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THE SECRETS OF THE RED ROOM

By [Courtney](#) on Saturday, May 26, 2012 ·

When one of Burgundy's most flamboyant, charismatic and charming vintners, Jean-Charles Boisset, purchased [Raymond Vineyards](#), a storied Napa Valley estate, in 2009, there were bound to be changes. First, the most sustainably-minded playboy on the planet initiated a strict biodynamic farming regimen, starting the long, arduous process of restoring soil health and biodiversity to the 224 acres that Raymond manages, both on the St. Helena property and in Jameson Canyon. Then, he called Baccarat.

For The Red Room, the estate's private gentleman's club, Boisset gave San Francisco-based interior designer [Joshua Rowland](#) three words to use as inspiration: bordello, speakeasy and seduction. "From there," says Rowland, "I just kind of ran with it." Plenty of red velvet was an obvious place to start. The room is draped in enough of it to do David Lynch proud. The wallpaper, made by Scottish textile designers Timorous Beasties, covers the walls and parts of ceiling with thousands of velveteen Napoleonic bees (an homage to both Boisset's French heritage and his commitment to biodynamics).

Plenty of mirrored, lacquered, gilded and glass surfaces contrast the soft, lush fabric and create, according to Rowland "Alice in Wonderland-like second views of the room." An impressive 18-light Hélios Baccarat chandelier hangs at the room's center, its light dancing on the giant mirrored table beneath.

"You really lose yourself when you're in this room," says Rowland. "It takes you to another place." Ninety percent of the objects in the room — from a Marilyn Monroe-like seductress riding a Raymond Wine bottle, a Raymond-scripted "R" tattooed on her ankle, to the piano-black lacquered pool table and the faux-fur-backed chairs were commissioned and designed custom for the room. The other ten percent are either antiques and vintage objects that Boisset personally sourced from various flea markets, like a roulette wheel, a Bally pinball machine, a colonial chess board and books (there are a lot of books) — which vary from lushly bound volumes by Taschen and Assouline to weathered vintage finds. And "sometimes," says Rowland, "things just appear." (We suspect the taxidermied pheasant to be one such apparition).

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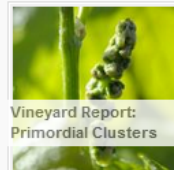


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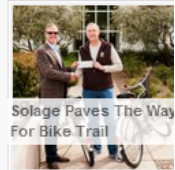
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The room may pull inspiration from 1920s bordellos, but what Rowland thinks makes it suitable for the modern gentleman is the mix of luxury and technology. Behind another painting of an iconic Playboy Marilyn (which swaps pink satin for a bed of gilded grapes) is a flat screen television. A state-of-the-art sound system is tucked discreetly in nooks and crannies throughout.

The room, let's be honest, had every potential to run terribly, terribly amuck. But it is somehow saved from being ostentatious by obsessive attention to detail, the use of contrasting but classic shapes, the very best of everything (beginning of course with Baccarat light fixtures) and, most important, an undeniable sense of fun and the pull of play. "If you take shortcuts, you end up with something that feels trendy" (and eventually staid and dated) says Rowland. "You have to go big or go home."

And, oh yes, there is wine (red, of course) lest you do happen to forget where you are. "Wine is part of a seductive lifestyle," says Rowland who is a very serious wine drinker himself. A special blend of Cabernet Sauvignon has been created exclusively for members and guests of the Red Room.

Memberships to the Red Room start at \$500 a year for full access to the room for yourself and three guests. One thousand dollars will grant access for seven guests and invitation to member-only events.

<http://tabletograve.com/the-secrets-of-the-red-room/>