



Dinner with Jean-Charles Boisset at Chateau du Lac



There are Fridays and then there are *Fridays*. Last week I had one of those epic evenings that can only be described as dreamy. When Boisset invited me to their Alchemy of the Senses Wine Dinner, I said yes without even knowing the location. That's how fun their events always are! Little did I know the location would be so remarkable.



My friend Matt pulled up when I was still standing out front in a daze and we explored the mansion together. The backyard was even more jaw-dropping than I could have imagined, equipped with an infinity pool, stunning views of Grapevine Lake, and entertaining spaces galore. Even on a dreary autumn night, the property was gorgeous.

We finally went back inside and enjoyed some passed appetizers: oysters, foie gras, and smoked salmon hors d'oeuvres while sipping JCB Gala Champagne. We looked through the velvet-bound *Alchemy of the Senses* book, which has pages dedicated to smells (lovely notes found in wine), touch, and more. The book is not your typical wine book. Rather than focusing on wine making, *Alchemy of the Senses* celebrates how wine makes you feel: the emotion of wine. My favorite line from the book is, "Life is a theater and wine is our muse." It's a great coffee table book for wine lovers.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Jean-Charles himself! After years of attending Boisset wine events, it was such a treat to meet the man behind the label. He's just as charismatic and warm as you might imagine a Frenchman to be. He has a passion for wine and love for life, that much is clear. After an entertaining welcome speech by Jean-Charles, we made our way to the dining room.



There were five tables set up adorned with some of the prettiest silverware I've ever seen. We drank, by the way, out of JCB's new Baccarat crystal line, which you can shop [here](#).

We started with quail eggs and caviar paired with 2016 JCB N 81 Chardonnay. I don't particularly care for Chardonnay but I loved this wine! It tasted like Creme Brûlée to me and smells a bit like wedding cake. I would not have thought to pair something so sweet with such a salty dish but that's why I go to events like this: to learn more and get inspired for home entertaining.

Next up was salmon with a butter sauce and crispy leeks paired with 2012 JCB No 3 Pinot Noir, which is a blend of burgundy wine + Sonoma county wine. Jean-Charles' wife Gina was raised in Sonoma County so this is a special wine to him, particularly since the blending of international fruits is forbidden by both countries. Jean-Charles called this the "forbidden marriage" wine but I like Matt's take on it better. He said, "So this is the Romeo and Juliet of wine." The end result is a muted California pinot, which was really something with the rich butter sauce. This was my favorite dish and pairing of the night, seeing as I'm such a salmon fan and it was executed beautifully.

Next up was wagyu massaged with beer with a crab potato gratin paired 2016 Passion by JCB. The sauce was a pinot noir reduction. Jean-Charles told us, "We wanted to bring all the emotion and style of JCB."



Finally we enjoyed a trio of cheeses paired with 2013 JCB No 1. Cabernet Sauvignon, which Jean-Charles described as having "curves everywhere you want it, beauty and grace." The cheese offering included espoisses, brillat-savarin, and 36-month aged Comte. The brillat-savarin melted in my mouth and reminded me of a port salut, one of my favorite cheeses. I'll dream about it!

For dessert, Jean-Charles served dark chocolate truffles with 2014 The Surrealist, a cabernet sauvignon. Guests milled about happily savoring truffles (you always have room for truffles, don't you?) and exploring the mansion.



I couldn't agree more!

It was an exquisite evening, as most Boisset nights are. Bravo, Jean-Charles! Let's do it again soon. Shop JCB Wines [here](#). Learn more about Alchemy of the Senses [here](#).