

# FEATURES



## The Wine Corner

### DeLoach Vineyards

By Pierre DuMont

As we drove up the driveway approaching DeLoach Winery I felt I was returning home. That's because the first wine I fell in love with back in the late 70's was DeLoach White Zinfandel. This is embarrassing for a wine writer to admit. It was 5 bucks a bottle and I thought it was the most delicious thing I had ever tasted. Here I am 45 years later returning for a taste only to find things had totally changed – for the better. They no longer make White Zinfandel but instead craft an amazing variety of cool climate grapes like Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

DeLoach Vineyards stands as one of the foundational wineries of California's Russian River Valley, shaping the region's reputation for world-class Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Zinfandel. Founded in 1975 by Cecil and Christine DeLoach along with partners, the winery grew from a modest estate into a pioneering force in Sonoma County viticulture. Early on, Cecil DeLoach planted some of the valley's first modern Pinot Noir on the Olivet Bench, recognizing the cooler climate's affinity with Burgundian varietals, and in 1983 he was among the first producers to use the "Russian River Valley" appellation on a wine label—helping define the region's identity.

Despite rapid growth, financial strains led DeLoach Vine-

yards into Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2003, opening the door for new stewardship. That same year, the winery was purchased by Boisset Family Estates, a Franco-American wine group led by Jean-Charles Boisset with deep roots in Burgundy and a commitment to terroir-driven, sustainable winemaking.

Under Boisset's ownership, DeLoach underwent a transformation focused on organic and biodynamic farming. The estate vineyards were replanted with cover crops to restore soil vitality, and in 2008 the property earned organic certification from the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). By 2009, the vineyards and gardens were certified biodynamic, making DeLoach one of the region's leading estates in holistic vineyard stewardship.

Today, DeLoach remains anchored in the Russian River Valley at its 1791 Olivet Road estate, where its vineyards produce expressive fruit that reflects the region's cool-climate terroir. The winery's approach marries traditional Burgundian techniques—such as open-top fermentation, native yeast fermentations, and hand punch-downs—with California innovation, resulting in wines that balance elegance, depth, and a strong sense of place.

Current leadership includes Director of Winemaking Brian Maloney, and winemaker Katie Carter, who work to highlight the nuanced personalities of DeLoach's vineyard sites and the Russian River Valley's diverse microclimates.

DeLoach's portfolio spans single-vineyard Pinot Noirs, vibrant Chardonnays, and rich Zinfandels, drawing on both estate fruit and trusted grower partners dedicated to eco-friendly practices. The winery also invites visitors



The DeLoach property includes gardens and a culinary museum

to explore its organic gardens, picnic areas, and hospitality spaces, blending educational experiences with approachable, terroir-focused wines. The winery also offers wine lovers a very enticing deal – on Thursdays they offer free wine tasting, something that is rare in today's wine world.

Celebrating over 50 years of heritage and evolution, DeLoach Vineyards continues to honor its founder's vision while advancing sustainable viticulture and expressive winemaking in Sonoma County.

#### White Wines

- **2024 DeLoach Pinot Noir Blanc, \$35**

Crystal clear in the glass they successfully removed every trace of color from this white wine made from red grapes. It has a lovely nose of citrus and flowers that jumps from the glass. The palate is slender and dexterous filled with juicy apple/pear fruit and culminating in a brisk, mouthwatering finish. The perfect aperitif for a warm afternoon or to accompany a picnic lunch. Goes down easy....better bring two bottles.

- **2024 DeLoach Estate Chardonnay, \$80**

Matured in 33% new French oak the Estate Chardonnay has open-knit aromas of honeysuckle, butterscotch, apple and well-in-

tegrated vanilla oak spice. The full-bodied palate is satiny and expansive with slowly unfurling creamy flavors. It is balanced by good acidity and has a long, elegant finish.

#### Red Wines

- **2021 DeLoach Pinot Noir Estate, \$90**

The Estate Pinot is vibrant with notes of cherry and raspberry fruit. In the mouth the wine exhibits beautiful structure: fine chalky tannins, bright fruit, good acidity and satisfying length. It is a straight-forward easy drinking Pinot Noir.

- **2021 DeLoach Pinot Noir "La Bienvenue", \$125**

A big step up from the Estate Pinot, the La Bienvenue is darker in color and richer in body. The nose has scents of leather, earth and old bookstore similar to a Burgundy from the Cotes du Nuits. Its substantial tannins show it is built to last and should improve for a decade or more in the cellar. My favorite DeLoach wine.

- **2021 DeLoach Pinot Noir "Les Parcelles Cachees", \$125**

The wine has a beautiful perfumy floral nose that struts out of the glass. In the mouth it is silky, supple and spicy with attractive clarity of fruit on the middle pal-

ate and bright acidity through the finish. This is all about opulent plum, raspberry and cherry fruit leading to a smooth, tannin free finish.

- **2022 DeLoach Zinfandel "Forgotten Vines", \$50**

Collected from various parcels around Sonoma County this is a balanced, mid-weight "Dry Creek" style of Zinfandel. deep purple in color it offers aromas of spice box, charcuterie, and black olives with a core of jammy, blueberry pie fruit. The wine has well-managed ripeness a firm, fresh frame and long, floral-laced finish. Fire up the grill and throw on the burgers.



DeLoach Pinot Noir Blanc is a refreshing aperitif

#### DeLoach Vineyards

1791 Olivet Lane  
Santa Rosa, CA

#### TASTINGS

Thursday to Sunday  
11:00 to 4:00  
(free on Thursdays)



Talented winemaker Katie Carter led us through the tasting



DeLoach offers free wine tasting on Thursdays