

Raymond Vineyards Hosts Seventh Annual Sommelier Selection Blending Session

by Press Release

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NAPA, CA (February 10, 2016) – Raymond Vineyards Proprietor, Jean-Charles Boisset, Director of Winemaking, Stephanie Putnam and Thane Knutson, Assistant Winemaker, recently hosted 10 hand-selected sommeliers from across the country to participate in the seventh annual Sommelier Selection Blending Session. Each sommelier was selected for their depth of knowledge and experience, and together they represent some of the best and brightest sommelier talent in the nation.

To create the 2014 Sommelier Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, the group was paired into teams of two and asked to craft a one-of-a-kind Cabernet Sauvignon, blended from the finest quality grapes in Napa, Sonoma and Lake Counties. Each blend was blind tasted and ranked amongst the sommeliers until they determined their favorite, revealing the winning combination. The winning 2014 Sommelier Selection blend is a delicious wine that seamlessly combines the three appellations into a food-friendly, approachable, flavorful wine and will ultimately be released in May 2016 as the 2014 Sommelier Selection Cabernet Sauvignon.

The participants for the 2014 vintage featured an all-star cast that spanned the country. The esteemed panel of sommeliers included: Nico Snyman (Robuchon, Las Vegas, NV), Todd Lipman (Bistro du Midi, Boston, MA), Yannick Benjamin (The University Club, NYC), Gregory Mayer (Bern's Steakhouse, Tampa, FL), Ashley Ceraolo (California Pizza Kitchen, Orange County, CA), Todd Rushing, (Concentrics Restaurant Group, Atlanta, GA), Noel Petrin (Cru Wine Bar, Dallas, TX), Jeffrey Mayfield (Del Frisco's Steakhouse, Philadelphia, PA), Jamie Harding (Cavallo Point, San Francisco, CA), Danielle Kuzinich (Hidden Vine, San Francisco, CA).

Yannick Benjamin, also known for Esquire's Uncorked said, "It was an honor to have been chosen for Raymond Vineyard's Sommelier Selection annual blending and also be part of such a talented group of sommeliers. I was inspired by the passion of Jean-Charles Boisset and the brilliant Stephanie Putnam, as both were extremely generous in sharing their knowledge with the group. It was so exciting to be part of creating a wine that I know in a few years I can taste and look back on and remember how I was part of that special group. A truly great wine can bring a sense of nostalgia to any wine drinking experience and I know that every time I taste the 2014 Sommelier Selection, I will always be reminded by the unforgettable experience I had with the team at Raymond Vineyards.

Speaking of the experience, Jean-Charles Boisset said, "It was such a pleasure to host these incredibly talented sommeliers here at Raymond Vineyards. Each one added their enthusiasm, energy, personality and charisma to the wine that will become our 2014 Sommelier Selection Cabernet Sauvignon. We can't wait to share this beautiful elixir with the patrons of the best restaurants in the world that these sommeliers have the pleasure to represent. Winemaking is truly magical and to share in this creative experience with this talented group of sommeliers was an incredible moment and shared memory."

The first annual Sommelier Selection blending experience, in 2008, inspired the creation of Raymond Vineyards' Winemaker for a Day program which has become one of the most popular guest experiences at Raymond Vineyards where visitors learn how to blend Bordeaux varietals from Napa Valley's appellations to create their own ideal wine. The 2014 Sommelier Selection Cabernet Sauvignon will be exclusively available in restaurants nationwide and will retail for approximately \$50 a bottle or \$12 to \$15 by-the-glass.

Sommelier Selection Alumni

2013 Vintage: Vonda Freeman (Indigo Group, SC); Christopher Gaither (Restaurant Gary Danko, CA); Paul Kozolis (Joe's Stone Crab, FL); Paul Krikorian (Lodge at Torrey Pines, CA); Mario Moise (Michael's Restaurant, NY); Michael Pickering (Langham Hotel, IL); Kate Webber (Webber Restaurant Group, MA); Susi Zivanovic (Perry's Steakhouse, TX).

