

San Francisco Chronicle

Love letter to Napa survives the fires



Vintner Jean-Charles Boisset: “My wife, Gina (Gallo), and I were celebrating friends at our Wappo Hill home and had set out a cake with lots of candles when my phone rang. It was Tim Mondavi, who lives down the hill. I said, ‘You’ve seen our lights, come on up.’ Tim warned me to look over at Stags Leap mountain — which was engulfed in flames. We got our girls, grabbed some photos, jewelry and passports and left in five minutes. We evacuated to our Raymond Winery, managing to finish fermentation without electricity. Over in Sonoma, Buena Vista Winery (California’s oldest) was threatened. But first responders thankfully stopped that fire — just 6 feet from the building and museum. There’s so much damage in Sonoma, yet many people don’t have fire insurance.

“During the fires, Napa looked like a war zone. So our team of chefs jumped into action serving 1,500 daily meals at shelters and Napa Airport for firefighters. Harvest was almost done but some of our staff volunteered to assist other wineries finish theirs. ... In October, chef Bob Hurley and I hosted a winemakers dinner to raise relief funds. With Festival Napa Valley, we hosted Wine Country Strong, a concert-picnic honoring first responders. Then, in just two days, we created 300 cases of Honoris, a 50-50 blend of Napa and Sonoma cabernet at \$75 each. And all proceeds benefit Napa and Sonoma relief.”