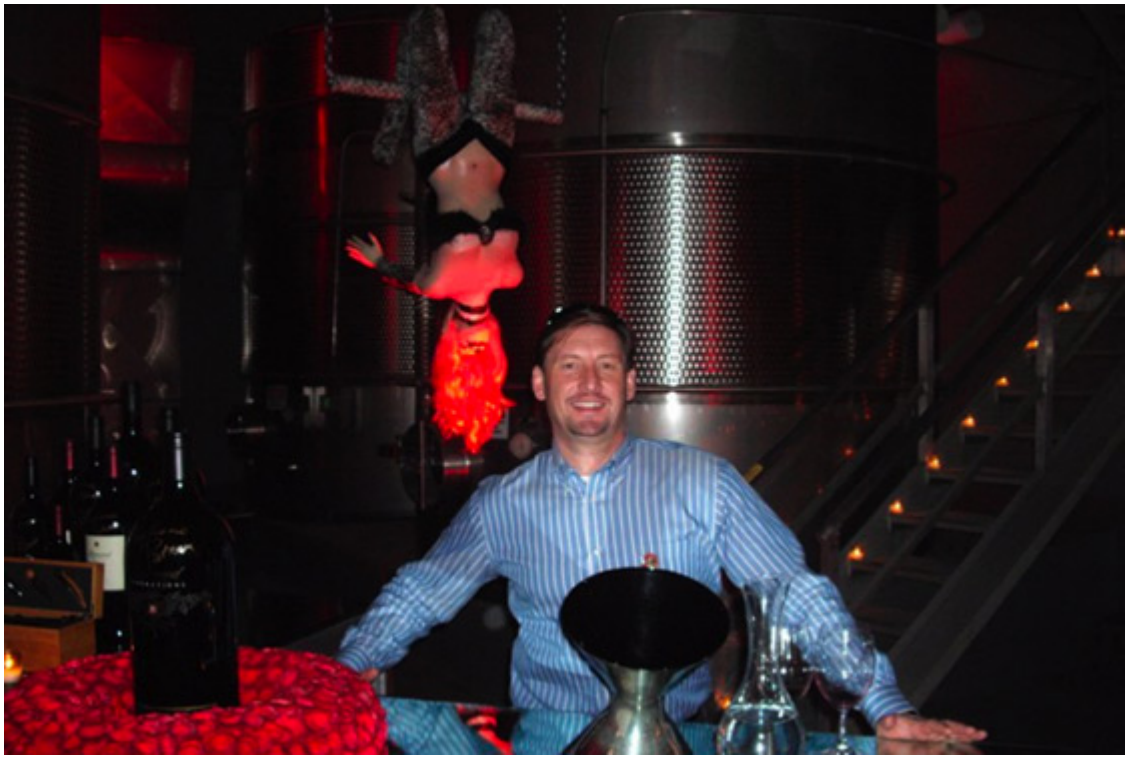
GRUB STREET San Francisco

At Raymond Vineyards, You Will Find Jackson 5 Videos, Lots of Crystal, and a Stuffed Leopard

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We don't know who this guy is, but that is a scantily clad manequin on a trapeze.*Photo: via Facebook*

Some significant cosmetic changes have taken place recently at Raymond Vineyards in St. Helena, with the decades-old winery now under the ownership of Burgundy-based Boisset Family Estates. The *Guardian* includes the tasting room in a roundup of notable wine country stops, and we were most intrigued by the description of the "delightfully eccentric" Jean-Charles Boisset who has transformed the grounds outside the winery into a kooky "Theater of Nature" featuring a bunch of suspended picture frames and such. He says things like, "I love personally the word[s] sexy and voluptuous," and he's transformed the winery's tasting rooms into gaudy spaces where that fictional Russian billionaire from those DirecTV ads would feel right at home.

Tasting Room 1: The Crystal Cellar, "a room that has been lined with steel to give the effect of being inside a wine vat. An explosion of Baccarat crystal shimmers off its walls, vats, and giant mirrors glinting around us. Encased vintage crystal decanters are inscribed with wine descriptors — in lipstick." (Also, see above the mannequin in black lacy underwear on the trapeze.)

Tasting Room 2: The private tasting lounge, available for groups. "It housed gold and white leather couches covered in fur throws, a stuffed leopard standing guard in the corner... The pièce de résistance: a giant flat-screen rimmed in gold — of course! — playing Jackson 5 music videos."

As for the wine? Eh.

Tour de Tasting Room [SFBG]