



Fact Sheet

Media Contact

Tamara Stanfill
Tamara.stanfill@boisset.com

Proprietor
Vice President of Operations
Director of Winemaking
Assistant Winemaker
Vineyard Manager

Jean-Charles Boisset
Lisa Heisinger
Brian Maloney
Katie Carter
Eric Pooler

Tasting Room

On an idyllic twenty-acre farm in the Russian River Valley, visitors enjoy a certified organic and Biodynamic® estate thriving with Sonoma's agricultural bounty. Guests are treated to limited release offerings of DeLoach's vineyard-designate wines, each with as little as fifty cases produced. Guests can enjoy tours of the garden as well as picnic grounds, cheeses from local Sonoma purveyors and an intimate look at the winery's Burgundian winemaking techniques.

Hours

The tasting room at DeLoach Vineyards is open to the public daily from 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Groups and limos are welcome by appointment only.



Tasting fees

\$15-\$100

About DeLoach

As a pioneering producer and winegrower of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Zinfandel in Sonoma's Russian River Valley, DeLoach Vineyards has been experimenting with and perfecting the best combinations of soil, rootstock and clones for over three decades.

In 2003, the Boisset family brought two generations of sustainable winemaking experience from Burgundy, France to California's Russian River Valley and pulled up the estate vineyards that had just produced *Wine Enthusiast* magazine's 2004 Wine of the Year: DeLoach Vineyards' 30th Anniversary Cuvée Pinot Noir.

The award-winning vineyards were replanted with cover crops in order to revitalize the soil and in the meantime, DeLoach partnered with winegrowers equally dedicated to and passionate about eco-friendly farming practices and the production of high-quality wines. *Wine & Spirits* magazine named DeLoach Vineyards a Top 100 Winery for the twelfth time in the winery's history in 2012.



EXPERIENCES

TASTING SALON FLIGHT \$15

Enjoy a selection of five of our premium wines.

PIZZA & A GLASS OF WINE \$15

Pair a glass of wine with one of our individual-sized wood fired pizzas.

Available Saturday and Sunday 12-4

VINEYARD AND WINERY TOUR & TASTING \$20

Learn about our history, philosophy, winemaking techniques, and our commitment to organic and Biodynamic farming on a tour of our twenty-acre estate in the bucolic Russian River Valley.

Available daily at 12p.m. No appointment necessary.

VINEYARD DESIGNATE TASTING, APPELLATION ROOM \$30

Many DeLoach wines are made in very small lots and sell out shortly after they are released. Enjoy these highly prized, award-winning wines in this seated, guided flight, offered in our Appellation Room beneath a towering three-dimensional map of Sonoma County. At DeLoach, *terroir* reigns, and there's no better environment to discover the nuances of our diverse terroir and our commitment to expressing it in our wines.

Available daily at 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm and 3pm.

ROYAL BARREL TASTING, BARREL CELLAR \$30

Explore the many expressions of the Pinot Noir grape in this seated tasting, with one of our gracious and knowledgeable staff as your guide. Begin your experience with barrel samples, followed by a seated tasting of exclusive Vineyard Designate Pinot Noirs often including rare library wines.

Saturday & Sunday between 12pm and 3pm.

WINE AND CHEESE PAIRING \$30

This private, guided tasting includes a selection of three of the region's best artisan cheeses, chosen to complement the flavors of our dynamic wines.

Available daily at 11am, 12pm and 1pm by appointment.

PICNIC AT DE LOACH \$30

Relax and savor the wine country! Select your favorite DeLoach wines and we'll provide a picnic basket for you to enjoy in our beautifully landscaped picnic area. Each basket includes salami, cheese, crackers, olives, chocolates, dried fruit and nuts (vegetarian option available as well). We loan you linens, stemware, cutting board and knife to make your picnic complete.

Available by appointment year round, weather permitting.



LES LIBERTINES CELLAR TASTING \$35

Explore the style, fashion and excess of the 17th century French royal court while enjoying our exclusive, limited production wines from our esteemed Estate Vineyard.

MAGIC OF WINE & MUSTARD \$40

In partnership with Falot Mustard (Burgundy, France), we will introduce you to the wonderful world of wine and mustard. Your host will teach you about the history and production of these two venerable products as you stroll through our vineyard and garden, and guide you through the process of making your own mustard from Dijon mustard seed. The tour ends with delicious mustard-inspired food with a flight of DeLoach wine.

