

ONE BOTTLE: The Paul Bara Champagne “Grand Rosé”

by JOSHUA BAER

I got a letter from the future. “Foolish child,” it began, “your world is about to change in ways that will terrify you. When the changes occur, you will feel like your life has been stolen from you, turned inside out, stripped of its meaning, and returned to you—all in a matter of seconds. If you read it and take what it says to heart, this letter will protect you. If you ignore it, or choose to think of it as a prank, you will lose everything.”

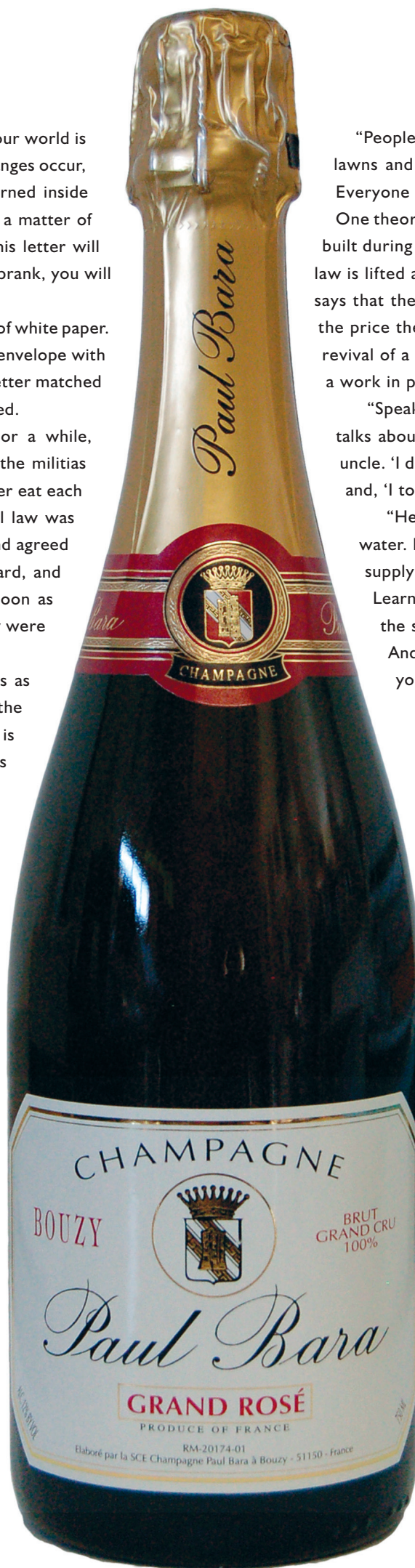
The letter was handwritten in dark blue ink on a sheet of white paper. It was delivered to my mailbox on Halloween, in a manila envelope with my name written on the outside. The handwriting of the letter matched the handwriting on the envelope. The letter was not signed.

“Things are not so bad,” the letter continued. “For a while, none of us thought the riots would end. The gangs and the militias fought with such intensity, it seemed like they would rather eat each other alive than agree to a truce, but then, after martial law was declared, both sides put down their guns, shook hands, and agreed to stop fighting. Of course, the police, the National Guard, and the ‘advisors’ had something to do with the truce. As soon as the uniforms arrived, the gangs and the militias knew they were overmatched.

“In her speeches, President Sarah refers to the riots as ‘growing pains.’ Like a lot of what President Sarah says, the term is open to multiple interpretations but the message is specific: Your job is to obey the law. Law enforcement’s job is to enforce it. As long as you do your job, law enforcement will leave you alone. As soon as the criminals and the terrorists are off the streets and behind bars, martial law will be a distant memory. America is still a great country. It just needed to be saved from itself.

“At first, you will have a hard time with President Sarah. Because of where you grew up and what you were taught in school, you will think that President Sarah is a nitwit, and that she does not deserve to be president. When you have those thoughts, ask yourself this question: If President Sarah is a nitwit, then why did *Time* name her ‘Person of the Year’ two years in a row and describe her as ‘the most calculating president to ever sit in the Oval Office?’

“After you admit that you were wrong about President Sarah, you will see how lucky you are to have a president who does not hold grudges. Saving a country from itself is not easy. Just ask Barack Obama. After he lost the election, he lost his temper, and his anger was there for everyone to see. But after the outages and the shortages and the riots, even Barack Obama had the decency to admit that the country was in the right hands. That’s why he offered his support to President Sarah. That’s why he went on Fox News and asked all of us to pray for her. He knew what was at stake. Barack Obama did not survive by underestimating his opponents.



“People disappear. One day they’re living next door, mowing their lawns and feeding their hummingbirds. The next day they’re gone. Everyone has a theory about where people go after they disappear.

One theory says that the disappeared are being held in remote prisons built during the Bush years, and that they will be released after martial law is lifted and the new identity cards are distributed. Another theory says that the disappeared are gone for good, and that their absence is the price the rest of us have to pay for the end of martial law and the revival of a free society. The advisors tell us not to worry. Freedom is a work in progress. If you want perfection, talk to God.

“Speaking of God, it’s a great time to believe in Him. Everyone talks about God. It’s like overnight He became everybody’s invisible uncle. ‘I did what God told me to do’—you hear that all the time. That and, ‘I took God’s advice and never looked back.’

“Here is my advice. Go buy some canned food and some distilled water. Buy a first aid kit, plenty of kerosene lamps, and six months’ supply of vitamins. Buy a rifle. Buy ammunition. Buy morphine. Learn how to be patient. Learn how to stay up all night, watching the shadows for the shadow that turns out not to be a shadow. And buy some Champagne. If you don’t celebrate the bad times, you don’t deserve to celebrate the good times.”

Which brings us to the Paul Bara Champagne “Grand Rosé.”

In the glass, the Grand Rosé is a quiet, cautious, meticulous pink. The bouquet is exhilarating, the way the smell of a woman’s hair can be exhilarating. On the palate, the Grand Rosé is simultaneously orthodox and pagan. Each sip sets certain limits but those limits set you free. The finish celebrates the art of the slow, soft farewell.

I took the letter and the envelope to a graphologist. After she read the letter, the graphologist smiled. “The handwriting is feminine. So is the non-linear, free-associative, protective tone. This letter was written in a hurry and the writer was at risk when she wrote it.”

I asked the graphologist if the letter could be from the future.

“Look at the consonants,” she said. “See how they slant to the left, like trees in a fierce wind? We call that a regressive slant. It means that the writer has acute emotional cravings and that she is haunted by a deep-seated longing for the past. So, yes, I would say that this is a letter from the future, and that the writer is someone who wants you to survive.”

One Bottle is dedicated to the appreciation of good wines and good times, one bottle at a time. The name “One Bottle” and the contents of this column are ©2010 by onebottle.com. For back issues, go to onebottle.com. You can write to Joshua Baer at jb@onebottle.com

