyard was in 1985 from grapes grown at our late Estate in the eponymous hamlet of Bonny Doon. It was a blend of approximately equal parts of *cabernet sauvignon*, *cab. franc*, *merlot* and *malbec*, and against all expectation, was actually pretty damn good.

³ He has been heard to say at least once, "I will not kiss the lips Bordelais cépages will not pass these lips."

⁴ *Tannat*, the grape implicated in the French paradox (and the vinifera variety with resveratrol levels that are off the charts), is principally grown in Gascony (land of Les Trois Mousquetaires), though it was historically grown as well in Bordeaux as late as the 19th century.



VITAL STATISTICS

Varietal Blend:

- 46% cabernet sauvignon
- 17% merlot
- 15% tannat
- 13% petit verdot
- 8% syrah
- 1% petite sirah

Appellation: California

Alcohol by Volume: 13.5%

TA: 6.0 g/L

pH: 3.64

Production: 10,925 cases

REGION



WINEMAKER

