

ONE BOTTLE: The 2011 Domaine Tempier Bandol Rosé

by JOSHUA BAER

On a flight from Phoenix to Albuquerque, a young Navajo woman told me stories about growing up in Gallup. “The gangs ran everything,” she said. “That’s what people in Gallup don’t understand. They hear gunshots at night and they think, Oh, that’s just kids being kids, but they’re completely wrong. Kids being kids is life. Gangs being gangs is death—for everybody, not just for the gangs. I lived in fear. It got so bad, with all the break-ins and shootings? I stopped going to the store. The last year I lived in Gallup, I drove to Albuquerque for groceries. That’s actually how I moved to Albuquerque, was by shopping there. One day, I was in Albertson’s, the one on Lomas, and I was all set to pay and load up my truck and drive back to Gallup, but then I was like, You don’t have to go back. You can drive around and look for signs and rent a place today. And then you’ll be here. You can take classes at UNM, or apply for a job, or just chill. The bottom line is, Gallup’s going to blow up, and when it does, you won’t be there. You’ll be here.”

She had a smooth, steady voice. Her eyes were large and dark. She was wearing a white tank top and a pair of running shorts. Her hair and her skin were as smooth as her voice. While I listened to her, I tried to pay attention without staring. It was difficult. She was too easy to look at.

“So, now you live in Albuquerque?” I said.

She laughed, then she punched me on the shoulder. “You’re such a hoot,” she said. “Always pretending. The thing is, the gangs are in Albuquerque, too, but it’s an enormous city, so it’s no big deal to look the other way. But in a tiny little town like Gallup? It’s only a matter of time before you take a bullet that was meant for somebody else. You or one of your friends. But I’m not telling you anything new. You were one of the first people who told me I should leave. You said it was my destiny.”

“Excuse me?” I said.

She punched me again. “You crack me up,” she said.

Late that night, after I got home, I looked at my face in the mirror. Did I have the kind of face that might seem familiar to Navajo women on airplanes? Was it possible that an Anglo man who looked like me could have lived in Gallup a few years ago, and that the same man could have encouraged a young Navajo woman to move to Albuquerque?

I decided that anything was possible. Then I went to bed.

In New York, at Sotheby’s, I was standing in front of a painting by Andrew Wyeth when a man walked up and shook my hand. “How’s it going?” he said. “How’s the family?” He was wearing a camel hair sport jacket, blue jeans, and tasseled loafers.

“Do we know each other?” I said.

The man burst out laughing. “Some things never change,” he said. He pointed at the Wyeth. “Nogeeshik,” he said. “It’s one of his better portraits. I’ll take that over a Helga any day. What do you think it’ll bring?”

That night, at my hotel, I looked in the mirror. Was there

something about my face that made strangers think we were old friends? Or was this more complicated? What if my face was changing into versions of other people’s faces, but I couldn’t see it change? How many people did I look like? When would it happen again?

Which brings us to the 2011 Domaine Tempier Bandol Rosé.

In the glass, the 2011 Domaine Tempier Rosé is a pale coral pink. The bouquet takes everything you thought you knew about the bouquet of a world-class Provençal rosé and rearranges those assumptions. Or maybe it shatters them. On the palate, your first sip of the 2011 Tempier Rosé splits the difference between nostalgia and surprise. You do not taste this wine as much as you allow its gifts to overwhelm you.

The finish is edgy. It refuses to go quietly. It stays with you and entertains you until you are forced to admit that this is a new kind of finish, an innovation that evaporates before you can identify its qualities.

In a wine shop in Pasadena, an older man touched my elbow. He was wearing navy blue coveralls. The name “Dutch” was sewn in red script into the fabric above his breast pocket. The man had thick, white, unruly hair. “I can talk with my eyes closed,” he said. He was smiling, and at first I mistrusted his smile.

“Okay,” I said. “So can I. So can everybody.”

“I meant my mouth,” said the man. “Not my eyes. I can talk with my mouth closed.”

I looked around for cameras. Aside from the man behind the counter, we were the only people in the store. “Is this some kind of prank?” I said.

The man pantomimed zipping his mouth shut. His smile was still there, but his lips were pressed together. I heard his voice say, “There’s a helicopter flying over the city of Prague. As we speak. It’s midnight, and they’re evacuating the palace.” The words sounded like they were coming out of the center of his chest.

“How do you do that?” I said. “Are you a ventriloquist?”

“Ventriloquy is *throwing* your voice,” said the man, speaking normally again. “Talking with your mouth shut is not ventriloquy. It’s an audible manifestation of thought. I’m one of eight guys in the world who can do it. Eight *known* guys.”

“People would pay money to see you do that,” I said.

“But you got to hear me for free,” he said. “You and all your friends.” ♡

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