By appointment only.

TASTE OF *TERROIR* \$50 - \$100

Discover the Burgundian origins of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in this exclusive, guided comparative tasting that features wines from our Boisset family of wineries in France served alongside a selection of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from California's nuanced terroir.

Minimum two people per tasting.

Available daily at 11am, 1pm and 3:00pm by appointment.

M.F.S. BLENDING EXPERIENCE \$100

DeLoach OFS "Our Finest Selection" Pinot Noir is one of our most esteemed wines, reflecting the skill and passion of our winemakers. Learn the winemaker's art while blending your own OFS Pinot Noir in our 90 minute Winemaker for A day experience. Following the blending session, you will bottle, cork, foil and take home your very own MFS "My Finest Selection" Pinot Noir with your own personally-designed label.

JCB WINERY

The JCB Winery unites the worlds of wine and fashion in a luxurious tasting experience that illuminates then transcends *terroir*, reaching beyond the traditional confines of wine to embody both style and sophistication.

By appointment only.



DeLoach Vineyards Brings Burgundian Traditions to California

DeLoach Vineyards has been reborn as one of the foremost American examples of a time-honored European tradition. For generations, individual families in Burgundy have achieved success with an estate winery, built strong relationships with neighboring growers, created “families of families” that expand their winemaking to include multiple vineyard-designated wines from outside their own estate, and finally gained enough size and scale to produce single vineyard, single appellation, and regional wines that bring Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to a diverse audience and at a range of price points that reflect the pedigree of the bottling. This Burgundian tradition has created world-class reputations for families such as Boisset, Bouchard, Leflaive, Faiveley and Jadot among others; it has produced extraordinary wine at all price and production levels; and it has attracted countless people to either become more engaged wine drinkers or simply to explore the world of wine to a greater extent.

The Boisset family has brought their first-hand experience and success with winemaking in Burgundy to California’s Russian River Valley with their purchase of DeLoach Vineyards in 2004 and its subsequent transformation. As it was under founder Cecil DeLoach, the winery is family-owned. Yet it is now anchored more deeply than ever in the Russian River Valley appellation, America’s most renowned appellation for Pinot Noir. At DeLoach, *terroir* reigns. The Boisset family brings to California their commitment to understanding the microclimates of a region in order to refine their understanding of the best growing sites for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Zinfandel and other varietals that thrive in this *terroir*. To that end, the winery’s 17-acre estate vineyard has been completely restored and converted to organic and Biodynamic® viticulture, a tradition upheld by many foremost Burgundian vineyards. The DeLoach estate vineyards are certified organic by CCOF.

DeLoach has found a camaraderie with many of its neighbors – a mutual respect for Russian River Valley’s great *terroir* – and has partnered with these independent winegrowers to produce more than half a dozen vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs as well as award-winning Pinot Noirs from the Russian River, Sonoma County, and California appellations.

One lesser known yet widely influential aspects of Burgundian winegrowing is increased attention on organic and Biodynamic farming. While many wine drinkers know, for example, that Burgundy’s Domaine de la Romanée-Conti is one of the most famous vineyards in the world, few know that it practices Biodynamic farming. Jean-Charles Boisset, who now leads the family business from bases on both sides of the Atlantic, grew up with this awareness and has been a proponent of greener viticulture and its attendant holistic benefits for the land and the people who work it from an early age. He has brought his experience and convictions to DeLoach. Winegrowers who provide grapes to DeLoach are offered incentives, the knowledge of the DeLoach winegrowing team, and technical support to eliminate synthetic chemicals from their vineyards and to validate their practices with third-party certifiers.



DeLoach is looking ahead in other ways as well. Its leaders are young yet thoroughly experienced professionals equally at ease in an old-vine vineyard and a state-of-the-art winery, equally comfortable with wine's great European traditions and modern American practices. In fact, DeLoach has quickly become one of the more innovative wineries in the country in the area of environmentally-friendly packaging with the launch of its eco-friendly Barrel to Barrel concept. Making the wine business more sustainable sounds like a modern idea, but as the great houses of Burgundy demonstrate, managing the land and winery for the benefit of future generations is an idea with a long history.

