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Jean-Charles Boisset's \$395 wine book will help you live your best life

The 10-pound coffee table book titled *Alchemy of the Senses* costs \$395, comes in a black velvet box, has a red velvet cover, leopard print velvet inside cover and no, it doesn't come with wine.

It's extravagant, but also quintessentially Jean Charles Boisset, the mind behind the book and proprietor of Raymond Vineyards, JCB Collection, and Buena Vista Winery, among many other wineries (which like his book, are often decorated in velvet and leopard print).

Always dressed to impress in his Louboutins, red socks, and a jeweled brooch he designed himself, Boisset has successfully infiltrated California Wine Country with French joie de vivre and his infectious celebration for life's finer things. So yes, [Alchemy of the Senses](#) costs more than a really, really good bottle of wine, but it's also not your typical wine or coffee table book.



Much like Boisset, this book is difficult to define and checks many boxes, expanding far beyond the vine. It's a fantastical autobiography, where readers learn about his upbringing in France, family history with wine, and move to California to establish his wine-inspired empire. It's educational, defining wine terms—from biological farming to the elusive terroir to decanting—and explores the aromas and textures of wine in a fun and tactical way. It's interactive, with challenges, hidden messages, and glow-in-the-dark and 3D pages. It's part cookbook and even provides tips on how to throw the perfect soirée. But most importantly, it's JCB's manifesto on how to live every day with unbridled passion, a guide to living your best life.

In his own words, he describes it as, "A wine book that speaks not only of tannins and barrels, but also emotion and fantasies, hope and imagination."

The Pendulum

There may not be any wine hidden in the velvet box, but it does come with a custom-made, gold pendulum, a touching tribute to Boisset's grandmother, who carried one with her always. She used it to line up the vineyard rows, but also to connect with cosmic forces beyond science. There are several immersive opportunities throughout the book to use the pendulum, which feels a bit like a modern-day ouija board. In the final pages, readers use the pendulum to choose wine characteristics and create their ultimate bottle.

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The Last Supper

A central part of the book is *The Ultimate Dinner*, a seven-course meal that Boisset would want to enjoy if it were his last day on Earth. The menu features more than 60 dishes, including many French delicacies like duck liver pate, foie gras, squab, caviar, and quail eggs. A handful of recipes are scattered throughout the book, though it's unlikely the average cook would attempt them. Where does one acquire stingray anyway?

But absurd indulgence is the point. The book reads, "The menu ignores the counting of calories that typically transforms a dinner into an exercise, and thus becomes a grandiose dedication to the extreme pleasures of taste and the joys of life: a journey of discovery that transcends all rational logic and temperament." In case you're wondering, yes, the whole book reads like this kind of Shakespearean poetry.

This section also includes a pull-out, *Last Supper*-inspired illustration of Boisset's ideal dinner party, featuring the likes of Lady Gaga (wearing her infamous meat dress), Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Salvador Dali, among others. It's a good prompt for a lively dinner discussion about who you'd have at your last meal.



Hands-On Wine

One can exhaustively study the history of wine, grape varieties, and wine regions, but at the end of the day the palate is developed by experience, not memorization. This is where Boisset's book really separates itself from other wine books. A collection of 12 aromas displayed like perfume samples enable readers to practice identifying scents like tobacco, rose, and mushroom in wine while varying textures, like leather, velvet, and wood, help them comprehend mouthfeel.

The wine and music section of the book demonstrates how different songs can interact and change the flavors of the wine. He supplies a playlist, ranging from Beethoven to Lady Gaga, Madonna to Vivaldi, to test his theory.

These are just a few highlights of the 235-page book, which can be experienced alongside Boisset himself at an upcoming Bay Area [tour date](#)—May 3 and 4 in Napa at Boisset's estate and May 7 and 8 in San Francisco at his private Nob Hill residence will be modeled after the book's Last Supper soirée. There are also two events taking place in Silicon Valley on May 10 and 11.

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