

## Zero-Two-Wine-Three-Eight

The most opinionated wine Newsletter in America

### The Tale: Sight and Etiquette...

Label In French is Etiquette



#### Genesis 21:19...

*"Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the waterskin and gave the lad a drink..."*

#### A short ethnological history of wine etiquette\*, and its loss of social label\*\*.

\*Etiquette - also called "propriety": a set of rules and/or social norms known as "good manners" that governs appropriate and respectful behavior in society.

\*\*Label: a card or mark placed on the bottle that aims to gather mandatory (legal) or informative information about the contents (and not about the container). For the wine bottle, if the label on the front of the bottle is refined for aesthetic reasons, then it becomes the counter-label, and the original counter-label becomes the label (resulting in the loss of its original meaning).

Our most evolved and developed sense of our brain is sight. Essential and informative, it originates from a survival function for the human being. It allows us to inform ourselves of the danger to choose the appropriate actions and reactions to the appropriate situations, and this uses our judgment. On the other hand, in our evolution, writing (written language) has allowed us to establish a universal communication of its codes. It is for this reason as soon as wine has been the object of lust and exchange, that the first writings

appear on clay amphorae, bottles and barrels. We use this primary sense to decode what cannot be seen, felt, or touched. "The elixir of the gods".

This nomenclature has followed fashions and currents, and today, knowing how to read a wine label between the lines, especially when it is American and/or what I refer to as "Vin Hipster," is essential so as not to be deceived by what is not in writing, and therefore, of what we cannot be certain.

#### ...21:19.1

##### The American Label:

The label or counter-label must absolutely provide us with accurate information regulated by the TTB (Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau) and COLA (certificate of label approval).

First, the **government warning** (give this a quick read if you have not already done so): It is important to understand that laws are established based on minimum demands and standards. There is nothing that prevents the producer from including more details than required.



#### ...21:19.2

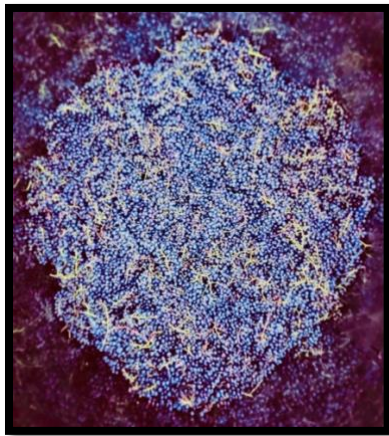
##### ABV

Then, the entry of the alcohol level (ABV). The alcohol level is important for the consumer, because the lower the rate, the lower the percentage of sugar in the wine (except for so-called dessert wines that are lower in ABV but higher in sugar). When it comes to the labeled ABV we encounter a catch 22: **a wine that has 14.0% ABV or less allows for a margin of error (intentional or not) of 1.5% more or less than what is written on the label.** This means that your wine at

12.5% ABV may have an actual rate of 11% or 14%. But beware, that's not all. **If the wine is at 14.1% ABV or more, the inscription can only have a margin of error less than or equal to 1%.** So if your wine has 15.5% ABV in reality, it may contain only 14.5% real ABV or could be at 16.5%. (Well !!!)

Okay, so you may say to me, "so what?"

Well, if you take into consideration that the percentage of alcohol multiplied by 1.8, this gives you the sugar level, and therefore your glass of wine at 13.5% contains 24.3 grams of sugar (equal to 5.8 tsp). 1 gram of sugar provides 3.87 kilocalories, and this represents 565 kilocalories per bottle. But if the actual ABV is 15% rather, the unsaid difference in sugar level will be 27 grams of sugar (6.5 tsp) or 63 Kilocalories more. Hello, accuracy?!



More importantly,

...21:19.3

#### Grape Varieties Listed (or not) on a Label:

*Each state and AVA have regulations that may differ slightly from the nationally required minimum regulations. For the sake of simplicity, I will generalize this approach to all American labels.*

- 1 If the **grape variety** is listed on the label, a **minimum of 75%** of this specific grape variety must be used in the final production of this wine.

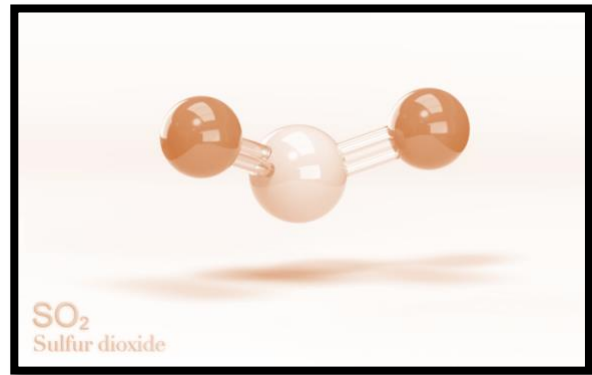
*Example:*

*A Californian "Cabernet Sauvignon" label can consist of 25% of other grapes of American origin, such as Syrah from Washington State or Merlot from Texas(!), or Chardonnay from the Sonoma region.*

- 2 If there is an inscription of the **AVA on the label, then 85% of the grape varieties registered must come from said AVA.** This allows for 15% surprise of the origin of the other grape varietal(s) in the bottle.