Case in point:

- As one of the great houses of Burgundy, Boisset is a classic example (artisanal estate + vineyard designator + regional negociant) of a winery that has created extraordinary reputations, produced great wines at all price points, and inspired countless wine-drinkers to take up the glass or explore wine of greater refinement.
- Since 2003, Boisset has been successfully transplanting the Burgundian model to DeLoach:
 - family-founded and family-owned;
 - anchored in America's best-known and most respected appellation for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Zinfandel;
 - producing multiple tiers ranging from accessible negociant wines to small-production appellation wines to vineyard designated artisanal wines
 - using winemaking tools such as native yeasts and open-top fermentors
- DeLoach also brings a Burgundian sensibility in its determination to implement and inspire more earth-friendly farming – along with a decidedly global perspective that drives DeLoach's leadership in innovative, earth-friendly packaging.



DeLoach Vineyards: At Home in Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, and Beyond

Russian River Valley has quietly become one of the most prestigious wine appellations in the U.S. after Napa Valley, without the geographical and geological advantages that make Napa a top tourist destination. Like Burgundy, the region's reputation is based primarily on its exceptional Pinot Noir, site-specific expressions of terroir, and legions of small growers who coax extraordinary flavors out of the ground. DeLoach is deeply involved in all these activities: creating appellation-designated Pinot Noirs, tending its own 17-acre estate vineyard on the eastern bench of Russian River, and sourcing vineyard-designated Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel from carefully selected growers in Russian River Valley.

Half the wines in DeLoach's Vineyard Designate Series are grown in Russian River Valley and include Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Zinfandel, and even more Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are grown from neighboring appellations that radiate out from Russian River Valley like the petals on a rose: Dry Creek to the north, Sonoma Mountain to the east, Sonoma Coast to the south and west and Marin to the south. Other Vineyard Designate wines come from the counties of Mendocino and Lake, which bound Sonoma on the north and east, respectively.

"Russian River Valley is a great place to come from when you're looking for vineyards that stand out," explains DeLoach Vineyards Manager Eric Pooler, "because Russian River itself is made up of all kinds of individual microclimates, there are many small growers, and they tend to be really conscientious. So when we venture out into Sonoma County and beyond, we have good reference points for how a site is working and what the grower is doing. That helps us find great sites, and it helps us work with the grower more successfully."

DeLoach Vineyards has a heritage of making vineyard-designated wines from its Russian River Valley neighbors, and that tradition continues today. The difference is that under the Boisset family's guidance, the winery embraces Pinot Noir qualities unavailable to growers in Russian River Valley, as well as great examples of other noble grapes with a long history in Sonoma. This has brought the Vineyard Designate Series its Pinot Noirs from Sonoma Coast, Sonoma Mountain, Redwood Valley and Marin and its old vine Zinfandel from the Mayacamas foothills.

Ranging even further afield, DeLoach sources grapes from appellations throughout northern California for its popular, affordable California appellation wines. "We put as much time and attention into our California wines as we do for our most expensive small-production wines, including sourcing, blending and aging," says winemaker Brian Maloney. "It's as if we're still making a terroir-based Russian River Valley wine. We're just doing it on a larger scale so that more people can enjoy the results. We believe in having a Pinot Noir on every table, and a wine for every moment of enjoyment."

DeLoach is looking ahead in other ways as well. Its leaders are young yet thoroughly experienced professionals equally at ease in an old-vine vineyard and a state-of-the-art winery, equally comfortable with wine's great European



traditions and modern American practices. In fact, DeLoach has quickly become one of the more innovative wineries in the country in the area of environmentally-friendly packaging with the launch of its eco-friendly Barrel to Barrel concept. Making the wine business more sustainable sounds like a modern idea, but as the great houses of Burgundy demonstrate, managing the land and winery for the benefit of future generations is an idea with a long history.

