



IT'S TIME FOR WINE and OTHER THINGS

by

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May 1, 2018

UNSURPASSED SPIRITS, NAPA TO THE PEACE CORPS,

SUSHI IN BERMUDA,

MIAMI'S NEW HOT SPOT, & MIAMI'S GREAT OLD GUARD

If There is Better, We Don't Know About it:

Either your head has been in the sand or you are new to the wine industry and this column if you have not heard of Jean Charles Boisset and the Boisset collection of wines. The Collection includes about a dozen major wineries in Burgundy and California - all of them creating superb products. Can we say any of them are the best? Well, some have indeed won "Best of Class" or "Best of Show" at major competitions, but not every winery participates in those events. Bottom line on this issue: We think it rare that writers and/or critics would choose any one wine to be the "absolute best." Besides changing every vintage they are just too close these days in tastes, styles, and terroir.

That said, though we cannot claim to have tasted anywhere close to the world's production of spirits, we may well have come close when it comes to the primary five – gin, vodka, bourbon, scotch, and rum. Today, we are here to each introduce you to one gin and one vodka (though we disagree on *which* one) that we believe outclasses any other, as well as highlight one other vodka also at the top level. And, yes, they are made by Jean Charles Boisset under his *JCB* label.

The *JCB Gin* is created through the distillation of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wine, and then infused with 44 herbs, spices, and biodynamic plants which include juniper berries, ginger, cardamom, coriander, and vanilla beans. The healthy herbs are chamomile, honeysuckle, dandelion, calendula, valerian, lemon balm, and yarrow, just to name a few. You can revel in this gin in its pure state (it almost tastes as if it is mixed with Fever Tree tonic) or mix it. This one gets both our vote for the world's best (or at least our favorite).

Moving to the next "World's Best" (according to Monty), we were both enthralled by the *JCB Truffle Vodka*. How much better could it sound than to describe a liquid form of black truffles from the Perigord mixed into an almost perfect *JCB* vodka, which is created by fermenting Burgundian grapes into wine and then distilling it seven times into a refined, pure spirit. Then the best lots are chosen to make the base vodka. Adding truffles, as Jean Charles says, "... creates the perfect umami expression. It is a gift from Mother Nature that all beings hunt together, from wild animals to [we] humans who bring it to the best tables ... and now to the glass."

Sara, while loving the truffle, believes the "World's Best" accolade should be bestowed upon the *JCB Caviar Vodka*, which took the Boisset team over 12 years to create. Ultimately, the base vodka was merged with sturgeon caviar from southwest France to provide what one always hopes s/he will experience when ingesting caviar eggs – an explosion on the palate of the pure taste of caviar. Jean Charles describes it as, "... perfection – the apotheosis moment!"

As mentioned above, three spirits happen to fall into our judgement as the best. Yet the base vodka can compete with any on the market so it should never be slighted. These beautiful elixirs in stylish bottles will sell for between \$125 - \$175/bottle. Are they worth it? Is LeBron James worth the obscene money he earns? Tom Brady? The best can simply command the top.