



DRINK – Wine tasting in the Crystal Cellar

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This may be the winery tasting room opening of the year. [Raymond Vineyards](#), in Napa Valley, has partnered with the legendary French crystal maker [Baccarat](#), to create a one-of-a-kind tasting room, the Crystal Cellar.

It's pretty awesome. Granted, I was at the soiree to celebrate opening the Crystal Cellar. The atmosphere was like a sophisticated night club. Mirrors everywhere – on the tasting bar and display cases. A stunning crystal chandelier, the focal point of the cellar. A mannequin hanging from a trapeze. Lots of colorful mood lighting. Display cases with Baccarat wine decanters, glasses, and other decorative objects.

I have seen the cellar during the daytime, when it's much more subdued, but equally brilliant.

The pairing of a winery and crystal manufacturer is nothing new, but this is the first collaboration for Baccarat with a winery. The inspiration comes from Jean-Charles Boisset, who is head of [Boisset Family Estates](#). Boisset bought the Raymond winery in August 2009, setting its sights on improving the wine quality and developing a unique wine tasting experience. This is Boisset's first Napa Valley acquisition. They also own DeLoach Vineyards in Sonoma County, and recently opened Taste of Terroir, a wine tasting room on the square in Healdsburg.

Jean-Charles told me he starting collecting Baccarat at the tender age of 11. You can imagine he's got a large collection now. He approached Baccarat about a partnership with Raymond. Makes, perfect

sense, both Boisset and Baccarat are rooted in France, and Baccarat creates beautiful decanters and glassware.

I can't wait to take friends wine tasting in the Crystal Cellar. You don't need to make a reservation, but there is a \$25 tasting fee. What they're pouring: the Raymond Vineyards District Cabernet Sauvignon series, including the 2006 Oakville, Rutherford and St. Helena wines, the '06 Generations, a 2009 barrel sample of a barrel fermented Chardonnay, and a 1987 Napa Valley Cab. This last wine was poured at the opening event, and I found it to still have fruit and a floral nose, and soft tannins.

If you get to Paris, you should plan to go to the [Baccarat museum](#). The crystal collection is amazing. The galleries and restaurant were designed by Philippe Stark (reason enough to go). The display cases are filled with both vintage and modern works.