

By [Editor](#) | February 9, 2017

Not Just a Celebrity Wine; John Legend's LVE in Harmony with JCB

Every actor, musician, and television personality seems to be getting their own brand of wine or spirits these days, but do they bring anything to the table beyond a brand name that bolsters sales figures? For Jean-Charles Boisset, the owner of Raymond Vineyards that produces John Legend's Legend Vineyard Exclusive wines (LVE), their joint venture is much more personal and meaningful.

"We're not interested in just stacking cases with the name of someone famous," says Boisset. "We do it because we like him, we like his style, we like the concept. We do it to add something to the wine world and to the music world."

So far they've produced two vintages of the LVE Cabernet Sauvignon, one of the Chardonnay, and are about to release a limited edition Napa Valley red blend as well. Boisset and Legend had already been friends for some time before they decided to blend their talents for wine and music respectively into the LVE project, and the making of the wines prototyped the sensual experience they envisioned.



John Legend and Jean-Charles Boisset. [Legend Vineyard Exclusive Wines](#) Awarded Wine Enthusiast's First Wine Star and Culture Award

"You put on the beautiful music of Legend, and you sit and enjoy the melody in your mouth. That's the idea, so we wanted to make two really robust, open and harmonious wines," says Boisset. "John's preference is towards wines with a lot of structure, and mouthfeel, great texture, and great presence, and the idea was to create a powerful and great tannin structured Cabernet as well as a rich, barrel fermented Chardonnay."

Together with Raymond Vineyard's director of winemaking, Stephanie Putnam, Boisset and Legend spent several long days going back and forth between the Red Room at Raymond Vineyard and the blending lab. Legend would play his music as they tasted the samples in the Red Room with its sensually rich decor of velvet and Baccarat chandeliers, and then they'd go to the blending lab slowly narrowing down the samples to match the vision.



"We tasted a lot of samples, we talked style, we talked emotion, we really had a lot of fun the three of us blending together, and blending to where it became the wine we wanted to make in relationship to the vision of LVE," says Boisset.

The LVE wines are currently sold at fine on-premise locations throughout the U.S. as well as at the JCB and Raymond Vineyard tasting lounges, but they're about to expand their joint venture with LVE Wine Cellar and the [LVE Collective Wine Club](#), and are poised to expose new pallets to the LVE wines by going on the road with John Legend's Darkness and Light tour.

During the Darkness and Light tour John Legend's Diamond and VIP ticket holders can have an experience of wine and music together reminiscent of the creation of the LVE wines by entering the LVE Wine Cellar, a backstage tasting lounge echoing the red velvet décor of the Red Room at Raymond Vineyards, and enjoying a tasting of the LVE wines before the concert.

"This will be the ultimate pairing experience that greatly enhances the concert-going experience — the rich emotions of John's music with the balance, finesse and power of his wines," says Boisset.

Boisset believes that these wine and music experiences will not only be valuable to the participants, but to the wine industry as well.

"Thanks to this concert series we're turning a ton of people on to wine, who typically drink whiskey, bourbon, or beer, and they're going to try wines because John tries wines. For the wine word it's a huge plus, because we bring more people in at the super premium end of the wine category."

The idea of a resonance between wine and music is not new to Boisset, who offers music and wine tasting experiences at both the JCB Tasting Lounge at Raymond Vineyards and Buena Vista Winery. "The tasting we just released at Buena Vista is all around classical 18th and 19th century music. We do it live and it's really cool."



Boisset also plans to erect a bubble, a cozy echo chamber, at Raymond Vineyard later in the spring adding to the wine and music experiences already offered.

While the style of the LVE Wines compliments the Boisset Collection well, not quite resembling anything else they make, but fitting somewhere between Raymond Vineyards and JCB, the vision and lessons from the project go beyond the bottle.

"Our objectives are much deeper than just making the wine and selling the wine, it's really getting into this world and converting people into wine and music or music into wine," says Boisset.

"I really learned how to attune wine and music in a very deep powerful and energizing way with John. As he played the piano, we drank, and we went back to the blending room, and we really made it that way together, which was very thrilling."

