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## A Frenchman's creative spirit shakes up the wine industry

Billy Munnely for Metro Canada  
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Tight regulations around marketing and promotion limit innovation in wine. Besides, it's always been a conservative business, and it could get even moreso as multinationals buy up more wineries. But you can't kill a creative spirit, and one of today's best is a Frenchman named Jean-Charles Boisset. His family heads up the Burgundy house of the same name, and their stable of wineries include big names such as Mommessin, Jaffelin, Moreau, Bouchard Aine & Fils, Ropiteau and Louis Bernard. A decade ago all of these wines were in decline but today they are above average -- some are even excellent.

Jean-Charles put Mommessin Beaujolais in a metal bottle with a 'cooldot' that changes colour when the wine is properly chilled. He also created the very successful French Rabbit brand in Tetra, which now has a new member, the organic Green Rabbit. This is the best bunny yet -- lots of rustic French country character. Think bistro foods and maybe transfer the wine into a glass decanter or bottle. A good value red for sure.

Mommessin's Beaujolais Nouveau will be coming in Tetra on Nov. 20. Perfect for a little office luncheon, after work celebration, or if you have a long train or bus ride home. Don't forget to lightly chill -- unfortunately there's no cooldot.

Jean-Charles is not just about everyday, fun stuff, he also has ambitions to make premium wines outside France, at his De Loach winery in California, and here in Niagara. A decade ago he struck a joint partnership with the Vincor company to plant Pinot and Chardonnay on Niagara's Beamsville Bench with the aim to producer world class wines -- organically. After just three vintages I have to say that the dream could well come true. The winery is called Le Clos Jordanne and the classy 06 Pinot (\$30) will be at LCBO vintages on December 6th. I'll give you the particulars later in the month. If you can't wait, order online at [www.leclosjordanne.com](http://www.leclosjordanne.com).

Lots of wine events coming up! Our bocce tournament at Allen's on the Danforth (November 15th), the Gourmet Food & Wine Expo (my seminar is Friday, November 21) and U of T's Hart House wine lectures (my seminar is Thursday, November 27). See my website for details. And coming soon: Billy's Best Bottles Wines for 2009 -- more than 300 recommendations for best buys at the LCBO -- plus winery tour info for Niagara, Prince Edward County and Lake Erie North Shore. Order ten or more copies from [www.billysbestbottles.com](http://www.billysbestbottles.com) and pay only \$12.95 each.

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