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Raymond Adds Jewel to Crown

Napa winery buys neighboring vineyard, will replant for sustainable certification

by Kate Lavin

St. Helena, Calif.—Raymond Vineyards' purchase of the 55-acre Bartolucci property off Stice Lane in St. Helena brings its total holdings in the Napa Valley to 380 acres under vine. The winery is part of the Boisset Collection owned by Jean Charles Boisset and produces 300,000 cases per year, according to Wines Vines Analytics. The price was not disclosed.

Megan Long, communication manager for Boisset Collection, said the Bartolucci Vineyard is east of the Stice Vineyard already owned by Raymond, and it is planted to Bordeaux varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot. Planted acreage on the property totals 47 acres.

The Bartolucci family that originally owned the property have been farming in Napa Valley since the 1920s and planted Bartolucci Vineyard in 1976, the year of the famed [Judgment of Paris](#) wine tasting. The Raymond family that founded Raymond Vineyards purchased the original property in 1970 and planted vines the following year, completing their first harvest in 1974.

A new beginning

Long said the Boisset Collection will honor the Bartoluccis' two existing grape contracts through their original end dates, after which the company plans to use fruit from the vineyard property for its Raymond label wines.

Following the 2017 harvest, Boisset Collection plans to start replanting the vineyard with the goal of having its vines certified organic or Biodynamic—designations the company already has obtained for its estate vineyards. The process could take two or three years, Long said, adding that Boisset wants to use farming practices that respect Mother Nature and “work from the soil up.”

During the replanting, some of the Sauvignon Blanc vines will be replaced with Cabernet Sauvignon. (See “[Napa Cabernet Prices Raise Concern](#).”) Other varieties currently growing in the Bartolucci property include Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc.

Other outlets

The new vineyard purchase will not affect Boisset Collection's attempt to gain direct access from Highway 29. Currently visitors must use Zinfandel Lane, an artery connecting Highway 29 and the Silverado Trail, in order to access the winery and hospitality center.

A permit appeal currently pending would allow Raymond to create a pathway for guests to access the winery via the Ticen Ranch property purchased in 2015. Raymond hopes to have an answer on the matter by late summer.