

Come for the Wine

Wine, Food & Travel: Adventures in the Wine Tourism Universe

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2012

Back to the Future at Buena Vista Winery --Some Like It Boisset

Whenever I get an invitation to any event that is associated with Jean-Charles Boisset I drop everything, clear the calendar, and make sure I can attend. JCB events are never dull and always illuminating in ways one can't anticipate.



Just about six weeks ago I was invited to tour the grounds of the newly restored Buena Vista Winery in Sonoma and witness the first grapes placed into the new custom built wine tanks as part of the Grand Re-Opening Ceremony. I live tweeted the event and posted video and pictures, but for a full account afterwards it takes me some time to process it all and the writer in me needs to let it marinate, let the essence of the experience bubble up in to my conscious. Others have written more objective accounts of the day (see links below) —but if you want the magical mystery tour of my synapses read on—

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WHERE I'M SPEAKING:



Back To The Future

Upon arrival at the property we were greeted by the Count of Buena Vista himself –well actually it was an actor portraying Count Haraszthy– who was our escort on a journey back in time to the birth of California winemaking.



We strolled the grounds with the Count who led us past historical markers telling the story of the family and winery as we made our way towards the inner courtyard. Then Jean-Charles Boisset appeared and took us deeper into the property by way of the tasting room and museum, the courtyard vortex fountain, and of course the cellars themselves.



No stone has been left unturned, un-reinforced or unpolished--literally. It's a restoration of the highest order. Only a Hollywood plastic surgeon could work more magic on the old façade and restore it to its full luster and glory. From replanting the historic crops and trees and a complete re-engineering of the landscaping, to the total rebuilding of the cellar and tasting room— Boisset is moving Buena Vista back to the future and into the forefront of California

INTERNATIONAL WINE TOURISM CONFERENCE



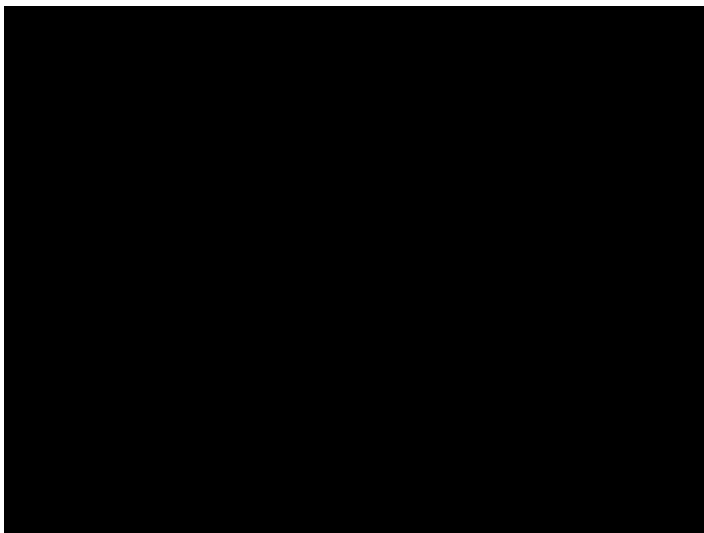
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winemaking and wine tourism.



There was ribbon cutting and sabering and cellar anointing. There was “Some Like It Hot” playing on continuous loop in the cellar. There was Tokaji, birthday cake, proclamations, and more celebrating. And of course there was wine.



Behind the Scenes of a Mastermind

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In front of the cellar sits a fountain with a natural vortex used to dynamise the water for biodynamic practices. As I stood by the pool watching the flowers swirl by, I realized the mighty vortex of JCB had drawn me in once again. The master of events and spectacle had pulled another fabulous rabbit of wonder from his imagination filled hat. As usual I was curious about the work behind-the-scenes. I would dearly love to be a fly on the wall during one of the Boisset marketing and event meetings –I can just imagine the conversations that may unfold--

"We shall hang an alligator from the sky to commemorate The Counts tragic but awe inspiring demise in the jaws of a gator. Then we will feast upon gator meat and look death in the eye! Yes --we must honor Count Haraszthy --he is a hero, a super star like our modern day sports figures. Let us make him a modern hero, in zee modern fashion. --We must have zee bobble head made in his image!"



Oh yes, The Count of Buena Vista bobble head. Such a thing exists. It's sitting on my desk right now. Mine is imbued with mystical powers much like a Magic

8 ball and is able to answer Yes and No questions. I frequently consult it about the weather and fashion.

JCB is not selling mere wine, he is selling a sensate experience – a memorable affair that guests can savor long after the bottle has been opened—a memory that lingers in theater of the mind.

Dan Berger recently wrote a piece asking—“**Is Jean-Charles Boisset the next Robert Mondavi?**” I think in part he could be, but JCB is so utterly in tune to his own inner vision that whatever role he assumes will not be a replacement of Mondavi, but a completely unique interpretation and a legacy of his own devise.

Some Like It Boisset



While I watched the scenes of “Some Like It Hot” flicker on the cellar walls it occurred to me that JCB is so very much like the character Tony Curtis portrays on screen. He is the embodiment of the charm, the romance, the sophistication, and most of all the seduction. Some may not always understand his methods, but for visitors seeking an entertaining and educational wine experience—some will certainly like it Boisset.

I am looking forward to what Jean-Charles Boisset has to say about the state of wine tourism when he delivers the keynote at the 2nd Annual **Wine Tourism Conference** that will take place in just a few weeks in Santa Rosa. Wine tourism in all aspects is a great fascination of mine and I think his talk alone will be worth the price of admission.

Disclosure:

I am working on behalf of the Wine Tourism Conference to promote the event. But my opinions and utter fascination with JCB are entirely my own.

Details:

Buena Vista Winery is located at 18000 Old Winery Road in Sonoma.
www.buenavistawinery.com.