Case in point:

- As one of the great houses of Burgundy, Boisset is a classic example (artisanal estate + vineyard designator + regional negociant) of a winery that has created extraordinary reputations, produced great wines at all price points, and inspired countless wine-drinkers to take up the glass or explore wine of greater refinement.
- Since 2003, Boisset has been successfully transplanting the Burgundian model to DeLoach:
 - family-founded and family-owned;
 - anchored in America's best-known and most respected appellation for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Zinfandel;
 - producing multiple tiers ranging from accessible negociant wines to small-production appellation wines to vineyard designated artisanal wines
 - using winemaking tools such as native yeasts and open-top fermenters
- DeLoach also brings a Burgundian sensibility in its determination to implement and inspire more earth-friendly farming – along with a decidedly global perspective that drives DeLoach's leadership in innovative, earth-friendly packaging.



The DeLoach Vineyard Designate Series: Letting Great Sites Speak

With wine roots deep in Burgundy, the Boisset family understands that their home and the iconic Pinot Noir grape reached their exalted status in the wine world because vintners allowed extraordinary sites to speak – no matter how small or unassuming they might look to a casual observer. What matters is what shows up in the glass. The DeLoach family understood this as well, becoming one of the earliest Russian River Valley vintners to create individual bottlings that bear the names of the best sites within his vineyard portfolio. The winery continues to showcase exceptional vineyards today with its Vineyard Designate Series.

The sites in the series are primarily in Sonoma County, with the majority of these in the winery's home appellation, Russian River Valley, though the series comprises bottlings from Marin County to Lake County. Some are extraordinary due to their physical position on slopes or ridges, others due to rare old vines or unusual clones, still others due to growers with decades of proven excellence. Many share more than one of these advantages. Numerous vineyards outside Sonoma are farmed in the same ethos of Biodynamic® and organic farming as DeLoach. DeLoach's own estate vineyards are certified organic and certified Biodynamic. The winery's commitment to sustainable winegrowing is evident in the support it offers to all of its growers, working hand in hand with each to move from conventional, chemical-based farming toward greener growing practices.

Jean-Charles Boisset



Jean-Charles Boisset was born into the world of wine in the village of Vougeot, Burgundy, France. His lifelong passion for wine began as a child, growing up above the cellars and within view of the centuries-old vineyards of Château du Clos Vougeot, the epicenter and birthplace of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

His parents, Jean-Claude and Claudine, founded the family winery in 1961 with an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit in one of the most traditional winegrowing regions in the world. Today, the family collection includes wineries that share more than 18 centuries of combined winemaking

heritage and tradition in some of the world's most prestigious terroirs, from Burgundy to the South of France, to California's Napa Valley and Russian River Valley.

Jean-Charles leads the family firm with passionate commitment to fine wine, history, quality and a deep respect for the environment. He implemented organic and Biodynamic farming at all of the family's estate vineyards in Burgundy and California. Together with his sister Nathalie, he created Domaine de la Vougeraie, uniting the family's Burgundy vineyards, including prestigious monopoles such as the Vougeot 1er Cru Clos Blanc de Vougeot – planted in 1110 by the Cistercian monks, into one of Burgundy's leading domaines. He instituted the concept of "viniculteur", redefining the company's traditional role to encompass a close and active interest in all aspects of winegrowing to ensure premium quality and sustainable farming practices. He refashioned and elevated the family's founding winery bearing his father's name – Jean-Claude Boisset – into a premier boutique vigneron in the Cotes de Nuits.

In 2003 Jean-Charles brought DeLoach Vineyards, a pioneering producer of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Zinfandel in Sonoma's Russian River Valley, into the family collection. He immediately recognized the similarities to Burgundy: each boast a confluence of river, mountains, and soil that is perfect for growing world-class Pinot Noir. He began a mission, inspired by his Burgundian heritage to produce terroir-driven wines with the same commitment to terroir and organic and Biodynamic farming he had instituted in Burgundy. In 2009 Jean-Charles' quest for California wineries with a sense of history, heritage and a pioneering spirit, led him to Raymond Vineyards in the Napa Valley, where five generations of family winemaking anchors it to the earliest days of the Napa Valley. Under his vision, Raymond has become a leading producer of luxury fine wines, implemented organic and Biodynamic farming on its 100 acre Rutherford estate, and become among the most dynamic winery destinations in California, earning "Winery of the Year" honors from Wine Enthusiast magazine. In 2011, Jean-Charles' dream of championing California wine history became a reality when Buena Vista Winery, California's first premium winery, founded in 1857, became a part of the Boisset Collection. From this great foundation of historical, pioneering wineries in France and California, Jean-Charles' sets forth a vision of the wine world centered on family, passion, history, innovation, a commitment to fine wines, and a dedication to sustainable winegrowing.



