

Boisset's "green" packaging

I am not generally a fan of words such as "new," "improved" and "revolutionary" when it comes to consumer products. When something is described as "bold" I wince, and see mental images of advertisers trying to manipulate shoppers into buying something they don't need. But in the case of the Boisset family's approach to alternative packaging, all these terms are entirely justified.

(Disclosure: I know and like Jean-Charles Boisset, who runs the family's California ventures, including DeLoach.)



Boisset yesterday announced the debut of Fog Mountain, an organic Sonoma County line of wines that will come in 750 ml. PET bottles. The company also stated that from now on, all Boisset Beaujolais Nouveau (including Mommessin) shipped to the U.S. — some 25,000 cases — will be in PET. The letters stand for "polyethylene terephthalate," a thermoplastic polymer resin packaging that reduces solid waste by 90%, and is estimated to have a 50% smaller carbon footprint than a traditional glass bottle. Where a standard case of glass bottles can weigh 40 pounds or more (consider some of those steroidal bottles of Cabernet), a case of PET containers clocks in at 22 pounds, representing a potential saving in transport fuel costs and a resulting reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. PET bottles also are 100% recyclable.

Two years ago, Boisset introduced yet another new form of wine packaging with their French Rabbit line of varietals that come in "Tetra Paks" — octagonal-shaped, 1-liter polyethylene pods, sealed with screwtops, that reduce packaging waste by 90% compared to the standard wine bottle. A container of French Rabbit (which is biodynamically grown) weighs only 3% of an ordinary bottle.

Everybody in the wine business these days seems to be talking green this and green that, but Boisset is putting their money where their mouth is (so to speak). Good for them.