

ONE BOTTLE: The 2003 Château Saint Martin de la Garrigue, “Grès de Montpellier” by JOSHUA BAER

When I asked the question, the twins looked at me like I was crazy. Then they looked at each other. The talking twin said something to the silent twin. He said it in Navajo. The silent twin nodded. He didn't seem to be offended but he didn't seem all that happy, either.

“You need to come with us,” said the talking twin. He and the silent twin led me away from the dance and into one of the houses at the edge of the plaza. Inside the house, they led me through a series of rooms to a room at the back of the house. The house smelled like a combination of bacon, peanut butter, and Vick's VapoRub. There were beds and blankets in the rooms, and there were pictures of saints on the walls, but no people. Everyone was at the dance.

When we reached the room at the back of the house, the talking twin said I should sit on the floor. There was a kiva fireplace in the corner of the room and there were embers but no fire in the fireplace. It was cold in the room, so I sat with my back to the fireplace. The silent twin sat on the floor across the room with his back to the door. The talking twin sat on the floor at the center of the room, halfway between me and his brother.

“How come you asked us that question?” said the talking twin.

“Hey, look,” I said, “if I offended you, I'm sorry. I have nothing but respect for Navajo culture. I was just watching the dance. When you guys came up and asked me what I was doing here, I thought you were from the pueblo. Then, when you said you were Navajo, I remembered reading something about how Navajos believe in the four sacred winds. It's a windy night, so I asked the question. I meant no disrespect. I was just trying to be friendly.”

The silent twin looked at the floor. The talking twin held up his hands. “Stop talking,” he said.

The three of us sat in the room without saying anything. You could hear the drums and the singing from the dance, and you could hear the sound of the wind above the sounds of the drums and the singing.

“The answer to your question is yes,” said the talking twin. “Our people believe in the four directions. So, for us, there are the four winds. But for you, there are only two.”

“Why?” I said. “Because I'm White?”

The silent twin laughed and shook his head. He could not get over how stupid I was.

“For you,” said the talking twin, “there is a howling wind and there is a listening wind. You listen to the howling wind. The listening wind listens to you. Right now, for you, that's all there is.”

I tried to control myself but I've never been that good at controlling anything, much less myself. “Oh, I see,” I said. “I'm not spiritually ready for the four winds. I can only handle two. Is that what you're telling me?”

“Being ready has nothing to do with it,” said the talking twin. “Neither does being White. Why are you angry?”

“I'm not angry,” I said. “I'm just frustrated.”

“That's who you are,” said the talking twin. “If you want to know the four winds, start with the two. Speak to the howling wind. Listen to the listening wind. Maybe that will help with the four. Or maybe not.”

Which brings us to the 2003 Château Saint Martin de la Garrigue, Coteaux du Languedoc, “Grès de Montpellier.”

It has been a while since the beat of the drum and the whoop of the dance could be heard in the countryside of the Languedoc. As recently as two hundred years ago, in the middle of summer, people in the south of France danced, sang, and worshipped outside, but those days are gone—maybe not forever, but definitely for the time being.

These days, the French do their worshipping inside, usually in the kitchen and at the dinner table. Eating and drinking are a religion for the French, at least that's how it looks to Americans. Whether their food and their wines are sacraments or just food and wine depends on the Frenchman.

In the glass, the 2003 Château Saint Martin de la Garrigue is opaque in color and thick in texture. The bouquet is relentless. You get your nose into a glass of this wine and you feel lucky to get it back. On the palate, the Château Saint Martin is more of a story than a statement. The finish goes on for ten minutes. It's like a song you can't get out of your head.

That night, at the pueblo, the talking twin told me not to follow them. He and the silent twin got up and left. I waited in the room for a while, then I got up and went back to the dance. I looked from face to face in the crowd around the plaza but I never saw the twins again. That was almost thirty years ago, though it feels like it happened last night.

In the years since it happened, I've met Navajo people in Santa Fe, at the pueblos, and on the Navajo Reservation. If I had to guess, I'd say I've asked a hundred Navajos about the twins. None of them could tell me anything.

I've listened to the howling wind and I've let the listening wind listen to me. Those parts I can handle. Speaking to the howling wind is something I've done, but I don't think I'm any good at it. Listening to the listening wind remains a mystery. ♦

One Bottle is dedicated to the appreciation of good wine and good times, one bottle at a time. The name *One Bottle*, and the contents of this column, are © 2006 by onebottle.com. If you need help finding a wine or building a cellar, write to Joshua Baer at jb@onebottle.com.

