

Now And Zin Wine

now and zin / words on wine by Randy Fuller

WHO DO YOU HAVE TO KNOW TO GET A PROPER CLARET AROUND HERE?

Monday, April 27, 2015

Reginald French-Postalthwaite is billed as the alter ego of the beloved, quixotic, notorious Bonny Doon winemaker Randall Grahm. His flowery prose graces the back label of the 2013 A Proper Claret, and his missive to me, accompanying a sample of the wine, is similarly evocative and properly footnoted. It may well be the only wine label in existence with footnotes.

On the label, French-Postalthwaite wonders aloud - albeit in print - what one has to do to “be served a glass of Proper Claret around here?” Claret is the generic British term used for wines of Bordeaux. There may have been a jab directed at France by the word, which formerly meant something of light color. The wines of Bordeaux once actually were of light color, but that was quite a while before they stormed the Bastille.

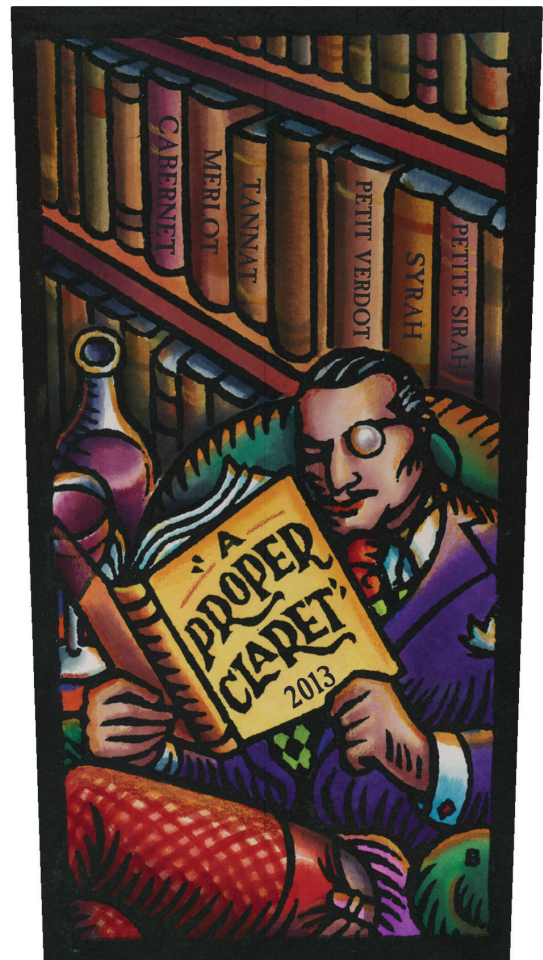
The pejorative stuck, as did the use of the phrase “the French disease” to describe syphilis. It may or may not be true that the French fought back on that one, calling syphilis “the English disease.” They also got in a shot of their own by recognizing the American colonies as independent of Great Britain, while not recognizing the wine of England as anything at all.

But, as French-Postalthwaite might annotate in his footnotes, I digress. He writes me that A Proper Claret “nominally purports to represent an old-fangled style of ‘Claret,’ it frankly strikes me as perhaps more of a version of the Cabernets I remember of the ‘60s and ‘70s. Slightly riper and richer than the ‘12 version, it is still quite elegant and restrained.” Which is more than we can say for French-Postalthwaite. Nearly 16,000 cases of A Proper Claret were made.

This wine is composed of a blend of red grapes, 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 15% Tannat, 13.5% Petit Verdot, 7.7% Syrah and .8% Petite Sirah. Did he say “point-eight-percent?” Did he say “Tannat?”

The interesting reading on the back label should not - could not - distract you from the wonderful illustration on the front, by New York City artist Bascope. The wine clocks in at a restrained 13.5% abv, no faint feat considering the high-octane grapes used in the mix. It retails for \$16 and comes bottled under a proper screwcap.

The wine is as dark as night. Black fruit on the nose is adorned in customary Grahm-savory fashion by notes of sage, rosemary and a delicious black olive scent. The palate shows blackberry



and cassis, but the wine is not dominated by fruit. Notes of cedar, cinnamon and cardamom play a huge role on the palate. The tannins are firm, but elegant, and it should pair as well with British bangers as they do with a good old American beef brisket.

View this post online at:

<http://www.nowandzin.com/2015/04/who-do-you-have-to-know-to-get-proper.html>