

# Now And Zin Wine

now and zin / words on wine by Randy Fuller

## BONNY DOON VINEYARD A PROPER CLARET 2012

Monday, November 18, 2013

Bonny Doon Vineyard has been “a strictly Cabernet-free zone for the past 28 years,” so it may come as a bit of a surprise to find Rhône-loving winemaker Randall Grahm harvesting Bordeaux varieties. The last Claret - the British term for red Bordeaux - produced by Grahm was in 1985, and it was made from grapes grown at the late estate in Bonny Doon.

Why a Claret now? Grahm notes, “the deal was doon grudgingly and harumphingly.” Those who know Grahm’s prose will see this as the shrewd marketing that it is. He implies that this Cabernet-based wine is the only such that ever crosses his lips, although that may or may not be true. He wraps up the promo sheet with, “Proper (!?! ) Claret. Indeed.”

The promotional information is actually attributed to one Reginald French-Postalthwaite, who I take to be an alter ego of the illustrious Mr. Grahm. It is a mark of the super-intelligent to always have a couple of extra egos lying around the house. This one, if that is him pictured in the Bascove label art, wears a monocle, a smoking jacket and some brightly colored thigh-high hosiery attached to a garter belt. Proper alter ego, indeed.

The less lurid side of the label explains the need for A Proper Claret. “A Proper Claret brings order and focus to a meal as well as to a world that is in constant danger of, dare I say, changing,” writes the alter ego. “In conclusion, it is likely that it is only A Proper Claret that will keep the barbarous hordes at bay, and allow Civilization a modest prospect of some undoubtedly short-term continuity.”

Mr. French-Postalthwaite’s pairing suggestions include, “proper (British) mutton and proper leg of lamb (ideally served with proper Yorkshire pudding).” I sipped the contents of my promotional bottle with bangers and mash.

A Proper Claret 2012 contains 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Petit Verdot, 8% Tannat, 7% Syrah and 1% Petite Sirah. Alcohol hits a very reasonable 13.2% abv. 7,000 cases were made and they retail for \$16 per bottle - a very proper price point.

Grahm - er, Reginald - says the presence of Petit Verdot adds “silky violets and textural elegance, in precision counterpoint to the lead-in-the-pencil firmness of the manly Tannat.”



The deep purple wine gives a spicy nose marked with cigar tobacco and eucalyptus. Dark red fruit - plums and raspberries - provide the backdrop for all those fireworks. The acidity is very nice and the tannins do their work without getting in the way. The palate is dark and a bit savory, but the fruit is in full bloom. I’m thinking about that leg of lamb, now..

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