

# Napa Valley *Register*

## Scargle takes the reigns and Atelier goes on the road

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Victor Scargle has just returned from three weeks in Burgundy, France, when he sat down on the porch of Atelier Fine Foods in Yountville to chat about his new job.

The Burgundy excursion had been his introduction to this latest venture, culinary director of the Boisset Collection, which includes Atelier.

Scargle is one of the valley's best known chefs, having worked at Julia's Kitchen at the old Copia, the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, and Lucy's at Bardessono in Yountville. A native of Santa Cruz, California, Scargle also worked at San Francisco restaurants including Aqua, Jardinière and the Grand Café at the Hotel Monaco, before making his home in Napa Valley.

He was working at the new CIA at Copia in Napa when he said a friend told him Jean Charles Boisset needed a chef. This friend thought this could be a match.

Boisset, a native of Burgundy, has been one of the most spectacularly creative and enthusiastic additions to the Napa Valley wine scene since he purchased Raymond

Vineyards in St. Helena in 2009. (He also owns and has restored to grandeur the historic Buena Vista winery in Sonoma and the DeLoach Winery in Santa Rosa.)

In 2016, Boisset opened Atelier Fine Foods in Yountville, adjacent to his dazzling, if not decadent, JCB Tasting Salon, resplendent with chandeliers and leopard print sofas.

In a cozy setting that evoked a trip to Belle Époque Paris — from its brass fittings to the romantic mural on the ceiling, Boisset’s team assembled a collection of foods from local purveyors and from around the world, including bread flown in from France. Atelier spices, salts and peppers, olive oil, vineyards, caviar, truffles, smoked salmon, anchovies, foie gras, condiments, chocolates, terrines, coffee and teas, and more than 120 cheeses overseen by locally renowned cheesemonger James Ayer, who had been at Sunshine Market in St. Helena for two decades.

Scargle met with Boisset. “I wanted to see what his vision is.”

And he discovered there was a fertile meeting ground between a chef from Santa Cruz and a Burgundian connoisseur of — well, just about everything from wine to bread to crystal vases.

Boisset said his philosophy is “to source the best that the world has to offer from incredibly dedicated and passionate people who are relentlessly true to Mother Nature.

“We are what we eat and therefore our vision of food must reflect who we want to become,” he said. “We are fortunate that nature gives her best, and we must honor and respect that gift.”

Having established Atelier, Boisset had two new steps in mind, to create an Atelier brand, reflecting this devotion to superb quality and then to share the vision through catering service.

“What he was talking about was creating a total experience and taking it on the road,” Scargle said.

The challenge was: “How can we bring the food to level of beverages? What can we develop? How do we bring the complete experience to people?”

Not long after this, Scargle was on his way to Burgundy, a region of France he’d never visited before; his mission was to understand the roots, so to speak, of his new boss, to “... see it, smell it, feel it, taste it,” he said.

“Of course, it was incredible,” he said of the place that has given the world Boeuf Bourguignon, Escargots à la Bourgogne, Coq au Vin and Oeufs en Meurette. “But what was interesting to me was similar the feeling in the villages was to Santa Cruz when I was growing up there.”

Back in Yountville, working with the team of Atelier team of Ayers and manager Betsy Musick, Scargle went to work developing ideas for the Atelier brand, developing distinctive items including many from Boisset’s gardens

and farms — deviled eggs from Raymond's chickens, salad greens from De Loach, and the perfect gougère, the savory puff of choux pastry and cheese.

“You can't grow everything everywhere,” Scargle said — but perhaps Atelier can bring it to you. “We want to deliver — over-deliver — a culinary brand like no other, tell the stories behind the product, the reason why.”

The black and gold Atelier catering trucks have since hit the road, providing culinary demonstrations and catered events.

“We're creating experiences — something you'll remember. It's been like reaching for the highest level — it's all about the experience.”

Well into the job now, Scargle said, “I'm enjoying the opportunity very much. So much inspiration and activity.”

“I knew it would be (Boisset's) vision and experience, plus my vision and experience.” But, Scargle said, he continues to be impressed by Boisset's “passion and vision and caring.”

“He's such a big thinker, it's exciting to be around. He's going to challenge you. Your thinking gets stretched. Big ideas are invited but you have to back them up, to know why you think it's a good idea, show what's possible — if something can be done better — why not try it if it can be amazing?”

“As big as I can think,” he said, “I've got someone who can think bigger.”

