

Tampa Bay's finewine
places + faces + bottles
Guide

RAYMOND VINEYARDS & CELLARS,
St. Helena, CA.

By Karen & Brian Aungst

Raymond Vineyards, founded in 1971, is one of Napa Valley's great estates and the winery's family tree is entwined with the earliest foundations of the Napa Valley. The Raymond family arrived in Napa in 1933 and became deeply connected to the valley's winemaking origins after Roy Raymond, Sr. married Martha Jane Beringer in 1936. Roy ultimately worked more than thirty-five years with the Beringers and after Beringer Winery was sold in 1971, the Raymond family left to start making wine under the Raymond name. They purchased 90 acres just south of St. Helena in the Rutherford appellation and their first harvest was in 1974. Raymond Vineyards became a part of the Boisset Family Estates collection of wineries in August 2009. With owner, Jean-Charles Boisset at the helm, a dynamic new team began to take shape: renowned winemaker Philippe Melka brought his well-known Cabernet expertise to complement the Raymond team during the 2009 harvest and Stephanie Putnam was named the new Director of Winemaking in February, 2010.





The winery itself began a renovation that will cement Raymond's status as one of Napa's classic landmarks. Upon entering the property you are greeted by the "Illusions of Reality" an interactive display featuring picture frames of all sizes and shapes so that guests can frame their own perfect view of the Napa Valley. They have also installed a platform above the vineyards so that visitors can get a broader view of the vines and surrounding landscape which includes the "Theatre of Nature".

At left: "Illusions of Reality" picture frame.



Brian & Karen Aungst with Stephanie Putnam

The "Theatre of Nature" is an exhibit of plant and animal life that explains organic and biodynamic winegrowing methods being implemented at the winery. It is truly an educational experience that the whole family will enjoy. The modern day renaissance which is taking place has transformed the Tasting Room where sleek lines, white and light are the focus. The property features a beautiful grove where you can relax and enjoy the wines while playing croquet, badminton, basketball or Petanque.

The wine tasting programs, vineyard and cellar tours have been expanded to afford guests many new options to learn about the wines. We spent a gorgeous afternoon sharing a picnic lunch in the grove and sharing some fabulous Raymond wines. Our personal favorites were the 2008, Raymond Reserve Selection Napa Valley Chardonnay, the 2007, Raymond Family Classic Cabernet Sauvignon and the amazing 2006, Raymond "Generations" Cabernet Sauvignon. Please visit www.raymondvineyards.com for more information and be sure to visit the Boisset "Taste of Terroir" Tasting Room in Healdsburg, where you can sample DeLoach, Raymond and Boisset wines.