DE LOACH
VINEYARDS

Decanter magazine has included him on its “Power List” of the fifty most important people in the wine world each year of its publication since 2007; in March 2008, he received the Meininger’s International Wine Entrepreneur of the Year; and in December 2008, he was named “Innovator of the Year” by Wine Enthusiast Magazine. The French America Foundation awarded him their first-ever French-American Partnership Award in 2013, bestowed upon an extraordinary individual or organization that has contributed to creating a strong and enduring French-American partnership in business, government, or academia. Haute Living Magazine named him to the Haute List San Francisco, recognizing the 100 most influential people in the San Francisco Bay Area. JFK University in Concord, CA named him and his wife, Gina Gallo-Boisset, their 2014 "Entrepreneur's of the Year" in an awards ceremony on May 16, 2014. He was honored with the 2014 Jefferson Award by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which celebrates the museum’s historical connection to wine. Jean-Charles Boisset was Honorary Co-Chair of the 2015 Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction, which broke all records by raising a staggering \$4.5 Million.



Lisa Heisinger, Vice President of Operations, Boisset Family Estates

Lisa Heisinger climbed the professional ladder from college graduate to Vice President of Operations at Boisset Family Estates in a scant dozen years. A year in France gave her ample opportunity to visit Burgundy and explore French wine culture while studying and working at the American Embassy before joining Boisset. A dynamic and multi-faceted talent, Lisa has worked in both domestic and international sales; in marketing as a Brand Manager and Marketing Director; in direct-to-consumer sales in both the tasting room and wine club; and in production and operations management. Her hard work, dedication and achievements have earned her the role of Vice President of Operations at Boisset Family Estates.

Success has come in part from Lisa's management style. "I try to be a ground-up enabler rather than a top-down boss," she says. "We are fortunate to have a very talented, committed team of people. It's my job to make sure they have the support and the tools they need to perform at their best." With her broad background in everything from administration to hospitality – plus a strong relationship with the Boisset family and a love of fine wine – Heisinger's goal is to encourage a collaborative environment where people aren't afraid to ask questions, think creatively and take risks.

To rebuild DeLoach's reputation and production in the face of a fierce recession, she and Boisset Family Estates have made bold moves with winegrowing, production, packaging, and marketing. "I try to follow Jean-Charles' example of being unafraid of failure," she says. "He's taught me that real progress often means taking a few risks." She applies the same philosophy to her personal life, driving herself to compete as a triathlete. "Every race puts me out of my comfort zone, but that's kind of the point," she says with a smile. "Whether you're making wine or riding bikes, it's easy to coast along. Life is much richer when you challenge yourself to constantly adapt... and that's precisely what I love about my job at Boisset."



Brian Maloney, Director of Sonoma County Winemaking

Brian Maloney was born on his family's historic ranch in the Petaluma Gap straddling the Marin and Sonoma County border. Inspired by his grandmother's stories of her father's struggles growing grapes and making wine in the Calistoga area before, during and after Prohibition, he enrolled in the world famous Viticulture and Enology program at the University of California, Davis. While there he fell in love with the diverse nature of the discipline and began a series of internships with wineries in Sonoma, Marin and the Sierra Foothills. Following graduation he worked the harvest of 2003 at DeLoach Vineyards and has remained there ever since, playing a key role in elevating the winery's Pinot Noir pedigree, expanding its vineyard-designate program, and planting and establishing its Biodynamic® estate vineyard.

With generations of farming and winemaking in his background, Brian has always taken to letting the *terroir* show first. Whether it's cool climate Pinot Noir or Old Vine Zinfandel, his ultimate goal is to let the interaction between the site, the vine and the grower shine through to set the style of the wines. This has led to amazing accolades and awards for his wines, including an impressive array of 90+ scores for the 2009 vintage from both *Wine Spectator* and *Wine Enthusiast*, his first vintage as head winemaker.

Starting in 2011, Brian has expanded his responsibilities to include overseeing the rebirth of the legendary Buena Vista Winery in Sonoma. In 2012, his team was the first to make wine in the historic Champagne cellars in over 30 years, a celebration that was punctuated by the joining of Tokaji and Sonoma as Sister Cities on the first day of harvest for the reopened cellars.

