

Wine Spectator

Boisset Family Estates Expands into Monterey

French wine company acquires Lockwood Vineyard in California's Central Coast

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Boisset Family Estates, a Burgundy-based wine company with a growing list of international wine properties, has purchased Lockwood Vineyard in California's Monterey County, executives have told *Wine Spectator*. The deal expands the size of Boisset's growing U.S. portfolio, which includes nine brands from Sonoma and Napa. Details of the sale were not disclosed, but Boisset will acquire full ownership of the 75,000-case Lockwood brand. Lockwood's founders will retain ownership of their winery facility and their estate vineyard, with Boisset buying the grapes under a long-term contract.

"I'm very bullish about Monterey," said Jean-Charles Boisset, [president of Boisset Family Estates](#), who added that the company had been looking for potential wine brands in Monterey for some time. Boisset was interested in [Lockwood](#) because of the *terroir* of the brand's San Lucas estate vineyard, which he believes produces Chardonnays similar to those of Pouilly-Fuissé and Mâcon in Burgundy. "The estate seduced us because of the soils and the size of the estate [vineyard]," Boisset said.

Paul Toeppen, Phil Johnson and Butch Lindley planted 1,850 acres of contiguous vineyards in 1981 at the base of the Santa Lucia mountain range in Monterey County. They chose the site because of the soil, which consists of crushed fossilized seashells, and planted seven grape varieties including Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. They released their first wines in 1989 under the Lockwood Vineyard brand, pricing the majority of the wines in the \$10 to \$20 range.

According to Boisset, the brand will focus on Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon produced in a "food-friendly" style using minimal oak. Lockwood's current winemaker, Larry Gomez, is leaving after he finishes aging the 2010 vintage. Boisset's winemaking team will take over production, shifting winemaking to one of their facilities.

This is the latest California sale for Boisset Family Estates; it [bought Buena Vista in Sonoma Valley](#) earlier this year. The company plans to expand its presence in the Central Coast and is looking for other properties in the area. "We feel that there is a strong future domestically as well as internationally [for Monterey]," said Boisset. "We want to make Monterey our home in the Central Coast."