

FALL 2017
Harvest Issue

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JEAN-CHARLES
BOISSET

Raymond Vineyards and the JCB Collection

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The Unexpected Side of *Wintner*

BY KARI RUEL | BY LOWELL DOWNEY AND JANNA WALDINGER OF ART & CLARITY.


Jean-Charles Boisset

Jean-Charles Boisset stands confidently with a fountain pen in one hand and a glass of bubbles in the other. He furiously draws his next creation explaining to his innovative team the newest experience coming to life at the JCB Collection in Yountville where his customers will “*be taken on a ride of their own imagination.*”

“Are you excited?” he says to his team. Laughter ensues and with more bubbles the celebration begins. The imaginative Jean-Charles is a force to experience. His energy and vivaciousness for life is contagious. He speaks to the soul and the spirit of everyone he encounters!

Jean-Charles Boisset is a French vintner and the proprietor of the Boisset Collection. Under Boisset’s leadership, the Boisset Collection operates 24 wineries in California, France, and Canada. Here you can experience his enthusiasm for life when you visit the Raymond Vineyards in St. Helena that he acquired in 2009 and his newest adventure called the JCB Village in Yountville.

There is a saying about looking through life through rose-colored lenses, but with Jean-Charles your mind-set changes when you *put your red socks on* - his signature apparel that accompanies his tailored suits. Today, even at work his casual side is perfectly finessed like the champagne you receive at the new Yountville JCB Salon Privé.

The JCB Salon Privé wine tasting experience is like no other for it is enhanced by the unexpected, encouraging the customer to see things like they have never seen before. There are 1000 handcrafted red roses in the rafters interspersed with white doves. Gazing into the glass tables your eyes see the room from all directions. 







At this particular wine tasting setting guests are seated on soft white chairs adorned by the feathers of ostriches, geese and roosters. Jean-Charles described the 48 petals on each rose as “layers and layers of beauty - art intertwined with the environment.”

“Reflections – What you see is not always what you see!” said Jean-Charles. “There is always a different way to look at something. The garden is suspended from the ceiling with the birds rather than growing from the ground. We are playing with the reality of the world we are living in and experiencing different elements of the world.”

In his newest environment he strayed away from his traditional gold and went with silver - only silver, mirrors and white. “The whole idea is to get the elements of nature,” said Jean-Charles as he points out the beautiful snake handles attached to a glass door leading to a room with a plexiglas table that seems to float in the air and is filled with gold leaf that responds to your touch. In the main room, his complete custom-made jewelry is highlighted along with a table designed to represent his ultimate last supper.

“I invited thirteen of my closest friends from my past, present and future that I would like to have at my table if it was my last moment in life,” said Jean-Charles. “Each chair surrounding the table has the imbedded translucent face of my hand-picked guests. Of course, I am one of them.” His “guests” include Lady Gaga, Ghandi, Gina Gallo (*his wife*), Frenchie (*his French bull dog*), Salvador Dali, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Alexander McQueen, Walt Disney and others.

“In this room, we want to inspire!” says Jean Charles, “while drinking wine. What we love to do is make sure that when people are with us they always dream, and that they are offered a journey mentally, spiritually, intellectually and creatively.”

At all of Jean-Charles winery properties, his handcrafted jewelry is on display. “First and foremost, Nature is the inspiration for my jewelry,” he said. “The leaf, the plants, the roots and earth as well as the cosmos – the moon, the stars, the sun. I’m inspired by all the natural elements around us and I’m very inspired as well by the senses;”

the movement of the hand, the heart, the eyes, the lips, the nose. All the senses come into play and this is how I love to create pieces by integrating all that's in the world that I love -with a different view of looking at it in a non-obvious and realistic way."