2012 Vintage: Matthew Christoff (Moderne Barn Restaurant, NY); Hamid Elofir (Sand Point Country Club, WA); Marc Irving (Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, CA); Saddiq Mir (Hilton Anatole, TX); Kevin C. Reynolds (Duquesne Club, PA); Nicholas Rimedio (L'Ermitage, CA); Christopher Sawyer (Sonoma, CA); Matthew R. Scott (Kent Rathbun Concepts, TX).

2011 Vintage: Orlando Ramos (Bobby Flay's Mesa Grill, NY); Daniel Low (The Sea Grill, NY); Mark Underkoffler (Vino Volo, CA); Troy Knapp (Hyatt Hill Country Resort, TX); Gina Delmonico-Williams (Weber Grill Restaurants, IL); Ryan Tedder (FT33, TX); Joseph Davey (Eddie Merlot's, IN); and Eduardo Dingler (Morimoto, CA).

2010 Vintage: Gary Andresky (1776, IL); Josiah Baldvino (Michael Mina, CA); Mark Bright (Saison, CA); Russell Burkett (Nana Restaurant, TX); Mary Horn (Wine Trends, OH); Jennifer Knowles (The Inn at Little Washington, VA); Phil Natalie (Bob's Steak and Chop, TX); Joseph Scalzo (B.R. Guest Hospitality, NY).

2009 Vintage: Ron D'Allegro (Knickerbocker, NY); David Flom (Chicago Cut, IL); Jim Gallagher (Cole's Chop House, CA); Steve Gancotti (Lawry's, TX); Steven Krueger (The Westin, TX); Virginia Philip (The Breakers, FL); Matthew Turner (CA); Emily Wines (Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, CA).

2008 Vintage: Nicole Burke (The Stock & Bones Company, CA); Amy Currens (Prospect, CA); Craig Demko (Wine Warehouse, CA); Josh Haberman (Harris' Steakhouse, CA); Michael Jordan (Master Sommelier, CA); Anani Lawson (French Laundry, CA); Kenny Luciano (The Plumpjack Group, CA); Haley Guild Moore (Spruce, CA).

About Raymond Vineyards

Raymond Vineyards, founded in 1970, comprises over 325 acres in Rutherford, St. Helena and Jameson Canyon. Five generations of the Raymond family created a Napa icon, with an enduring reputation for elegant wines with a beautiful balance of finesse, power and complexity. Today, guided by the vision of Proprietor Jean-Charles Boisset, Winemaker Stephanie Putnam, and Winegrower Eric Pooler, Raymond Vineyards is one of the wine world's most dynamic winery destinations. Blending phenomenal wines with guest experiences that unite education, passion and entertainment, the winery offers diverse opportunities to explore wine, leading it to be named Sunset's "Best Tasting Room – Experience Beyond Tasting" in 2011, the 2012 American Winery of the Year by Wine Enthusiast, and one of Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines of 2013 for the 95-point rated 2010 Generations Cabernet Sauvignon. Raymond's estate vineyards are certified organic and Biodynamic®, and the winery generates more than 1 million kilowatt hours of energy per year from its 3,000 roof-mount solar panels. To learn more, please visit: www.raymondvineyards.com.

About Boisset Collection

Boisset is a family-owned collection of historic and unique wineries bound together by a common cause: authentic, terroir-driven wines in harmony with their history, their future and the land and people essential to their existence. With more than twenty historical and prestigious wineries in the world's preeminent terroirs, including the Côte d'Or, Beaujolais, Rhône Valley, California's Russian River Valley and the Napa Valley, each house retains its unique history, identity, and style, and all are united in the pursuit of fine wines expressive of their terroir. To learn more about the Boisset Collection, please visit www.boissetcollection.com.