

Historic Wine Tools Museum opens at the Buena Vista Winery

Julie Santiago March 7, 2015



Buena Vista Winery was founded in 1857 by **Agoston Haraszthy**; the self-proclaimed “Count.” The winery has a rich heritage as the first premium and certainly the most colorful of all of the wineries in California.

The Count’s passion for innovation and excellence not only led to California’s first premium winery, but also to the development of the California wine world as we know it today. The Count, has been called the Father of California Viticulture for his introduction of innovative winegrowing techniques, his championing improvements in the quality of grapes, and his tireless promotion of California’s as one of the greatest fine wine regions in the world.



Edgar Solis

In May 2011, **Boisset Family Estates** and its President, Jean-Charles Boisset, purchased the Buena Vista brand and the old stone winery. Jean-Charles Boisset is passionately committed to continuing the imaginative vision and unrivaled legacy first created by the Count 150 years ago. He has demonstrated a real commitment to bringing the winery to its full and deserved glory.

Since May of 2011 the historic landmark has seen an unprecedented renovation. The historic Champagne Cellars has been brought back to life employing the most advanced techniques to retrofit the building to preserve its structural integrity. No doubt the labor of love helped it to survive the August 2014 6.2 earthquake that struck Napa and Sonoma. The Champagne Cellars last produced wine in 1979 and closed to the public after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Jean-Charles Boisset made the restoration of the winery his duty, in order to remind the world of its extensive role in winemaking history. “Buena Vista’s future is its past. Our mission is to preserve and perpetuate the imaginative vision and unrivaled legacy of the winery’s founder and to protect the first grand estate of the California wine world for the world to discover.”

When completed in 1862, the Old Press House, was the first gravity-flow winery in California. Now, also renovated, it is the new winery Tasting Room downstairs and a museum relating the winery's story in the second floor.

The full restoration and renovation of [Buena Vista Winery](#) is now complete. The "pièce de résistance" is a new Historic Wine Tools Museum and Show on the third floor of the historic Cellars recently unveiled to members of the press.

The educational seventeen-minute light, sound and visual show presenting the story of winemaking through a collection of ancient winemaking tools curated in France over decades by Philippe Berard. Now retired, Philippe Berard was an engineer and during his life, he was a keen bargain hunter and collector. He built and designed the collection on his own at his small winery in Burgundy, where his family has been growing grapes for nearly four centuries.

He spent his lifetime curating the tools from across Europe and the world; always on the lookout for historical winemaking tools that he could add to his collection. The complete set of tools was assembled over 25 years of dedication to this passion. After 25 years, he decided to create the museum "[Sacrée Vigne](#)" in Nuits St Georges at L'Imaginarium, which is an audiovisual show showcasing the tools within his collection. Many of these same tools are now on display at Buena Vista Winery and have gone into the creation of the Historic Wine Tools Museum in Sonoma. The Boisset family purchased the collection of tools and shipped them piece-by-piece to the United States. During the last two years, while developing the Buena Vista Winery Historic Wine Tool Museum show, all the tools were restored and brought back to their former glory.

The several hundred tools contained within the museum are historic and are arranged in artistic patterns against the ancient stone-walls carved from the Mayacamas Mountains in 1864. The museum is the final, crowning achievement in the revitalization of Buena Vista Winery, returning the iconic California wine property to its former glory.

The museum will be open daily at Buena Vista Winery from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and shows will run every hour, with the last show of the day being 4pm. The cost is \$25 per person for a 4-5 wine tasting and guided tour of the museum. Families will also be offered a choice of a "museum-only" experience for \$10 per person, and children with paying adult are free.

Official public opening of the Wine Tools Museum will take place March 24, 2015.

While visiting the winery, make sure to enjoy some of the many other wine experiences Buena Vista has to offer. You will soon realize The Count's passion for innovation and excellence still is alive.