Wine Spectator

Exclusive: Jean-Charles Boisset Purchases Artesa Winery

The vintner says he intends to put the “art” in Artesa with bold new plans



With artworks and a surreal entrance, Artesa has long been a striking destination. (Courtesy Boisset Collection)

By MaryAnn Worobiec
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Jean-Charles Boisset, president of Boisset Collection, has purchased Artesa Winery in Carneros from Raventós Codorníu, *Wine Spectator* has learned. The transaction includes the Artesa brand and estate, totaling 350 acres of land, with 150 planted to grapevines across the Carneros and Mt. Veeder appellations, as well as a winery permitted for producing about 190,000 cases of wine annually, a tasting room and existing inventory. The purchase price was not disclosed.

“In this gloomy wine world and all this negativity, we think the opposite,” Boisset told Wine Spectator. “We decided to double down and acquire something very special.”

Boisset called the deal one of the most exciting and emotional transactions of his career, citing both the chance to make sparkling wine in-house along with his plans for the property. He wants to turn Artesa into “a destination for art,” he said, bringing together culture, food, wine and sensory experiences, from gardens to fragrances. “These are things we've created everywhere, but now we're going to bring all of it together as the alchemy of the senses.”

Patrick Egan, Boisset’s senior vice president of marketing and communications, called the property a “new canvas of creativity” that will offer guests interactive experiences.

Winery With History and Beauty

Raventós Codorníu, one of the Spain's oldest family wineries, founded Artesa in 1991. The company is best known for Cava, the Spanish sparkling wine made using the traditional method. When Artesa was founded, Carneros had already emerged as one of California's hubs for sparkling wine, home to producers including Taittinger's Domaine Carneros and Spain's Gloria Ferrer.

The winery operated under the name Codorníu Napa until 1997, when Codorníu rebranded it as Artesa, Catalan for "artisan." The company expanded the property to include 150 acres under vine, planted primarily to Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, along with Spanish grapes such as Tempranillo and Albariño, that produce a mix of both sparkling and still wines. Paula Borgo is Artesa's current winemaker. Boisset plans to keep the current staff on board through the transition.



Artesa currently has 150 acres of planted vines in the cool climate of Carneros. (Courtesy Boisset Collection)

"Artesa has played a significant role in the history of Raventós Codorníu, and it is one of the most successful wineries in our portfolio," said Sergio Fuster, Codorníu CEO. "We are convinced that Boisset is the ideal custodian to guide the winery through its next phase of development. Their in-depth knowledge of the local market will unlock Artesa's extraordinary potential even further, while ensuring the continuity of its legacy."

Artesa ranks among Carneros's most memorable destinations, with dramatic views south toward San Pablo Bay. On clear days the vista extends to downtown San Francisco. Much of the 120,000-square-foot winery is carved into a hill, with a roof covered by earth and native grasses. The design includes a gravity-flow winery. Modern sculptures dot the landscape.

Boisset's Two Continent Story

Boisset's father, Burgundian businessman Jean-Claude Boisset, founded the family's négociant house, Boisset La Famille des Grands Vins in 1961, when he was 18.

Jean-Charles and his sister, Nathalie, now run the Boisset Collection, a group of more than 30 wineries and properties in France and California. The siblings built Domaine de la Vougeraie, turning the family's Burgundy vineyards into one of the region's most prominent domaines, with six monopoles, nine grands crus vineyards and 130 acres under vine. The family's French labels include J. Moreau & Fils, Bouchard Aîné & Fils, Château de Pierreux, Mommessin, Louis Bouillot, Ropiteau, Fortant and Antonin Rodet.

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In the 1990s, Boisset turned his attention to California, growing the portfolio to include DeLoach, Buena Vista, Raymond and Elizabeth Spencer Winery. The company also owns Oakville Grocery.

Separately, Boisset and his wife, Gina Gallo-Boisset, own the former Flora Springs Winery and the Ink House Inn in St. Helena (which is not accessible to the public). In 2011, the couple bought the former home of Robert Mondavi, located on Wappo Hill in Napa Valley, where they live with their twin daughters.

Part of Boisset Collection is JCB, a luxury brand carrying his initials, which makes both still and sparkling wines as well as caviar-infused vodka, Cognac, candles, perfumes, jewelry and collaborations with Baccarat glassware. Boisset specializes in creating branding and experiences.



Jean-Charles Boisset at Artesa, which he believes offers a big opportunity. (Alexander Rubin)

Boisset says there will likely be renovations or redecorating at Artesa, and he intends to convert the vineyards to fully organic and biodynamic farming, in line with his other California vineyards.

He has said he draws inspiration from his home country's history and tradition, paired with the sense of possibility California offers. "The landscape has a rhythm. The architecture gives it resonance," he said. "I experience an energy, a vibration, a frequency that answers something deep within me, as though this place has been conceived for the dreams I carry."