

Interview: Randall Grahm of Bonny Doon



Demijohns al fresco at San Juan Bautista (photo provided by Randall Grahm)

emotionally moving; you can’t say that about ordinary fruit juice, can you? What I like best about wine-growing (which is, b/t/w, the term of art that really best describes what we should be doing) is the fact that it offers an enormous satisfaction in seeing the completion of a very long and complex process, from planting a vineyard, tending one’s vines and then shepherding the resulting produce. Taking it further, unless you are making wine strictly for yourself, you have to then successfully introduce this wine to the world, “World, meet wine; wine, world.” This, in and of itself, requires yet another distinctive skill set. So, in sum, the wine biz offers someone the opportunity to really exercise every possible mental, physical, aesthetic and spiritual muscle.

Wine Trail Traveler: *How would you describe your wine journey?*

Randall Grahm: Extremely long and convoluted, with many missteps along the way, but also with some extremely good fortune (like meeting Kermit Lynch almost forty years ago, who got me pointed in the right direction.) Without being too New Agey about it, it has also been a sort of spiritual journey, i.e. gradually drawing me closer to my deepest values and learning how to be present. (Those are still lessons to be learned.)

Recently Randall Grahm has been experimenting with producing a new style of wine, Vin Tuilé. The wine is produced by allowing it to set in the sun for nine months. Randall Grahm wrote, “I’m not sure that there are any specific benefits to producing a wine this way, apart from the fact that it produces a most unusual style – slightly oxidized/aldehydic, a bit like sherry, nutty (almost with a fragrance of peanuts or curry), and very savory (making it a perfect wine with, say, salty tapas).”

Wine Trail Traveler wine notes: The Vin Gris Tuilé 2013 was a blend of Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne, Cinsaut, Carginane and Grenache Blanc. The wine was a gold color with an aroma of floral and curry. The taste reminds one of daisies. The wine offered a very smooth mouthfeel. The finish was floral yielding to curry and spices.

The Vin Gris Tuilé 2013 is for the wine adventurer, someone who is interested in the unusual aspects of wine tasting and winemaking. Since the wine offers notes of curry, chefs may want to consider using it as an ingredient in one of their creative dishes and pairing the Vin Gris Tuilé with the meal.

Suggested pairings included: Mediterranean cuisine, French onion soup and oysters on the half shell.

Numerous wines are produced at Bonny Doon Vineyard winery. Find out more about the wines [online](#).

Cheers!
Kathy

A few weeks ago, after learning about an unusual winemaking technique I contacted Randall Grahm of Bonny Doon Vineyard in California. In addition to a photo of the technique he used for producing Vin Gris Tuilé, he kindly responded to interview questions via email.

A portion of the interview is below plus I added notes about the unique wine he is producing.

Wine Trail Traveler: *You have been a wine enthusiast for a long time. What is it about wine that influences your enjoyment of winemaking and wine growing?*

Randall Grahm: Wine is or at least can be utterly magical, capable of instilling artistic/aesthetic inspiration as well as courage and consolation/solace in we fragile mortals. There are some wines that are so utterly complex and seemingly perfect that they are



Vin Gris Tuile at Bonny Doon Vineyard