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The Frenchie Winery

A Dog's Life in Napa



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Jean-Charles Boisset and Frenchie

C'est Wag-nifique!

Jean-Charles Boisset's new Napa Valley establishment has it all, from a tasting room offering a range of thirst-quenching beverages, to an outdoor area with stunning vineyard views, to a selection of private quarters perfect for an afternoon snooze. There's only one requirement for entry: four legs.

Located at Raymond Vineyards in St. Helena, Frenchie Winery is the region's only tasting room designed exclusively for dogs. Boisset, the property's proprietor, was inspired to create this unique space after seeing customers struggle to figure out how to accommodate their furry companions while visiting Raymond Vineyards. "We have a ton of people coming with dogs, but we had no place for them. This way, the dogs can have a great time themselves while their parents focus on the wines we provide." In addition to a tasting bar dispensing flavored water, and individual kennel spaces for dogs that might be a bit less social, the winery is rigged with "doggie cams" so that owners can keep an eye on their pets from inside Raymond Vineyards' main tasting room.

Frenchie Winery gets its name from Boisset's 5-year-old French Bulldog, an outgoing, "always smiling" pooch known for his contented "purring" sound when he's being caressed (particularly by women with long nails). Boisset purchased Frenchie as a gift for his wife during a period of time when he was traveling frequently to

France to help run his family's international wine production and import company, Boisset Family Estates. "I told her Frenchie was the perfect French gentleman: he follows you everywhere and never talks back!" Boisset recalls. Over the years, however, father and canine son became nearly inseparable. "I'm so in love with my Frenchie," Boisset sighs.

That affection is reflected in the décor of Frenchie Winery, where a "Gallery of Frenchie" features canvas portraits depicting the dog as famous historical figures, from George Washington to Julius Caesar to Marie Antoinette. And while such whimsical touches are meant to amuse, there is serious, high-quality wine being produced under the property's new Frenchie label. (Like the paintings, each label depicts Frenchie as a historical icon, starting with Napoleon and Louis XIV.) "I had this idea that it would be fun to create a line of wine around Frenchie, just for fun, as something to give to friends," Boisset recalls. "But then everyone started asking for it, so I said, 'Let's do this for real, but only if the wine is superb.'"

To make this latest venture a success, Boisset will rely on his decades of experience in the wine industry, as well as a *joie de vivre* he shares with his happy-go-lucky pup. "This is about bringing wine lovers and animal lovers together in a unique, enjoyable way," he says. "The key in life is to have a great time." ♦

—ROBIN HINDERY