

[Home](#) > [Blogs](#) > [rich's blog](#)

Navigation

- [Forums](#)
- [Polls](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Recent posts](#)

User login

Log in using OpenID:[What is OpenID?](#)

Username: *

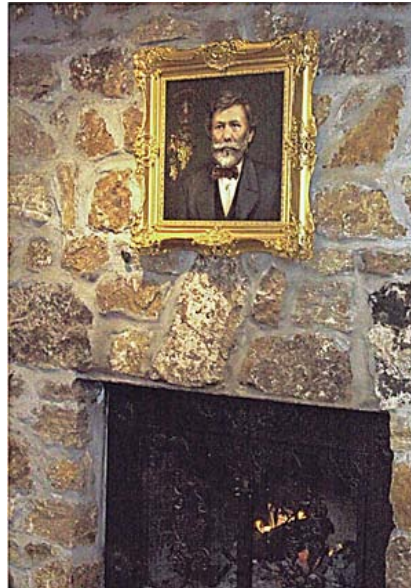
Password: *

- [Create new account](#)
- [Request new password](#)

Rebirth of the Buena Vista Winery

Wed, 09/05/2012 - 01:18 — rich

In 1856 a Tokaji Hungarian immigrant by the name of Agoston Haraszthy de Mokesa purchased 800 acres of land on the Buena Vista ranch (in a region that in contemporary times is known as the in the Carneros AVA) near the town of Sonoma, California, where (over the course of the next 6 years) he built a home, a winery, wine caves, a cellar, and a vineyard.



Agoston Haraszthy de Mokesa

Mr. Haraszthy de Mokesa dry-farmed his hillside vines to produce low yields of highly concentrated flavors and aromas. Always the viniculturist and agronomist, he imported hundreds of varieties of winegrape vines for experimentation, cloning, and blending. In 1862 Harper published his book, "Grape Culture: Wines and Winemaking, With Notes Upon Agriculture and Horticulture", a title that most California winemakers cherished. The next year, in partnership with investment bankers and assisted legislatively by the state government, Mr. Haraszthy founded the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society to facilitate large scale wine grape cultivation.

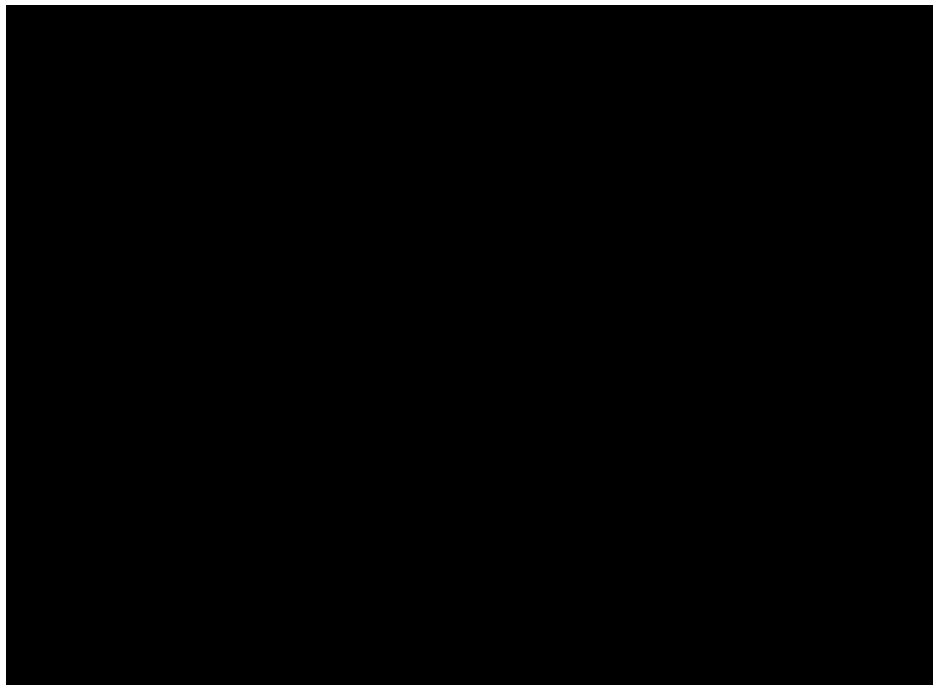
By 1868, the production of his winery quickly reached a scale that had outgrown domestic demand for its' products, leading to his ouster from the partnership. Within another 7 years, in spite of the excellence of Buena Vista wines and the accolades that it continued to receive, the winery went out of business.

During World War II, Frank and Antonia Bartholomew purchased the Buena Vista estate and began its' reconstruction. They hired André Tchelistcheff, the grandfather of modern winemaking, to restore the Buena Vista reputation. In the early 1980's, a young wine tourist from France, by the name of Jean-Charles Boisset, became most enchanted with the Buena Vista Winery during his family's visit there. It left an indelible impression upon him about the quality of wine being produced. The reputation of the Buena Vista Winery reached a new apex during this decade.

The Loma Prieta 1989 Earthquake caused severe structural challenges to the buildings on the Buena Vista estate, which led to their closure. The vineyards continued to yield fine winegrapes, and the vinification took place in other facilities. However, there was considerable turnover in the winemaking, hospitality, and general ownership for the past twenty years. Some of the vintages were not keeping up with the former reputation of the estate. In 2011, the Boisset Family Estate purchased the Buena Vista Winery, when Jean-Charles Boisset decided that the time was right to restore Buena Vista to the excellence that it had previously deserved and enjoyed.

On August 31, 2012, I visited with Monsieur Boisset and his associates, as they officially unveiled the fruits of their restoration project, in the company of the mayor of Tokaj, Hungary in a public presentation that reinvigorated the Tokaji influence in California wine country. The moment was memorialized in a folk dance.





The restoration of the Press House has been a most unusual triumph of architectural engineering. To occlude how the building is now held together, the roof was raised long enough to sink 60 vertical shafts into the rock structure, and fill it with steel rods and epoxy. There is no visible hint of the new high tensile strength that has been given to this 1862 structure.



The Press House now serves as the Tasting Room.

The re-dedication of the Buena Vista Carneros winery struck resonant chords with cultural, historical, performance, musical, and culinary communities around the globe, interweaving cross-currents between these interest groups. While completely unique in its' design, execution, and operation, the rebirth of the Buena Vista Carneros estate as a destination and venue parallels the purpose of the transformation that the Raymond Winery is still undergoing, as they continue to build upon their pull.

Like Count Haraszthy's symphonic field blend of red grapes gushing forth from ancient root stock, the texture, range, depth, character and finish of the BFE global initiatives stand head and shoulders apart from what others are accomplishing in hospitality, membership, and upgrades.

While Tokaji wines have continued to improve in the old world, they are gaining new currency domestically as the Boisset Family Estate imports these wines, which elevates their portfolio of offerings by adding Tokaji Aszú under the Buena Vista Winery label.

A small historical collection of 20th century wines is housed on the second floor. Peering down onto the tasting bar

from above, one sees Madame Boisset working busily on the phone. Ancient Masterpieces of Tonnellerie await further renovation. Joshua Parke Rowland, the genius behind the design of The Red Room at Raymond Winery, revels in the delight that the audience is expressing for his work in the restoration of the Buena Vista Winery.

