

This bottling Le Cigare Volant is identical to our *normale*, but, owing to its unorthodox *élevage*, quite different in its presentation. After a short tenure in barrel, assemblage, and completion of malolactic fermentation, the wine was removed to 5-gallon glass carboys (*bonbonnes*), where it reposed *sur lie* for 23 months. This yielded a rare degree of integration and complexity, plus a preternatural degree of savoriness. Our Flying Cigar is based on the traditional Southern Rhône style *encépagement*.

WINEMAKER NOTES

Winemaking, like life, is a bit of a dream. One imagined (some years ago) that one might produce a sort of *hommage* to Châteauneuf-du-Pape, a Rhônish-style blend in California, and somehow, miraculously, the wine materialized in this terrestrial sphere; it has been, in balance, a more or less viable, ongoing proposition. Over the years, I've had my ups and doons with the southern Rhône's most well known appellation. In general, I've not been so crazy about its escalating levels of over-extraction and ripeness, seemingly in commercial call and response to its most avid Marylandian partisan. With the exception of the redoubtable Château Rayas, I find that I can, at this juncture, largely take or leave C-du-P. But, possibly more to the point, I've come to realize that everything in my winemaking world has really been a displacement of my deep, secret desire to produce pinot noir, or more accurately, red Burgundy.¹

The idea of "raising" the wine in glass demijohns was also a bit of a fever dream, occasioned in part by the many hours I spent in deep contemplation of the mysteries of redox chemistry; there was something dream-like (*à la* Carlos Castaneda and Don Juan) about the many hours driving around southern France with Patrick Ducournau,² deep thinker about oxygen and wine.³ I've already written quite a bit about the nature of the esoteric *élevage en bonbonne*—*bâtonage magnetique*, etc., the opportunity for the wine to digest a substantial volume of yeast lees, and the extraordinary texture and savoriness this protocol engenders.

VINEYARD | PRODUCTION NOTES

The '09 Cigare Volant Réserve is, to my palate, the most elegant and complete Cigare we have produced to date; it is literally a dream, and dare I say, a very strange synthesis of the sensibilities of southern Rhône and Burgundy. It also contravenes one of the cardinal dicta I've established with respect to the style of the wine—that it predominantly be composed of *grenache* (or alternately, *mourvèdre*), but never, ever, *syrah*.⁴ But this is not an ordinary wine, and all bets are off. What is most noteworthy about the wine is its amazing silky texture, savoriness and infinite length. One finds many of the flavor elements typically associated with Cigare, most dominantly that of Montmorency cherry, but there is also a wonderful suggestion of sarsaparilla, licorice, juniper and menthol, and of course the wonderful earthy notes of truffle. But it is (I believe) the extraordinary contribution of the lees as *liaison*, acting as the perfect host or hostess at a cocktail party, keeping all of the elements in graceful play.

¹ The genius of great Burgundy is that it can be a seamless synthesis of Apollonian and Dionysian (well, maybe mostly Dionysian) elements—power, grace and sensuality. It defies all attempts at true characterization, evoking Margaret Cho's famous meditation on her own sexuality.

² Patrick had lost his driving license, so he was obliged to have someone drive him.

³ And inventor of *microbullage*, or micro-oxygenation.

⁴ Syrah is or certainly can be, the loud-mouthed drunk at the party, whose presence, i.e. varietal character, is just so ubiquitous, it just takes over the whole show. Cigare Volant should really be an ensemble performance with *grenache* (humbly and respectfully) leading the quartet.

VITAL STATISTICS

Varietal Blend:

30% syrah, 28% grenache,
22% mourvèdre, 20% cinsault

Appellation: Central Coast

Cellaring: Drinkable upon
release (Sept. 2013), 10-15
years ageability

Alcohol by Volume: 13.4%

TA: 6.0 g/L

pH: 3.67

Production: 465 cases

INGREDIENTS

Grapes, tartaric acid and sulfur dioxide.

In the winemaking process, the following
were utilized:

Indigenous yeast, yeast nutrients, French
oak cooperage.

At the time of bottling, this product
contained: 49 ppm total SO₂ and
21 ppm free SO₂.



REGION



WINEMAKER



SENSITIVE CRYSTALLIZATION

Balanced and integrated, the '09
Le Cigare Volant crystallization
exhibits beautiful aromatics and
savory floral, fruit and mineral
tones. Expressive centralized fruit
characters, give way to complex
mineral aspects, organization,
symmetry and nuanced expression.

