

BY CHRIS SHERMAN

So Brad and Angelina own a chateau and make a lovely rosé in Provence.

Just one? Big deal. The true superstar couple of wine are Gina and Jean-Charles, who have more chateaus, ranchos, bodegas, wineries big and small and labels grand and petite than even the most devout groupie can count.

More than 20? At least.

Each.

You would know them better as Ms. Gallo and M. Boisset, the names of two families who have built enormous wine empires in the New World and the Old in less than a century.

Yet both are the bright faces of a younger generation of their dynasties, working royalty if you will — and new parents. Always busy, whether she is in vineyard boots prowling the wet floors of the tank rooms or he is dashing between landmark estates in silk shirts and fast cars.

They will be in debonair dress and full-on charm when they visit St. Petersburg this winter to accept the honors of guest star vintners at the Museum of Fine Arts' Wine Weekend St. Pete 2015.

Recognition runs in the families. Hers started in California's Central Valley in 1933. E&J Gallo now is the largest winery in the world, with more than 60 brands, from André and Hearty Burgundy to the most respected terroir and single vineyards in Napa, Sonoma, the Columbia Valley, Catalyud and Tuscany.

His began assembling vineyards in Burgundy in the 1960s and, with young Boisset's help, in California in the '90s. The Boisset Collection comprises more than 25 wineries, including historic American names like Buena Vista, DeLoach and Raymond, and the French stalwarts of Bouchard, Moreau, Mommessin and gran cru vineyards and monopoles in Vougeot and Corton-Charlemagne.

Gina and Jean-Charles married five years ago and will arrive together in St. Petersburg next year, a rare double treat for Florida wine lovers. Their rich heritages will celebrate the museum's "Cheers to 50 Years."

Boisset attended the Wine Weekend two years ago at the invitation of event chairwoman Patricia Rossignol and her husband, Jean-Francois, and this year, Boisset arranged schedules to bring Gina as well.

In California they share one of the most famous houses in Napa, the former home of Robert Mondavi, with the next vintners in line, their twin girls and French bulldog, Frenchie, by the way, has his own line of wines (and videos) with his happy mug on the labels as Napoléon, Betsy Ross and more.

The couple love to taste each other's wines, Boisset says, and some from Oregon and Texas, two places where neither has wineries. They both enjoyed a terrific string of sunny



Gina Gallo and Jean-Charles Boisset each come from storied wine families. Each produces a broad range of wines and has a top of the line signature wine, at left.

Photograph courtesy of Boisset Collection

RICH HERITAGES TO ADD TO CELEBRATION

A superstar couple of the wine world will visit St. Petersburg next year as the Museum of Fine Arts marks its 50th anniversary at Wine Weekend.

California vintages (minus 2011), and 2014 looks as if it will be another great year.

Their histories and styles do differ.

"She's the one who wants to be behind the tanks every day," monitoring and adjusting the progress of each lot, while he is happiest in the last stages of blending and tasting. Boisset also is a builder and director of experiences who has restored the historic Buena Vista winery and made Raymond a sensual temple.

While he is a devotee of the Napa appellation, he concedes: "Gina has a big place in her heart for Sonoma."

WINE WEEKEND

ST. PETE 2015: CHEERS

TO 50 YEARS runs Feb. 6-8 and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg. WineWeekendSt.Pete.org; (727) 753-9463.



The couple's French bulldog, Frenchie, has his own line of wines. The labels feature him dressed as famous historical figures.

Photographs courtesy of Boisset Collection

Old Sonoma County is where she made her name — and remade Gallo's — 20 years ago when she elevated old family vineyards to produce estate cabernet sauvignons and chardonnays.

Boisset's heritage and first grand wines were in France until he fell in love with California's old vines and fresh surf.

Oddly, Gallo and Boisset never crossed paths in California: They met in Bordeaux at Vin-expo, the giant biennial trade fair, in 2000.

The foreign exchange has been robust and beneficial. He showed her the vast, intricate diversity of Burgundy's famously finicky terroir.

What did he learn from her?

"How to be a better husband. And father. Every day." He laughs.

Now they both make and sell wines all over the world, and each cheerfully makes wine affordable by the jug and box for the most humble table.

They also produce exceptional wines for oenophiles willing to pay top price. On those they put their personal names. "Gina Gallo" is broadly signed across the 90-, 92-, and 94-point Signature Series. "JCB" in all caps shouts on top of Boisset's most imaginative creations.

They'll bring some of each to St. Petersburg in February for grand dinners, rare auction lots and tasting. For now, they're off to China. Again. It's a very big market on the agenda of any empire.

Ultimately, Gallo and Boisset know chateaus don't matter. What counts is the vineyards. Like good rulers of any kind, they want to know each plot in detail and select the best for their own. ●