

COUNT ON A GOOD TIME

Jean-Charles Boisset of Buena Vista Winery is the life of the party.

A TOUR OF CALIFORNIA wineries is not complete without a visit to Buena Vista in Sonoma. It was originally built in the 1850s by Agoston Haraszthy, a self-proclaimed "Count" who hailed from Hungary. Known as a pioneer in the industry, Haraszthy experimented with various growing techniques and established the first gravity-flow winery in California. His career was cut short in 1869, though, when, according to Buena Vista lore, he fell from a tree branch while crossing an alligator-infested stream. In 2011, the winery was acquired by Boisset Family Estates of France. It's run by Jean-Charles Boisset (pictured below, at Buena Vista), a bon vivant who, in 2009, married Gina Gallo, granddaughter of Julio Gallo and a winemaker at E&J Gallo. Boisset has latched on to the colorful history of Buena Vista's founder. A costumed "Haraszthy" greets visitors of the beautifully restored, castle-like winery, where peacocks roam the lush grounds. Boisset says he is passionate about helping people connect with Buena Vista's historic past—and the wine it produces. "Living without wine," he says, "is no way to enjoy life." —C.P.

