

OCTOBER 2016 • \$6.95

THE **tasting** panel

MAGAZINE



**OUR FAVORITE
SWEATER...**

WHISKEY

**A LOOK AT A FEW OF THE
WHISKIES OF PERNOD RICARD
JUST IN TIME FOR FALL/WINTER**

Bar Director
Tyson Buhler with
Kevin Denton,
Pernod Ricard's
National Mixologist.

PHOTO: DOUG YOUNG

CHAMPAGNE

Boisset's Latest Victory

BUENA VISTA HEADS TO FRANCE by David Ransom

When the Boisset family acquired California's legendary Buena Vista Winery in Sonoma in 2011, it was with the intent to restore one of the region's most historic properties to its former glory, and also give it a new identity to move firmly into the future.

Founded in 1857 by Hungarian immigrant Count Agoston Haraszthy, Buena Vista was California's first premium winery, and was created with the belief, now realized, that California had the potential to be a world-class winemaking region. Born into a wealthy and titled landowning family, Count Haraszthy had ties to the Champagne region before migrating to the U.S. After starting Buena Vista, his eldest son, Arpad, studied in Epernay at the House of Venoges learning the intricacies of *méthode champenoise* production, before returning to California to produce his first sparkling wine in 1861.

When the Boisset family acquired the property in 2011, they did so with the understanding that a return to making Champagne would be a logical step in revitalizing the image of Buena Vista. Boisset worked with a carefully assembled team of architects to restore and renovate the entire property, including the Champagne Cellars,

a California Historic Landmark, which were seismically retrofitted using innovative technology called center core drilling, making it possible to restore and preserve the original look and feel of the façade of the cellars, as it originally been built in 1857. In 2012, the historic cellars once again began making and cellaring wine.

But Boisset didn't stop there. In fact, they went to back France—original home of Jean-Charles Boisset—to craft La Victoire Brut Champagne, which is available now. While many French producers have come to California to make sparkling wine, Boisset turned the tables and took Buena Vista's energy and winemaking history, which dates back to the 1860's, back to France to make its bubbly.

"What's significant about La Victoire is that we are a California winery returning to our French roots to make Champagne. Not many people have the reach in Champagne to do this. Boisset works with over 420 family-owned acres in 61 villages across France," says Jean-Charles Boisset, Head of Boisset Collection, the U.S. arm of his family's holdings.

"Our La Victoire Champagne is not

made or cellared in Sonoma—it is completely made in Champagne. We are paying homage to the history, heritage and legacy of Buena Vista's sparkling winemaking history with the release of the La Victoire. The Count's son, Arpad Haraszthy made sparkling wines in the historic cellars and caves in the late 1800s, and we're bringing that history back under the new Buena Vista label, La Victoire," explains Boisset.

Made from 70% Pinot Noir from Premier Cru vineyards of Montagne de Reims, and 30% Chardonnay, mainly from Grand Crus Mesnil sur Oger and Chouilly, La Victoire is aged more than three years, nearly double the traditional aging of 15 months as designated by French law.

Rich with a crisp, yet buttery-biscuit mouthfeel and spicy notes, La Victoire retails for \$50 a bottle. "I am very bullish about La Victoire," says Boisset. "We think it fills a significant niche between a Krug and a Dom Pérignon, which cost significantly more, and with La Victoire aim to show people that you don't have to spend \$200 for an amazing bottle of Champagne."

A victory indeed for Champagne lovers! ■■



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