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S.F.'s Bastille Day salute: Vive la fete

By Catherine Bigelow | July 23, 2015



Ritz-Carlton GM Bruce Gorelick (left) celebrates the hotel's new wine lounge with designing vintner Jean-Charles Boisset. July 2015.

Santé: Off the lobby of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, a former bellman's luggage closet has been radically transformed with leopard-print carpet and purple velvet settees into a sexy, bespoke sipping salon.

And vintner **Jean-Charles Boisset** christened this exquisite jewel-box space on Bastille Day with his signature savoir faire as he welcomed guests to the JCB Tasting Lounge.

"This is about bringing Napa to San Francisco, a little bijou in the city," toasted Boisset. "Our goal is to bring people together with great wine and food, to enjoy luxury, excess and passion."

The tasting flight of limited-edition and award-winning JCB wines (available by appointment to any vino lover) ranges from \$50-\$100 and is paired with gourmet tidbits by Parallel 37 chef **Michael Rotondo**.

In addition to this new Ritz-Carlton club (there is another in Napa at one of Boisset's other properties), he's developed exclusive partnerships with Baccarat, Bernardaud, Christofle and Lalique and designed a new line of 18- and 24-carat vineyard-inspired jewelry that adorns some of his bottles. When the last sip is savored, the jewels can then be worn on a lapel or as a pendant.

Oh, all that and he recently appeared on Bravo TV, when the bottle-blond housewives of Orange County visited his Raymond Vineyards.

"I adore design as much as making wines. Well, almost," Boisset admitted. "But I prefer to call myself a wine designer rather than a maker. Perhaps even a director of style."