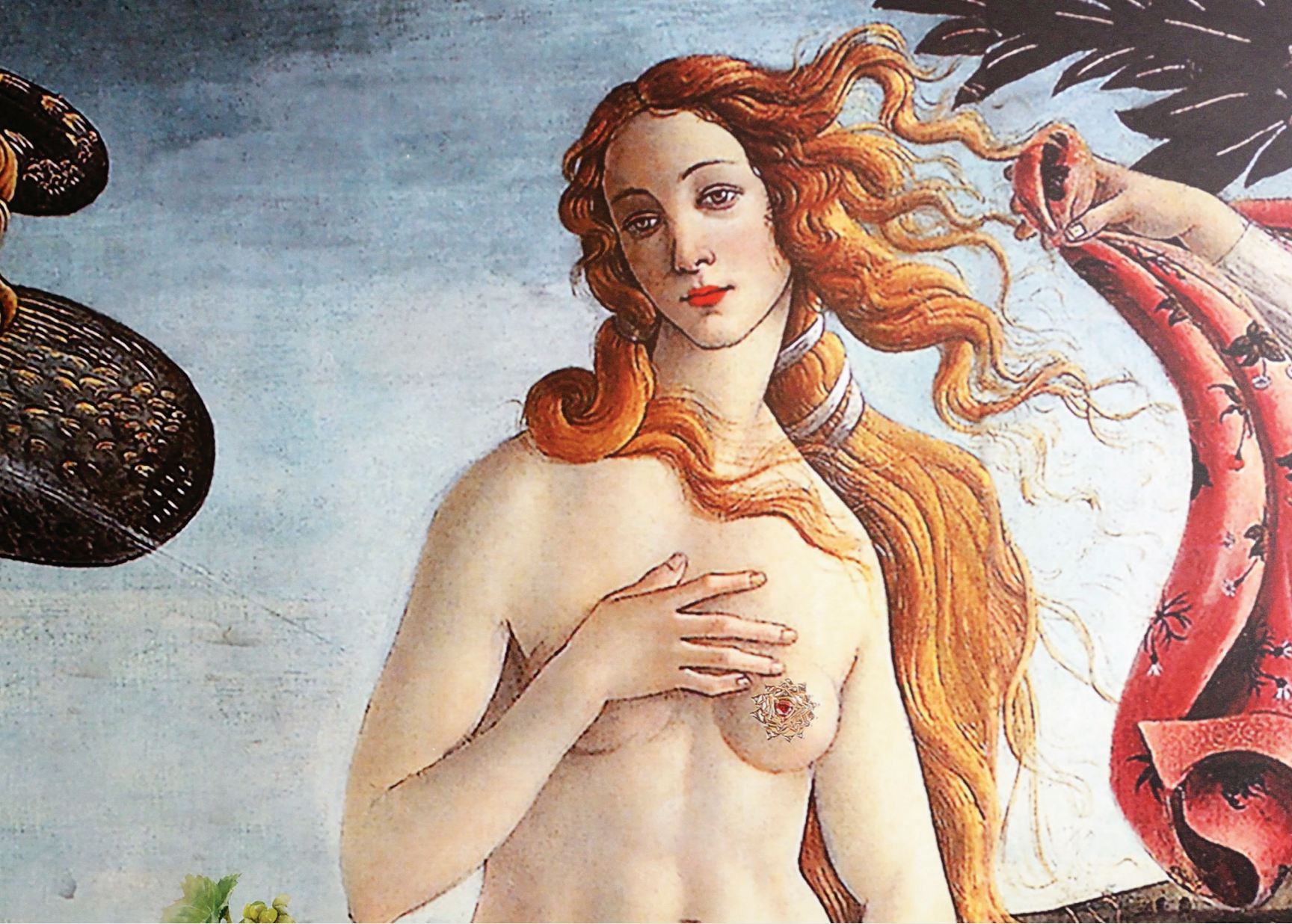
"I sketch all my pieces," said Jean-Charles as he opens one of his numerous sketchbooks. "I love sketching. I sketch places and I sketch all the things I do. I'm very visual so I love to play with the pen."

He picks up a piece and begins to describe his thought process behind a grape cluster pin with red lips adorned with jewels. "The grapes represent something I adore and is a symbol of who I am. It is an evolution of nature. After ten months of growing and becoming a full cluster of grapes, for me it is the symbol of the hands - reaching, touching and feeling life. The lips in the middle are obviously the tasting. The ruby gem represents the liquid and the emerald symbolizes the leaf and traces the photosynthesis and the birth of the actual grapes."

