



THE WINE WORLD'S IDEAL PAIRING

Join us in celebrating two of the oldest and most esteemed families in wine, Gallo and Boisset, sharing their lives, love and family traditions.

V

inExpo is a massive wine event, held on the banks of the Gironne river in Bordeaux. Here, thousands of wine companies set up booths to pour their emerging vintages as executives, winegrowers, distributors meet, taste and make deals. Every year is memorable, but 2003 stands out for me.

On the first day of this four-day extravaganza, I bumped into my friend and colleague, Jean Charles Boisset, son of Jean Claude Boisset and owner of the third-largest wine company in France, headquartered in Beaune. The Boisset family already owned many famous properties in Burgundy but at this time were starting to acquire wineries in California, including the Sonoma Pinot Noir producer DeLoach. It was Jean Charles who was driving this expansion, having been educated in London and San Francisco and now living almost half of each year in the Bay area.

I told Jean Charles I was planning to attend a party hosted by the California Wine Institute at one of the lavish Médoc chateaus. I asked J.C. if he would like to join me and he agreed.

Later that night, after jazz and cocktails on a wide expanse of lawn, J.C. and I entered the interior of this medieval castle for the dinner itself and spotted a large, round table with Robert Gallo, the son of the late Julio Gallo, his charming wife Marie and some of the children from their large family. I knew the Gallo family for many years since my father represented Gallo Wines in New York during the 50s, 60s and 70s. Fresh out of college, I'd spent some time representing Gallo wines myself before founding Wine Enthusiast Companies.

After saying hello to Dad and Mom and introducing them to J.C. I spotted their daughter Gina at the other end of the table. Gina was not only a hands-on winemaker at their Sonoma Vineyards but had also become the charismatic media face of the Gallo brand along with her brother Matt.

I knew Gina well and suddenly a light bulb went off: two attractive single people in their early 30s from viticultural backgrounds—they might enjoy meeting each other. And so I introduced them, saying

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that they “should really get to know each other since you have so much in common” (a bit of a stretch at that moment but it sounded like the thing to say). There was electricity in the air immediately. Lively conversation ensued and before the night was out they had promised they would reconnect when they were both back in Sonoma. Six years later, in 2009, they were married.

In this issue we join J.C. and Gina in their stunning home in San Francisco (see page 52) for a festive portrait of how these two famous wine families marry their holiday traditions. It's a heartfelt, joyful

blend of America, France—and Italy, too, as the Gallos happily summon their Italian heritage in all their endeavors. Executive Editor Susan Kostrzewa details the décor, recipes, wine pairings, songs and the all-important role of Frenchie the Bulldog in making even a small gathering memorable. The crucial ingredients in the recipe are true love and close families.

Also in this issue: our Top 100 Cellar Selections (page 36). Throughout the year, our tasting panelists can designate a certain number of wines as Cellar Selections—wines they feel will age in a properly temperature- and humidity-controlled cellar. And by age we mean improve, evolve, develop more complexities. On page 60, Roger Voss profiles some of the finest sparkling wines of France crafted outside Champagne: sparklers of the Loire, Burgundy, Alsace and Limoux—wines priced so reasonably you can open them for your holiday guests without seeing dollar signs floating away with every pop of the cork. On page 66, we present our annual gift guide for those of you

who enjoy giving wine, spirits and food-related items to the lucky folks on your list.

You are now all invited to Jean Charles' and Gina's house for a Christmas feast...enjoy!

Editor & Publisher