In addition, Brian guides the Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays of the JCB by Jean-Charles Boisset collection, and worked with Jean-Charles Boisset and Gregory Patriat, Winemaker at Jean-Claude Boisset winery in Nuits-St.-Georges, France, to create the innovative and critically-acclaimed JCB #3 – a wine that unites the best of the Russian River Valley with the best of Burgundy.

When Brian does find spare time, he enjoys gardening, reading vociferously, cooking amazing dishes with his partner Erinn Schwass, exploring new music and regions, and living in one the best places on Earth.



Eric Pooler, Vineyard Manager

Eric Pooler manages DeLoach Vineyards' 17-acre estate vineyard and the relationships with all of its growers throughout the Russian River Valley, Sonoma County and beyond. His job is to deliver the right kind of grapes to DeLoach, even when "right" has more than one meaning depending on the circumstances.

"Our whole Vineyard Designate tier rests on the premise that we know how to find truly distinctive vineyards and express their *terroir*," explains Pooler. "A lot of that expression comes from the winemaking, of course, but it all starts with the vines and the people who grow them."

The science of viticulture has leaped forward in the past generation, and Pooler is a college-educated agriculturalist like many of his peers. The difference may be that he's a lifetime outdoorsman working for a wine company that espouses organic and biodynamic principles. The first time he worked on converting a vineyard from conventional to biodynamic agriculture, others were focused on the subjective yardstick of "grape quality". Pooler saw the bigger picture, including the fact that the vineyard crew was healthier because they were no longer exposed to toxic chemicals.

"DeLoach offers growers production bonuses for farmers willing to farm organically or biodynamically," Pooler notes. "I know that our winemakers are going to understand the quality and character of the grapes I bring in," Pooler says, "and I know they're going to do a great job of expressing it. If a grower wants to see the highest and best use of their fruit, and they're willing to deliver the kind of quality we need, it's not hard to show them why DeLoach Vineyards is the best possible home for their grapes."



Katie Carter, Assistant Winemaker

A true local, Katie Carter was born and raised just five miles northwest of DeLoach Vineyards in the town of Forestville. Katie earned a degree in Biology from UC Berkley in 2003. However she did not let the pulse of urban life stop her from having new experiences. She traveled to a research station in French Polynesia and during the summer was a botanist in the Mendocino National Forest, while competing around the country racing for the Cal Sailing team

Katie's deep love of nature and all creatures' great (frogs) and small (yeast) led her to a variety of lab and field research jobs. She accepted a harvest position at Tandem Winery with Winemaker Greg La Follette. Katie loved the pace, spirit, and purpose of the winery led by Greg. This enthusiasm led to several winery lab positions and a 2006 assistant winemaking position with Mike Dobrovic at Mulderbosch Vineyards in South Africa. (Steen op Hout, Sauvignon Blanc, Tafel in the back of the bakkie, and many braais and boerewors – now that's lekker!)

She returned to West Sonoma County to survive her second harvest that year, joining the DeLoach team as Enologist. Promoted to Assistant Winemaker in 2012, Katie's a key player on our winemaking team keeping winemaker Brian Maloney in line, as well as supervising lab and cellar endeavors. She's delighted to be working with such fabulous and dedicated people. Katie loves being actively involved around the winery whether it is the regular barrel tasting, a day on the bottling line, chasing endearing dim-witted dirty sheep around the vineyard or blending our best Pinot Noir to perfection.

If Katie's not spending late harvest nights nurturing yeast or whipping up dinner for the cellar crew look for her sailing, skiing, hang-gliding, or hiking in the deep wilderness of our exquisite state. She brings her book-learning, palate and style to the winery, and is eagerly motivated to continue the journey of making fabulously interesting wines at DeLoach Vineyards.



The DeLoach Estate Vineyard: A Great Site is Reborn

When the Boisset family purchased DeLoach Vineyards in 2003, one of their first decisions was to convert the 17-acre estate vineyard surrounding the winery to organic and Biodynamic® farming. Decades of conventional chemical farming had left the soil tired and drained. The vineyard, with its prime location on an eastern bench of the Russian River, is one of the primary assets of the winery and one of the first things that visitors see upon arrival. Restoring the vineyard was a chance for the new owners, under the leadership of Jean-Charles Boisset, to demonstrate their commitment to changing the wine industry from within. These changes included Earth-friendly innovations in how wine is packaged and delivered to consumers, but they began with the Earth itself. The DeLoach estate vineyard would not just be replanted, but reborn in order to exemplify how great wine comes from great sites that are allowed to express themselves naturally.