*Imagine this: you particularly like Pinot Noir from the AVA Dundee Hills in Oregon's Willamette Valley. If the grape variety and the AVA are on the label and the wine is 13.5% ABV, it is possible that could be actually drinking a wine that's 85% from Dundee Hills but with 25% from Gamay (of which 15% are from Michigan at 15% ABV) Whoops....*

- 3 Here is the important part: if **"estate grown" is written on the label**, then (*more surprises for you*) **100% of the grapes must originate from said estate**, but only **75% is required to be the listed grape variety.** *Possibly true!!!!*
- 4 If the **vineyard** is included on the label, then **95% of the wine must be from that vineyard.** But that still leaves us with potentially 25% unsaid regarding grape varietals!



...21:19.4

#### Sulfites and their Validated Inscription

Sulfites have been both topic of discussion and myth around wine for the past few years. The law in our country regulates only a generic inscription about sulfites that the wine contains: "Contains Sulfites," but **there's no regulation on the requirement of percentage.** A wine generally varies from 5 mg/l (5 parts per million) to 200 mg/l. Yet a wine is legal for sale as long as it does not exceed 350 mg / l (350 parts per million). A real headache, with a possible difference of 345 mg/l. SO2 sulfite and other sulfite represent a long and fascinating subject. I propose in

order to shorten this Newsletter, to return to the subject "sulfite or not sulfite, that is the question" (the next Newsletter). What we must remember is that a wine produces naturally, during its fermentation between 5 to 30 mg / l of SO<sub>2</sub> sulfite. It is therefore impossible to have a wine without sulfite. But it is possible to have wines without added sulfite.

AVA (American Viticulture Area) is comparable to AOC in Europe.

### ...21:19.5

#### Information on the volume of liquid in the bottle

Did you realize that the inscription of the volume on the label is always written in "Milliliter" and not in Ounces? Do you know exactly how many ounces are in your wine bottle?

The irony is that the origin of this measure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century originated in the British measure. The barrel of wine is 50 Gallons Imperial, which is equal to 225 liters. This represents per gallon 4.54 Liters. So, 50 gallons is exactly 300 bottles of 750 ml. And for us 25.36 oz USA, of liquid.



### ...21:19.6

#### Vintage or Vintages?

U.S. labeling law allows a single year of production on the label if 85% of the grapes are of that vintage (some states require 95%). This means that your 2015 wine may have been (secretly) blended with 2011 and 2013 at 15% of the volume! The logic is that character is the value of a wine is based on the quality of the grape grown of the year. So where is the rectitude in all this?

### Let's Recap! Book of Bertil, Genesis 21:19....1-6

An American wine label must inform the consumer of the following:

Government Warning: 100% true but rarely read (written in very small print)

From where the wine was produced and bottled

If a grape variety is registered, this will possibly be false at 25% for the origin and the other variety or varieties.

If the AVA is registered, you will only be at 15%

If Estate is registered you will have a 100% guarantee of the origin of the grapes, but only 15% on other varieties possibly in the bottle.

If the vineyard is listed on the label 95% of the registered grapes will be of origin but 25% surprise on the other grapes in the bottle, and with 5% super-surprise.

The inscription that the wine contains sulfite, but without specifying whether it is 5 parts per million or 350 parts per million.

The alcohol level has 1.5% error.

25.36 oz of liquid guaranteed

The vintage has 85% or 95% truth



Psalm 51:9

"Turn your gaze away from my sins, erase all my iniquities."

**The thorny subject: the aesthetics of the label**  
21.19.@@@

**The Instagram Moment**



To return to the subject of sight, our brain is a very surprising organ. It will choose the beautiful and the attractive before the rational and the reasoned & reasonable judgment. Talk to Adam about it, he knows something about it. When you have the producers, and especially hipsters and wine oriented toward the « natural », we quickly understood that to be different, attractive, seductive, it was necessary to be hyper graphic and hyper minimalist. Then the bottle is presented to you today, without apparent writings, and without information. Your choice is no longer the content but satisfy it!! Who really turns the bottle to read the counter label anyway?



**So, you might say, “How does one navigate around this?”**

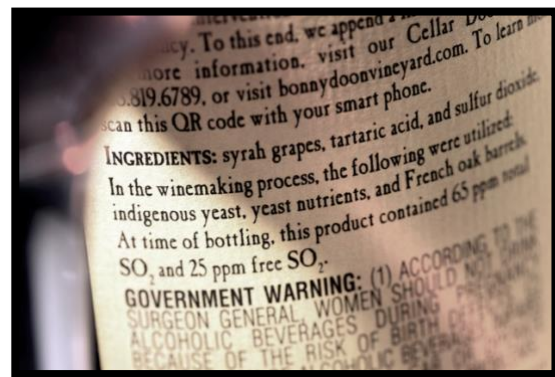
*Psalm 15:2-3*

*"He who walks in integrity, practices justice and says what he really thinks. He does not slander with his*

*tongue, he does not harm his fellow man, and he does not cast dishonor on his neighbor.»*

For us at Bonde the most important thing is that the winemaker is honest and respectful of eco-responsible standards (organic, biodynamic, sustainable, natural) and that the passion is in the content. This is what we define as “Authors' wine.”

**Choosing your wines at our shop guarantees that we have chosen for you, a selection of wines whose whole truth (and more), will be marked on the label.**



*Mr. B*

**\*Memorandum:**

*My words and opinions in these newsletters are and would always be personal, and I intend to offend.*

*I always accept that others have the full right and duty to challenge me, to argue, and, if it is necessary, excommunicate me from their beliefs (often dull and hollow) because I would act the same way if it were the other way around.*

**bonde**  
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