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## Raymond Vineyards surprises with elegance and theatre

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Stepping into the [Raymond Vineyards](#) Crystal Cellar exclusive new tasting room is similar to stepping into an avant-garde movie set with Baccarat crystal lighting, thumping music and outrageously dressed mannequins.

“Visitors are amazing and a little overwhelmed,” said tasting room sales Kelly Muters. “This room (one of three tasting rooms) showcases our Cabernet Sauvignon vintages and captures a moment in time.”

Each tasting area represents the past, present and future of the vineyards.

Tasting in the “Past” room with its historical photos are \$10-\$15 for five wines and tasting in the “Present” crystal room is \$25 for six current releases plus an older vintage from the cellar.

Stainless steel wine holding tanks line the walls of this functional room. Written on the metal walls in flowing script are word descriptions of the wine: “sexy, sensual, racy, voluptuous, opulent, luminous, robust, fleshy and sassy.”

Whimsical full-sized figures are tucked into corners and perched on a nearby trapeze.

After tasting Raymond’s 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon – a dark brooding wine with accents of clove and leather aromas, black fruit and velvety tannins– all the descriptions amply apply.

Another side chamber of the vast room is the barrel room, for small, intimate tasting. The space, with high back leather chairs and a polished wooden table of crystal glassware is lined with aging barrels. This room represents the future and is usually for tour groups by prior appointment.

Jean-Charles Boisset, who owns 17 wineries in France, bought Raymond Vineyards in 2009 with a vision of providing elegance, theater and a more attachment with nature around the winery.

“The Baccarat crystal chandelier was assembled piece-by-piece over the tasting room floor,” Muters said. “It is valued at \$60,000. John-Charles doesn’t adhere to the philosophy that wine has to be stuffy to be enjoyed. For him wine is a living organism with amazing character.”

The tasting rooms are open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.