

2015 "A PROPER CLARET"

CALIFORNIA RED WINE

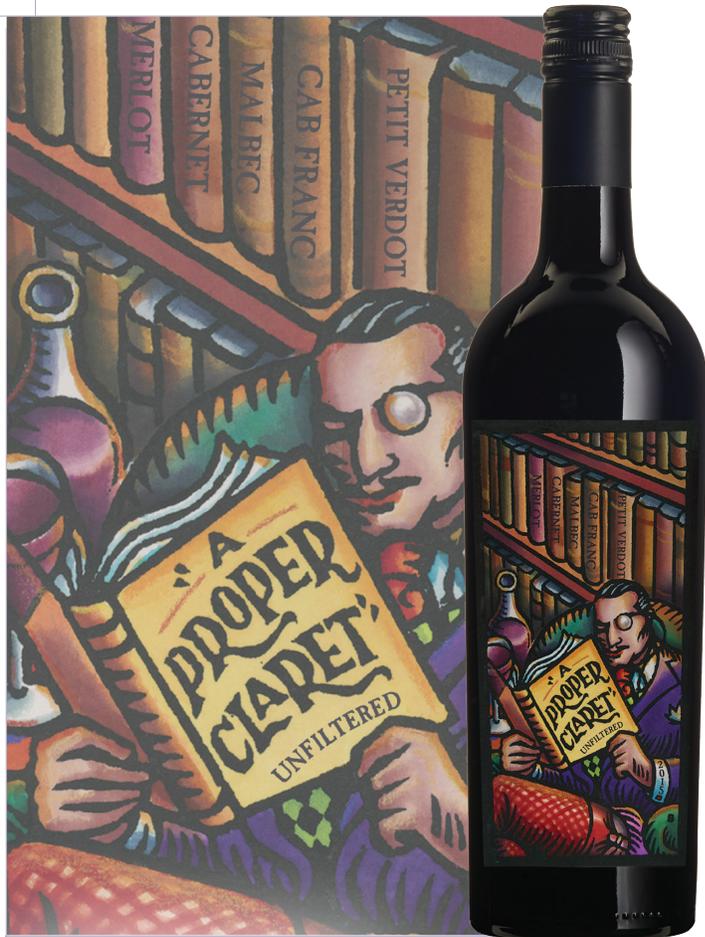
Some cautionary words: Bonny Doon Vineyard is, as we all know or should know, a strictly *cabernet*-free zone, at least it has been for the last twenty-nine years.^{1,2} Randall Grahm, owner and winemaker, has expressed indifference, occasionally bordering on amused disdain, for this popular grape variety.³ 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 13.2%) nor overly extracted, nor overly oakèd; it is precisely what one would imagine A Proper Claret to be. It is slightly ironic that the über-negativity heaped upon the hapless Right Bank cépage, Merlot, from the film, "Sideways," has actually resulted in a tremendous overall improvement in California's extant plantings of the grape, and for that we have been the beneficiary. The characteristic softness of Merlot is certainly an important feature of this wine; the substantial dollop of Petit Verdot (24%) has added a silky note of violets and textural elegance. 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 marketeers 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).



VITAL STATISTICS

Varietal Blend:

40% Merlot, 24% Petit Verdot, 21% Cabernet Sauvignon,
11% Cabernet Franc, 4% Malbec

Appellation: California

Alcohol by Volume: 13.2%

TA: 6.4 g/L

pH: 3.6

Production: 6,500 cases

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."

REGION



WINEMAKER

