



Home > News & Features > News



## Boisset Bets on the South of France

With the acquisition of Skalli Family Wines, the French wine giant gains a foothold in the Languedoc

Ben O'Donnell

Posted: December 2, 2011



Boisset Family Estates, a major wine player in Burgundy, the Rhône and California, has closed a deal to buy Languedoc-based Skalli Family Wines, a pioneer in southern France. The price was undisclosed. The deal adds 1.5 million cases of annual production and over 6,000 acres' worth of grower contracts to the Boisset portfolio, which will now produce 7.5 million cases a year from its 25 wineries.

Skalli's history in wine tapers back to the 1920s, and it was among the first houses to recognize the potential of international varieties like Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in southern France. It is a purchase Boisset has been considering for some time. "You always look at the leader, and you always get inspired by the No. 1," said president Jean-Charles Boisset. "And Skalli is the clear No. 1 quality-oriented family company in the south. So we've always observed with a level of interest and admiration what the family has done there, and we thought, well, if [proprietor] Robert Skalli wishes to pass on the company to someone, we should volunteer because we feel we are a good candidate to pursue his philosophy."

The purchase is intended to bolster Boisset's position among entry-level wine drinkers. The company started as a Burgundy négociant known for value wines, but in more recent years it has expanded by acquiring premium producers like Burgundy's Domaine de la Vougeraie, Bouchard Aîné & Fils, Mommessin, J. Moreau & Fils in Chablis, Louis Bernard in the Rhône Valley, as well as Carneros' Buena Vista Winery. According to Boisset, 95 percent of the company's portfolio now falls in the \$8-and-up category.

"We've been very focused in Burgundy, Beaujolais, the Rhône, Napa, Sonoma and Carneros," said Boisset. "But it's important as well to have wine in the \$8 to \$10 price point. And this is really where Skalli fits in, which is important to communicate our vision and story at the restaurant level, by the glass, and of course in retail, for bringing people into tasting wines from the beer and spirits categories." Boisset also cited Skalli's established presence in developing markets like China and India as a plus.

Skalli's biggest labels are the Fortant de France and Couleurs du Sud labels, but the company also bottles Famille Skalli, Domaine de Silene and F. by Skalli, as well as some Rhône selections. Boisset compared the size of the acquisition to his family's 2009 purchase of Raymond Vineyards in Napa, California's biggest brand by volume.

### More about winery sales:

Saturday, December 31, 2011  
**Bill Price Thinks Big With Small Wineries**

Monday, November 28, 2011  
**Napa's Tallest Winemaker: Yao Ming**

Friday, November 18, 2011  
**Buy Small, Think Big**

Thursday, November 3, 2011  
**Boisset Family Estates Expands into Monterey**

Tuesday, November 1, 2011  
**One of Port's Biggest Players Grows Bigger**

[More from topic Winery Sales](#)

### More News:

Thursday, December 1, 2011  
**Fighting the Funk in Funky Wine**

Monday, November 28, 2011  
**Napa's Tallest Winemaker: Yao Ming**

Friday, November 18, 2011  
**2011 Vintage Report: United States**

Friday, November 18, 2011  
**Buy Small, Think Big**

Thursday, November 17, 2011  
**2011 Vintage Report: California**

[More from News](#)

**You're not a member yet?**

Membership gives you **FULL ACCESS** to over 250,000 ratings and our entire site!

**YES—I WANT TO LEARN MORE!**

MEMBER LOGIN = members only

Keep me logged in  [Forgot Password?](#)

VINFOLIO THE FINE WINE SOURCE

**VIEW OUR EXCLUSIVE OFFER**

### Wine Spectator Is Hiring

Wine Spectator seeks a highly motivated wine lover for an entry-level position in its New York tasting

The philosophy behind the buy, however, is more like the one that inspired Boisset to [pick up Lockwood Vineyard in Monterey, Calif.](#) in November. "When you look at the south of France story and Monterey, Calif., story, it's actually very similar," said Boisset. "The story is to be written in the future. The south of France really got reignited in the last 40 years. So we feel the south of France makes sense, and we feel the Monterey region in California, on a parallel basis, makes a lot of sense too."

The Skalli team will remain in the Languedoc, making the wine, aging and bottling onsite. Boisset praised the operation for its deep roots and practices borne of experience. "Many brands in the south of France come and go, but they've been very consistent, very reliable, very loyal to the community, the growers and the fabric of the region." He added, "If we had to start that from scratch, it would take decades to create."

"I'm very glad that it's Boisset who will perpetuate and continue the spirit of the Skalli family," Robert Skalli said in a statement. "Boisset understands and will continue the quality of the wines and the partnerships that we've established for years."

This isn't the first deal between the two families. Skalli founded St. Supéry Vineyards and Winery in Napa on a property the family bought from the Boissets in 1984. St. Supéry was not included in this latest deal. But "obviously, would they one day be open to selling St. Supéry, we would be certainly delighted to meet, and to discuss, and to be part of what they have started there as well," said Boisset.

#### Would you like to comment?

Want to join or start a discussion? [Become a WineSpectator.com member](#) and you can!

To protect the quality of our conversations, only members may submit comments. To learn more about member benefits, [take our site tour](#).

department. [See full details.](#)

#### Free Email Newsletters

Sips & Tips | Wine & Healthy Living  
Video Theater | Collecting & Auctions

- » [View samples](#)
- » [Or sign up now!](#)
- » [Manage my newsletter preferences](#)

#### Classifieds



The marketplace for all your wine needs, including:

[Wine Storage](#) | [Wine Clubs](#)  
[Dining & Travel](#) | [Wine Auctions](#)  
[Wine Shops](#) | [Wine Accessories](#)

**Forums:** [Wine Conversations](#) | [Share Tasting Notes](#) | [Share Dining Tips](#) | [Travel Tips](#) | [Buying & Selling](#) | [Off-Line Events](#) | [Wine Education](#)

**Help:** [Customer Care/Manage My Account](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#)

**WineSpectator.com:** [Become a Member](#) | [Give a WineSpectator.com Gift Membership](#) | [Wine Spectator School](#)

**Wine Spectator Magazine:** [Subscribe](#) | [Give a Gift Subscription](#) | [Buy Back Issues](#) | [Issue Archives](#) | [Wine Spectator Retailers](#) | [Sell Wine Spectator](#)

**Advertise With Us:** [Wine Spectator Magazine](#) | [WineSpectator.com](#) | [Wine Spectator Mobile](#) | [Online Classifieds](#) | [M. Shanken Media Kit](#)

**About Us:** [Site Tour](#) | [Editors' Bios](#) | [How We Taste](#) | [Job Opportunities](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

**Services:** [Apps](#) | [Mobile](#) | [E-mail Newsletters](#) | [RSS](#) | [Video Podcast](#) | [Gift Center](#) | [Online Wine Courses](#) | [Retailer Club](#)

**Other M. Shanken Sites:** [Trade News—Impact and Market Watch](#) | [Cigar Aficionado](#) | [Food Arts](#) | [The Whisky Advocate](#) | [Impact Databank Reports](#)

**Categories:** [Wine Ratings](#) | [News & Features](#) | [Collecting](#) | [Learn Wine](#) | [Dining & Travel](#) | [Blogs](#) | [Video](#) | [For the Trade](#) | [Wine Shops](#) | [Classifieds](#)

Copyright © 2011 Wine Spectator Online