

Judgment of Paris 40th Anniversary celebration at Raymond Vineyards

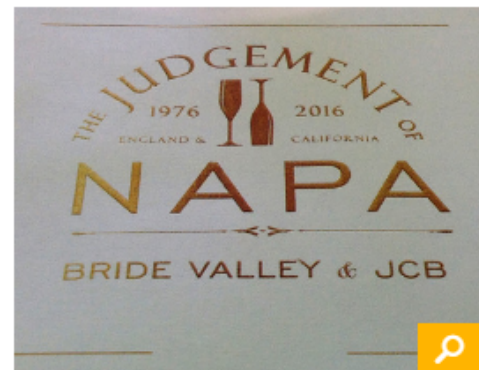
Julie Santiago

May 24, 2016



As part of the **Judgment of Paris** 40th Anniversary celebration, **Raymond Vineyards** held a friendly competition between California and English Sparkling Wines to introduce **Steven Spurrier's Bride Valley** English Sparkling Wines, on May 15th, 2016. The event also celebrated and honored the history and legacy of the 'Judgment of Paris' and Spurrier's contribution to the historical event, which launched **Napa Valley** wines onto the world stage and influenced how we think of Napa Valley wines today.

Spurrier flew in from England for the event and was alongside Raymond Proprietor **Jean-Charles Boisset** to host the blind tasting, which matched Spurrier's Bride Valley English Sparkling Blanc de Blancs 2013 in a friendly competition against Boisset's JCB No. 9 Russian River Valley Brut Blanc de Blancs 2009. Guests were invited to vote for their favorite, and the winning **wine** was the JCB No. 9 Russian River Valley Brut Blanc de Blancs. Once again, California captured the voter's hearts as the favorite, and it was a fitting tribute paying homage to the original event, which took place on May 24th, 1976.



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Bride Valley English Sparkling Blanc de Blancs 2013 made its debut for tasting and purchase in the U.S. during the event. Additionally, guests were treated to a flight of rosés following the blind tasting. The flight included Spurrier's Bride Valley Rosé Bella 2013 (of which only six bottles made it into the country, because of its limited availability and quantity produced in 2013), Boisset's JCB No. 13 2009 Crémant de Bourgogne Rosé and JCB 2009 No. 34 California Brut Rosé.

Speaking of the collaboration between Boisset Collection and Bride Valley, Boisset says, "Our dear friend Steven and his family had an endearing vision of producing sparkling wine on par with the world's best in the chalky soils of England... At the time of his original vision as early as 2007, he recognized England's potential for sparkling wine before the world had fully realized its potential. We encouraged him always and are honored and inspired to be his partner in importing Bride Valley to America, whether France, California or England, we are one world of wine!"

Boisset Collection is the exclusive importer of Bride Valley English Sparkling wines and will officially launch the brand to the U.S. market in January 2017. The Bride Valley Blanc de Blancs 2013 is currently only available in very limited supply at the [Raymond Vineyards](#) tasting room.

About England's Wine Industry

If you go to your favorite wine store, you will be hard pressed to find many, if any, English wines. However, the wine industry in England is thriving. According to the English Wine Producers *"The UK is a premium wine-producing region, with around 500 vineyards in England and Wales covering some 4,500 acres and producing sparkling and still wines. English and Welsh wines have been winning many prestigious awards"*.

Although the Romans brought grapes vines all throughout their empire two thousand years ago, it is not known whether England's weather was auspicious enough for the growth of quality winemaking vines at that time. It was not until three centuries later that the Normans brought monks who were experienced in winegrowing and helped mark the start of viticulture activities in England. However, during the Middle Ages the change in agricultural practices brought by illnesses, the dissolution of the monasteries, and possibly a change in weather conditions caused for most of the vines disappeared (with few exceptions).

After World War II, English wine viticultural practices experienced a revival in part thanks to a combination of new varieties, more suitable growing techniques and better disease control. Some also argue that climate change has also benefited the English wine industry, in particular, the Sparkling wine industry. According to NASA Earth Observatory world temperatures data collected since 1880 demonstrates how cooler or warmer some areas has become since the 1950s, but mostly since the 1970s. Based on recent climate trends, the United Kingdom is seeing a rising in temperatures for the last few decades, and the warmest year on record was 2006.

Whether you believe in Climate Change or not, it seems that England and Wales' wine industry are benefiting from this shift in temperature trends. If you are a student of geology, you already know that the Kimmeridgian clay soils extend from southern England to Loire Valley, Champagne, and Burgundy. Some Champagne houses are already taking note and are acquiring agricultural land to plant Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier; primary grapes in the Sparkling wine production. With the help of some English Sparkling wines commanding the same price point as Champagne, the wine industry is flourishing around its Sparkling wine production.

About Bride Valley

After fifty years in the wine trade, Steven Spurrier, inspired by the unique chalky soils on his wife Bella's Dorset sheep farm, decided to join the English sparkling wine revolution. In 2008, they selected the finest Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier root stocks from Burgundy's famous Pepinieres Guillaume vine nursery. Thirteen different clones were meticulously chosen to match each individual plot. Now they have over twenty-four acres under cultivation, making three delicious wines, on the chalky south facing slopes above the beautiful Dorset village of Litton Cheney. Forty-two thousand vines are close-planted on mostly south facing slopes in the bowl of their 200-acre farm on South Dorset's Jurassic Coast, near to Kimmeridge.

About Raymond Vineyards

Raymond Vineyards, founded in 1970, comprises more than 330 acres in Rutherford, St. Helena and Jameson Canyon. Today, guided by the vision of Proprietor Jean-Charles Boisset, Raymond Vineyards is one of the wine world's most dynamic winery destinations blending phenomenal wines with guest experiences that unite education, passion, and entertainment. Raymond's Estate vineyards are certified organic and Biodynamic. The Napa Green certified winery generates 100% of its energy needs from on-site solar panels and is additionally certified sustainable by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.