Along with his fountain pen, he has a set of colored pencils that he carries with him during his world travels. He never starts a drawing with a pencil that can be erased. Instead he accepts the challenge of the fountain pen and then goes back and colors in with his pencils.

"Over the years, I have realized that besides making great wine, I love to create environments," said Jean-Charles. "This is my passion. To create different heights, different fabrics, different emotions





and that all happens in each of the four rooms we have created here; from the way you see the room, feel the room, live a room and leave the room. This is what I adore about every space here.”

“Texture, senses, artistic creativity and a willingness to engage people to get to know themselves, hence the mirrors, hence the senses of touch, hence gravity between the environment and even putting the table top so low,” he continued. “You notice it, you live with it. Plexiglas is simplistic, and you see through it. It’s not an obstacle, it’s part of the environment and the table embraces you. The wine glasses appeared to be floating on the table and in a sense, you are moved to another place.”

Once inspired, Jean Charles immediately puts the thought to words

and may even improvise with his writing utensil. I asked him what his five favorite words were. He asked a female associate for a stick of red lipstick and went to work writing on the mirror the word “Seduction.” Even the way he wrote the word was creative adding an arrow off the “S” and dotting the “I” with a heart.

“My five favorite words?” he asked. “Passion, Dream, Eloquent, Escape and Incurable.” Though, later in our conversation he said the word he likes most is “Imagine.”

Imagine and Imagination are two active thought processes that are behind the new JCB Salon Privé. “I love the infinite sign because there are no limitations to your creativity or your thought process and to the boundaries of your thinking,” said Jean-

Charles. “In wine making, you have to engage the creativity of someone else’s imagination. My role, I feel, is to help people go beyond what they are and who they think they are and discover more of themselves.”

There are no bad ideas with Jean-Charles as long as one is expanding the possibilities and honing in on something new. Everything has to be purposeful and it has to wrap around his vision to expand people’s mind. He surrounds himself with people who share or encourages his ideas. Patrick Egan is his right-hand man and Tessa Mazotti, his Project Manager, help facilitate Jean-Charles visions into reality.

“The craft people are the hardest to find,” he said. Pointing to the feathered chairs – “I had to go to Holland and they had to come here. We worked with the





rooster feathers to determine which way the feathers should go. Sit in the chair and caress the feathers. I want it to be smooth and, while you are wine tasting, I want you feel the energy of the bird. You are feeling a texture you don't expect in the tasting room. Why feathers? and I say, why not feathers! Fur, feathers and leather and obviously plastic, transparency and crystal."

"I want people share what our vision is," he added. "Like the feathers. we made sure the feathers were crisp white so we hand selected each feather." He turns the chair around and straddles the chair and strokes the feathers. Jean-Charles said he would have a hard time having someone else design his places because he would be very difficult to work with and if he can't imagine it for himself, he won't see it.

"The JCB brand is unique because it's about bubbles, celebration, explosion, the gala, the feast, the discovery! It's about two worlds – Burgundy and Napa, friends, Russian River and Napa Valley," he said. "We want to bring in culture as well. There is Mona Lisa with my face superimposed. On the ceiling here is a mural of the nine scenes by Michelangelo from the Sistine Chapel."

"Discover for yourself, what will inspire the creativity within you to flourish and come to the surface. Join us for the unexpected," said Jean-Charles as he holds up a glass of his popular JCB 69. "I want to inspire you to dream."

The by-appointment JCB Salon Privé is designed to inspire our guests to reflect and dream! The private salon next door to the JCB Tasting Salon in Yountville, California provides



focused, guided tasting experiences of JCB's most exclusive wines. It is decorated in shades of white that represent neutrality, purity and peace that serve as a canvas for guests' imagination. Tastings are appointment only based on availability from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wine flights are priced between \$65 and \$75 per person with an assortment of JCB wines to taste that will be customized to guests' preferences. The new space can welcome groups wishing to indulge

in exclusive experiences in private rooms. In JCB Salon Privé, guests sample wines in a setting that invites them to discover their own senses and perceptions.

The JCB Salon Privé is part of the new JCB Tasting Village in the heart of Yountville. www.jcbwines.com/locations/jcb-tasting-salon

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