

## Energy Bar

JCB Tasting Salon & Atelier is a Daliesque deli

BY JAMES KNIGHT

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"This place has a very high level of energy," Jean-Charles Boisset says of his new tasting room in Yountville. Obviously, with Boisset in the room, it would have to, wouldn't it?

With his own special blend of international playboy flash and down-to-earth biodynamic ideals, Boisset, the 46-year-old scion of a Burgundy-based wine group, has been busily buying and transforming Sonoma and Napa County wineries over the past 12 years. And while he has meticulously preserved and enhanced established brands like Raymond, DeLoach and historic Buena Vista, he couldn't help but install a bit of "JCB" style in each. But in this combination wine boutique and gourmet deli, it's all JCB all the time.

How to recognize JCB style: Do you see Baccarat chandeliers? Crystal skulls? Leopard-print upholstery? If you checked all of the above, you're probably in a JCB property.

Wearing a sequin-labeled jacket, Boisset was on hand recently to explain his eclectic vision to a group of media folks. At other times, his digital image still smiles at you from a touch-screen table (interactive tasting, \$40). Visitors may sip the premium collection tasting (\$30) at the bar, while lounging on leopard print, or at the long central table—"And that is a very high-energy table," Boisset wants to remind us. Looking up, we see that the chandelier above the table has not stopped spinning. It functions as a sort of vortex, says Boisset, to assist in moving people through the room.

Curiosity is enough to draw one into the glittering Surrealist Boutique, in which a portion of the bar top is swirling as well as your flight of Surrealist wine (\$50), so watch where you set that glass. Everything's for sale—from walking sticks to decanters, plus brooches, cufflinks and earrings designed by Jean-Charles, with the exception of the items in the "bondage cabinet," a visual non sequitur.

The other half of the joint is Atelier by JCB, a wine country deli gone wild. The mountain of local and imported cheeses is exciting enough; local gourmands with a Sonoma or Napa County address get a 10 percent discount on jamón ibérico, foie gras, Dijon mustard and Scottish smoked salmon. And, yes, escargot.

JCB wines retail from \$25 to \$350. "At \$200, we barely make it," Boisset says of the No. 50, a sparkling Chardonnay made from top Burgundy vineyards that floats like a butterscotch cloud over the tongue. Leaner and drier, the Infinity sparkling wine (\$75) displays a fine bead that emerges in a perfect circle on the surface—or is it a vortex?

JCB Tasting Salon & Atelier, 6505 Washington St., Yountville. Daily, 11am–7pm.  
707.934.8237.