The process of restoring the DeLoach estate vineyard was conducted from the perspective of nature. A conventional farmer might have simply pulled out the old vines and put in new ones. The DeLoach team, however, began by restoring the health of the land. The vineyard was allowed to recharge itself by growing cover crops that return essential nutrients to the soil. Farmers call this letting the land go “fallow”; simply put, do nothing but let the land grow something different for a change. Biodynamic agriculture takes the restoration process even further.

The first cover crop planted was safflower, whose deep roots drew moisture up and out of the sticky clay soil of the Russian River floodplain. Once the soil dried out to a more balanced level of moisture, it was turned over at a depth of several feet. This introduced more space for oxygen and water, which make up nearly half the composition of good winegrowing soil. The soil was then amended with a combination of rock phosphate (a natural slow-release form of phosphorus), lime (to raise the soil pH and adjust the calcium/magnesium ratio), and a Biodynamic compost preparation.

Production of the compost had begun the winter before and was a mixture of organic barley straw and clean cow manure containing no hormones or other chemicals. DeLoach acquired manure from local dairies, thus recycling the natural nutrients from the manure back into the local ecosystem. A hundred tons of manure and straw were formed into a large windrow, covered with straw to hold in moisture and heat and thereby encourage metabolic activity. At certain points in the compost’s development the winery added Biodynamic preparations, teas made from beneficial plants. The preparations further stimulated and focused the compost’s metabolic growth.



During the first cover crop season, DeLoach applied horn manure to the soil to introduce more beneficial microorganisms. Horn manure is made by filling a cow horn with dried cow manure, burying it in the vineyard, and letting it remain there all winter. The horn shape is one of nature's inventions, and Biodynamic adherents see it as focusing the decomposition process while the horn is buried underground. When fully broken down, the finished compost is essentially "bugs in a jug," or soil inoculum, because it contains microorganisms that have naturally adapted to the farm's soil conditions.

In the second year of vineyard restoration, the vineyard soil was again inoculated with horn manure and its host of beneficial microorganisms. These minute living creatures carry nutrients into the soil and distribute them evenly to encourage the formation of good soil structure. Then DeLoach planted a winter cover crop of barley, vetch (which fixes nitrogen in the soil), and indicator plants, which are known to either thrive or wither under specific soil conditions. Like a canary in a coal mine, the indicator plants helped DeLoach's vineyard experts understand what was going on in the underlying soil.

After the second cover crop had successfully run its course, the vineyard was ready to plant to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Planting took place according to the Biodynamic calendar, which takes account of celestial and terrestrial movements such as the moon and tides. According to astronomers and geologists, our Earth and moon are part of a single gravitational system because of their close proximity. This explains why the moon can create the powerful tidal forces that are easily observable at the seashore or in the mouths of rivers as they reach the sea. In fact the moon creates tidal effects in many other places as well, including lakes, streams, underground reservoirs, and river floodplains like the one surrounding DeLoach Vineyards.

Even after planting the new grapevines, the vineyard's rebirth was not complete. From a Biodynamic point of view, everything moves in cycles: instead of endings, nature continually finds new beginnings. DeLoach therefore continues to plant a variety of cover crops alongside the vines to encourage beneficial insects and microbial diversity, and enhance soil fertility and structure. The estate vineyard is now a rich ecosystem in which grapevines are able to express the unique combination of soil, climate, air, water, nutrients and human attention that turn the concept of *terroir* into a tangible reality. 2010 marks the first vintage of wines from the estate vineyards at DeLoach Vineyards since their conversion to Biodynamic farming.



