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## Frenchie: Raymond's Pooch-Friendly Winery

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This guest-post comes to us from Mira Advani Honeycutt, author of California's Central Coast, The Ultimate Winery Guide: From Santa Barbara to Paso Robles. She frequently contributes wine and travel pieces to the Good Food Blog.



Water tasting counter for Frenchie and his pals.

We've all encountered winery dogs. But to name a wine after your pooch?

That's what Burgundy vintner Jean Charles Boisset is up to. Jean Charles (fondly known as JCB), president of Boisset Family Estates is serious about winemaking. I've been to the family estate Domain de la Vougeraie in Burgundy and his recent acquisitions – Raymond Vineyards in Napa and Buena Vista in Sonoma. But JCB loves his dog as much as he does wine. So paying homage to his French bulldog named Frenchie, he has created a brand of wine that shows Frenchie featured as various historical figures on the label. The first two releases depict Frenchie as Napoleon (a red blend) and Louis XIV (cabernet sauvignon). A white blend will soon be released featuring Frenchie (in drag?) as Marie Antoinette.

The Frenchie wine is launched at Raymond Winery in Napa Valley which is now a dog friendly property. This is where you'll find

Frenchie romping around the grounds. Visitors are encouraged to bring their four-legged companions and let them loose. If they want to answer the call of nature they can do so in the winery's Theater of Nature (plastic poop bags are available).

On the Raymond Vineyard grounds, you'll see Chateau Frenchie pathway which will lead you to Frenchie Winery – a stable like structure that holds five luxurious suites (stalls) complete with specially designed wine barrel dog beds, "Barkarrat" chandeliers and exquisite artwork showcasing the label designs. This is where your dogs can rest while you savor wines in the tasting room. The dogs have their own tasting (water) bowls. A doggie-cam is installed in Chateau Frenchie so you can keep an eye on your furry pets while you sip and they play.

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Evan Kleiman has been the host of Good Food on KCRW since 1998. A longtime restaurateur and owner of Angeli Caffe on Melrose. She was the founder of Slow Food, Los Angeles and is an avid gardener.

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Inside Raymond's tasting room an entire shelf is devoted to dog paraphernalia – organic dog treats, water bottles, dog collars and of course frisbies. Now let's get to the Frenchie wine: the 2009 Napoleon is a blend of cabernet sauvignon, syrah, sangiovese and zinfandel – the wine exudes aromas of black and red fruit with hints of cassis that unneash in your glass. The blend is well balanced and although you'd think it would have a short finish, it's quite long! The Louis XIV cabernet sauvignon shows fetching aromas of blackberry and cocoa. Like Versailles, this wine has great structure.



Barrels made into dog beds in Frenchie salon.



Frenchie wines.

In celebration of Frenchie wine (current production is just 2000 cases), Raymond Vineyard is staging a "Bark-b-que" on July 7th. The winery's chef Michel Cornu is already dreaming up French style pup cakes, hush-puppies, pup-corn, corn dogs, pup-tarts and so on. A mobile pet grooming van will be on hand and the Napa Humane Society will bring adoption pets.

Frenchie's master JCB would be delighted if you hit "like" on Frenchie's FB page so you can keep up with his antics in Napa Valley.



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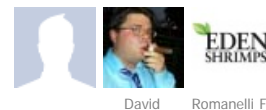
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