

spirited

SPIRITED TRADE SHOW A FIRST-YEAR SUCCESS

Posted by Alexandra Russell | Mar 6, 2018 | Spirits, Event, Industry Briefs, Tasting Notes, Consumer | 0 | ★★★★★



On February 27, 2018, *Spirited* magazine, in partnership with Wine Competitions Management and Productions, welcomed close to 800 attendees to its first-ever International Spirits Trade Show and Tasting in Santa Rosa, Calif. A collaborative effort between *Spirited* co-founders Ethan Simon and Debra Del Fiorentino, *Spirited* publisher Michael Zivyak, and a team of event professionals led by Del Fiorentino and Suzanne Webb, the show was the culmination of months of planning. The goal: To introduce the idea that Northern California has evolved past merely “Wine Country” into an inclusive enclave for premium craft alcohol beverages.



Keynote speaker Jean-Charles Boisset at the 2018 Spirited International Spirits Trade Show & Tasting
(Duncan Garrett Photography/DGP)

The day opened with a Keynote Address from Jean-Charles Boisset, whose wine empire (with properties in the United States and France) has recently expanded into a line of premium spirits. He entertained the crowd with outrageous stories, unbridled enthusiasm, and memorable one-liners, including “The more you drink, the more ideas you’ll have.” After recalling his childhood in the vineyards of Burgundy, the flamboyant Frenchman

recounted his first visit to California at age 11, tasting Russian River Valley and Carneros Chardonnay with his grandmother, and embracing her advice that, "in America, everything is possible." Referencing the years of experimentation that led to his new product line, Boisset encouraged all the makers in the room to identify what makes them authentic, then "Be audacious! Be crazy! Be adventurous!"



JCB Collection spirits [DGP]

Later in the day, Boisset and sommelier Christopher Sawyer led a large group through a tasting of the new **JCB Collection** spirits offerings, which includes three vodkas and a gin, all distilled from wine. "It's time to treat spirits the same way we've [treated] wine for so many years," Boisset proclaimed, urging makers to pursue premiumization and not be shy about pricing products accordingly.

The more than 40 suppliers that set up booths represented many aspects of industry support, including production, branding, packaging, storage, distribution, education, financial, and legal services—all making valuable and necessary connections with distillers new and established. Feedback was positive as the day wound down, with congratulations shared and promises for an even bigger and more inclusive event next year.