DE LOACH
VINEYARDS

About Biodynamic® Agriculture

Biodynamic® agriculture is a system of organic farming that can be applied to all types of agriculture. It was developed by Rudolf Steiner, whom most people know as the founder of the Waldorf School. The philosophy behind the school is that children learn in natural ways, and education should support and amplify these natural processes. Biodynamic farming is gaining adherents in the wine business because it does the same thing for grape vines: amplify the combination of physical factors that make a vineyard site unique. That combination of factors is also known as “*terroir*,” so you can think of Biodynamic farming as a way to help a vineyard express *terroir*.

Like organic agriculture, Biodynamic farming eliminates the use of synthetic chemicals to fertilize plants and fight pests. But where organic viticulture focuses almost exclusively on soil, Biodynamic farming attunes winegrowers to the energetic life of the soil, the vine, and its fruit. One of the simplest examples of this is the way that nature changes its focus during terrestrial seasons. During winter in the northern hemisphere, the sun is low, solar energy is weak, and the earth is warm relative to the air. So grapevines “go with the flow” by putting their energy into their roots below the ground rather than expend energy above ground. During their ripening season, on the other hand, solar energy is increasing and the soil is cool compared to the air. Now the vines put their energy into rising toward the heat of the sun even as the sun itself rises in the sky due to the Earth’s transit around it. During the seasons in between, the vines turn their energy to intermediate forms of matter, such as the liquid sap in their stems and leaves.

Much of Biodynamic farming is concerned with thinking along natural cycles – making sure plants are aligned with and can complete the cycles fully. This is why Biodynamic winegrowers apply natural “preparations” that gently stimulate the seasonal forces already at work. The spring preparation, for example, includes pulverized quartz, a light-reflecting form of matter. This preparation is sprayed onto the vines just as they are seeking sunlight to turn their flowers into fruit. During the previous six months, the quartz was buried in the vineyard so that its contribution would mirror the vine’s: rising from the earth toward the sunlight. (Those who doubt that quartz can do any good should consider that their wristwatch may well be powered by a tiny grain of the same material.)

Another important tenet of Biodynamic farming is that a farm should be a self-sustaining system – one that generates compost, provides habitat for beneficial plants and insects, and feeds its human farmers. In practical terms, few modern wineries have enough land or labor to fulfill this requirement, so Biodynamic growers often cooperate with each other and with nearby farms to procure manure for compost, materials for “preparations,” and other resources.



DE LOACH
VINEYARDS

This too reminds us that we are part of a larger system and succeed by harmonizing with it. At DeLoach, the half-acre certified organic garden thrives with life. Sheep and chicken reside beside the garden's seemingly endless variety of fruits and vegetables; five types of melons and fifteen different heirloom tomatoes grow hearty in the sun while a colony of honeybees pollinates the flowers. The organic garden produces food for friends and employees year round. During harvest, the entire team takes time to share in a lunch prepared by the chef using fresh produce from the winery garden and honey from the resident bees. Once a month, friends, growers, fellow winemakers and their families are invited to the winery guesthouse to share dinner and taste wine from all over the Russian River Valley. At the end of the day, Biodynamic farming at DeLoach is about community and quality of life.



OUR WINES

Russian River Valley Appellation Series

2012 Russian River Chardonnay	\$18.00
2012 Russian River Pinot Noir	\$24.00
2012 Russian River Zinfandel	\$20.00
2009 Russian River Late Harvest Gewürztraminer	\$24.00

O.F.S. (*Our Finest Selection*)

2012 O.F.S. Chardonnay	\$32.00
2012 O.F.S. Zinfandel	\$32.00
2012 O.F.S. Pinot Noir	\$40.00

Vineyard Designate

2014 Vieilles Vignes Blanc	\$25.00
2013 Stubbs Vineyard Chardonnay	\$45.00
2012 Hawk Hill Chardonnay	\$50.00
2012 Heintz Vineyard Chardonnay	\$45.00
2012 Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay	\$50.00

2012 Marin County Pinot Noir	\$45.00
2012 Maboroshi Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$50.00
2012 Green Valley Pinot Noir	\$45.00
2010 Masùt Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$45.00
2011 Pennacchio Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$45.00
2012 van der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$50.00

2012 Nova Vineyard Zinfandel	\$32.00
2011 Forgotten Vines Zinfandel	\$36.00
2012 Riebli Valley Zinfandel	\$45.00

Estate Collection

2014 Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir Rosé	\$25.00
2013 Estate Vineyard Chardonnay	\$50.00
2012 Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir	\$70.00