



# The Butcher's Pour

## Biodynamic Farming, California Wines, and... Flying Cigars?



### Le Cigare Volant

Once upon a time in September of 1954, there was a man named Marius Dewilde who lived in Northern France. One night his dogs began to bark, and when he followed them outside they led him to the train tracks where he was the most unusual sight. Two figures that looked like they were dressed in deep-sea costumes, and a cigar-shaped machine parked across the tracks. He said that there was a green light that he said paralyzed him, and then when he recovered the figures and their machine were gone.

When reports of the *flying cigar* or *Le Cigare Volant* reached Chateaufeuf-du-Pape; the mayor Lucien Jeunne and the village council acted quickly to make sure that extraterrestrials would stay away from their vineyards...

**Article 1:** The overflight, the landing, and the takeoff of aircraft known as flying saucers or flying cigars, whatever their nationality is are prohibited on the territory of the community

**Article 2:** Any aircraft, known as a flying saucer or flying cigar, which should land on the territory of the community will be immediately held in custody

## Bonny Doon Vineyard

Founded in 1983 by Randall Grahm; Bonny Doon Vineyard was originally planted with the intention of bringing Burgundy to California. This idea was short lived, and the vineyards were soon planted with lesser-known Rhône varieties; the first vintage of their soon to be flagship wine *Le Cigare Volant* would be released in 1986.

This decision to plant Rhône varieties would earn Randal Grahm a spot amongst "The Rhône Rangers," a group of winemakers dedicated to the production of Rhône varieties in the United States.

Besides being one the pioneers of Rhône varieties in California; Bonny Doon has been a staple in other winemaking techniques. The first being the Stelvin Closure or screw cap on higher end wines; this was generally reserved for less expensive bottles, but with evidence supporting the longevity of wines with a screw cap they became one of the first "premium" wineries to use a Stelvin Closure. The second with the adoption of biodynamic practices starting in 2004; focusing on lively, expressive wines that are... out of this world.

### What is Vin Gris?

Let's start with the basic idea of Rosé; a pink wine (of varying shades) made from red grapes through limited skin contact. *Vin Gris* literally translates to "gray wine," so when we are using this process to make Rosé we should use a darker skinned delicate red grape and allow a minimal amount of skin contact. This will give us the least amount of color extraction. Some wine makers will use this method to press a small amount of juice from the grapes before a full pressing; this will create a higher skin-to-juice ratio, resulting in a more concentrated red wine.

### The Rhône Rangers

What started as an article in Wine Spectator's April 1989 issue with a picture of Randal Grahm dressed as a The Lone Ranger entitled "The Rhône Ranger," has now grown into America's leading non-profit dedicated to promoting Rhône varieties grown in the US. For the wines to qualify the winery must be a member of the organization and 75% of the wine must include at least one or more of the 22 traditional Rhône varieties.

# Tasting Notes

## Le Cigar Blanc 2020

60% Grenache Blanc, 32% Vermentino, and 8% Clairette Blanc

**Notes:** A lengthy, bright, aromatic white with notes of pineapple and mango. Hints of lime are complimented by herbs with rainy day minerals

**Pairing:** Perfect for light fish dishes

## Picpoul 2020

100% Picpoul

**Notes:** Fresh cut white flowers, tropical fruits and an intriguing savory, salinity that keeps you coming back for more.

**Pairing:** All of the shellfish

## Vin Gris de Cigare 2020

71% Grenache, 11% Cinsault, 5% Clairette Blanche, 4% Mourvèdre, and 4% Vermentino

**Notes** Those things we love about Rosé; like strawberries and peaches, but add some guava too!

**Pairing:** Hot summer evenings on the porch while you are grilling dinner.

## Le Cigare Volant

152% Grenache, 35% Cinsault, and 13% Syrah

**Notes:** A medium bodied red with a zippy amount of acidity, spicy notes, and tons of tart cherries.

**Pairing:** Pop me in the fridge for a bit for a tasty companion to some grilled pork

## Biodynamic Farming in the Vineyard

in the 1920's an Austrian philosopher named Rudolph Steiner began practicing a chemical-free farming based on phases of the moon. All tasks are performed on their corresponding day:

- Root Day- Best for pruning
- Fruit Day- Best for harvest
- Flower Day- Leave the plants alone
- Leaf Day- Best for watering

One of the main men credited with installing biodynamics in viticulture is Nicolas Joly. A prominent winemaker in Savenniere; his vineyards planted specifically to chenin blanc. In the mid-1970's agricultural agents insisted that his methods of farming were outdated, and that he should adopt modern chemicals. He soon noticed that animals had left his vineyard, and that his soils had changed. It wouldn't be until 1984 that he would discover the secret to saving his vineyards in biodynamics.

## Some Lesser Known Varieties

### Picpoul

This is a very old French varietal that is seeing a little bit of a resurgence, thanks to its zippy acidity and unique flavor profile. Known for green apple notes with hints of citrus and hints of salinity.

### Clairette Blanche

A once popular white blending varietal; Clairette Blanche is pretty much the opposite of Picpoul. This grape tends to create flabby floral wines, but helps create an interesting, lengthened palate for some otherwise more linear style white wines.

## Events:

**June 23rd:** French July Wine Tasting