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Review: Passion for Wine-The French Ideal and the American Dream

March 15: The latest wine book to have come out, *Passion for Wine*, co-authored by Jean Charles Boisset of Boisset Collection in Burgundy and California and Marnie Old who is a Sommelier and an author and ambassador-at-large for Boisset, is an easy to read book that focuses mostly on Burgundy and California, with sufficient information on several basic aspects of winemaking and wine tasting, writes Subhash Arora who enjoyed reading the book and finds it useful for newer drinkers.



As Jean Charles describes in the first few pages of the book, it is perfect for novices and even those connoisseurs who find wine not only to be delectable, transcendent, and captivating but also confusing, frustrating or overwhelming. No doubt, the book is written around various wineries that are part of the Boisset Collection.

It starts with a history of winemaking –in 6000 BC in Georgia. But his heart is really in Burgundy when he writes about the Cistercian monks in Burgundy and how they tended vines for centuries, and as they cultivated wine for commerce. The authors write snippets about winemaking skills in the old world and New World in the Southern Hemisphere and California. They take you to a journey of winemaking in the 19th century and the 20th.

As is traditional with such books, there is a chapter on the Fundamentals of Wine tasting. Marnie Old takes you through the tasting experience, describing various variables for the palate and the physical sensation known as mouthfeel. A small section even tells you how to spot the wine faults. It uses easy to understand boxes in multi-colours and infographics to make it easy and useful reading. It is a book that conveys the contents with elegance and simplicity.

Chapter 3 focuses on various aspects of winemaking but in a simple form. It talks about how the vineyards and vines give the basic flavour. It talks about the viticulture and winemaking techniques. It also talks about organic farming and biodynamic ecosystem and relates it to the past practices. Various winemaking techniques have also been described in a simplistic manner.

The role of oak and the methods of sparkling wine production in different parts of the world are discussed, but focus is on European wines. The authors talk a bit more about climate and how it affects winemaking process in different parts.

Chapter 4 focuses on various forms and styles of White, Roses and Reds, and talks about the acidity, structure for the wines. It focuses unabashedly on the various styled American wines from Boisset Collection.

Chapter 5 is devoted to wine's key ingredients- the noble grape varieties. These are also limited to the varieties that are most popular in France and the USA. It describes the flavours of various grapes, the sweetest of all fruit juices and thus producing the most potent of all fermented drinks. It looks at Pinot Noir and Chardonnay of Burgundy, Cabernet Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot and supportive grapes used for red wines in Bordeaux, as also Cabernet franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon are other varieties that grow in Bordeaux, Grenache and Syrah in Rhone Valley and South of France and Zinfandel in California with their Sensory Profile, along with interesting and easy to read the "Best of the Rest grapes" covered tastefully and succinctly.

No wine book could be complete without suggestion for food and wine pairing. Chapter 6 is a general chapter for everything from Storing and pouring-including decanting glassware, serving temperatures, when to drink fine wines, and when to drink which wine. Choosing wine for vegetarian food, non-veg, and sea-food, is a unique presentation section. Salty or sweet food with wine has its own challenges. Oak level in the wine has been paired with light to grilled food.

Chapter 7 -the last chapter is an unabashed attempt to give information about various wineries in the Boisset Collection necklace and includes Buena Vista, Raymond, DE Loach in the US and Domaine de La Vougeraie, Bouchard Aine & Fils, J. Moreau & Fils (Chablis), Chateau de Pierreux (Beaujolais), Mommessin (Beaujolais), Bonpas (Rhone Valley) and Fortant (Languedoc) some of which are already being imported in India by the Indian producer, Fratelli Vineyards.

Reading Labels in Sonoma and Napa in America, Burgundy Cote d'Or, South of France has been made easy through the Appendix. Various appellations have been explained lucidly with the use of maps, making it easy for a novice to comprehend and pique his interest in wines-especially in the areas Jean-Charles Boisset (JCB as he is fondly addressed) is present. As is traditional, The book ends with Glossary.

The 192-page book has been published on glossy paper with golden coating at the outside edges. The book retails for \$65 and comes with a complimentary bottle of JCB 9 sparkling wine made from Champagne grapes. No price is available without the sparkling wine which sells for \$65 even without the book. For details of buying the wine and the book at the same prices, [click](#)

The book was released recently when the new wines in collaboration with Fratelli- JCB No. 47, and two variants of J'Noon had not been launched. After the Launch of these wines in Napa on June 9 and Burgundy later, one can look for these initiatives hopefully in the next edition.

Subhash Arora

