

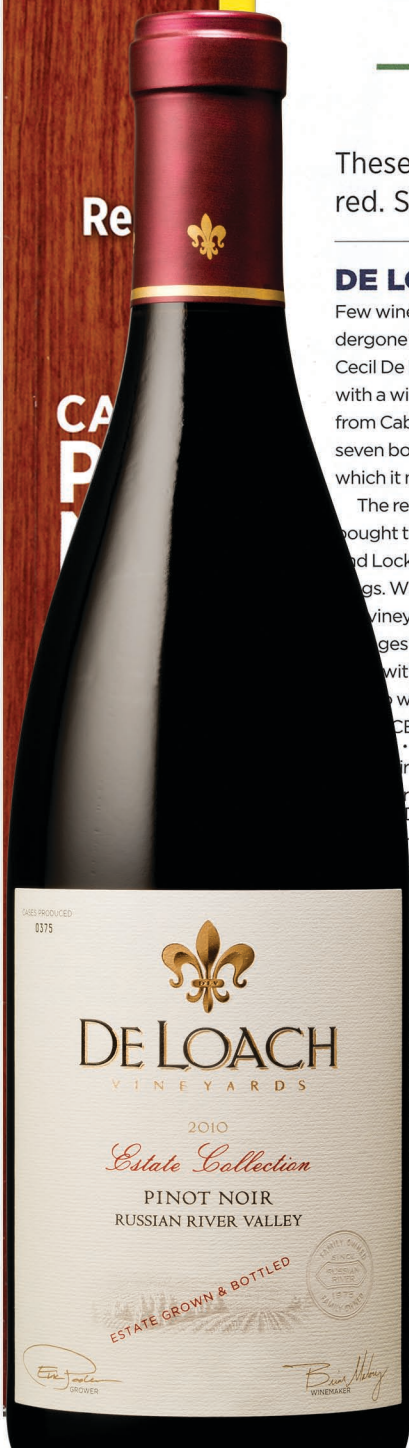
Wine Spectator

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ALL ABOUT

— THREE TO WATCH —

These California wineries have recently set their sights on Pinot Noir, the state's fastest-rising red. Shifting gears is often difficult in wine, yet this trio shows how deftly it can be done



DE LOACH: A

Few wineries better illustrate the seismic shift that Pinot Noir has undergone in Sonoma than De Loach. Founded in the 1970s by firefighter Cecil De Loach and his wife, Christine, the winery has enjoyed success with a wide range of varietals in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley, from Cabernet and Chardonnay to estate-grown Zinfandel (with up to seven bottlings) and more. It is now upping its game with Pinot Noir, of which it makes a dozen

The redirection is the inspiration of Jean-Charles Boisset, who bought the winery in 2003 and who also owns Buena Vista, Raymond and Lockwood. The focus at De Loach is vineyard-designated bottlings. Winemaker Brian Maloney, 30, credits experience working with the vineyards, upgrades in winemaking equipment and two excellent vintages for the upswing in quality. "We had a couple of nice years to work with in 2009 and 2010," he says. "Now the vision [for the wines] can go with the [upgraded facility]." Also of note from Boisset is the 2010 JCB No. 7 Pinot from Sonoma Coast (92, \$50).

WALKER

er and longtime efforts to his Pinog Skywalker Ranch character of Sta from two block in this emergin is midway bet breezy climat ned by mornin has been mak Coppola's wine

making both then and now. McLeod has led the replanting of erty, shifting the emphasis from Merlot to Pinot by moving the valley below to the cooler upper reaches of the ranch. s a deft hand with this rich, fleshy wine. The wine is made at

DE LOACH: A VETERAN CHARGES AHEAD

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—J.L.

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Estate Collection 2010	93	\$45
Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Pennacchio Vineyard Vineyard Designate 2009	92	\$45
Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Durell Vineyard Vineyard Designate 2009	92	\$44
Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Le Roi Vineyard Designate 2009	92	\$44
Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Maboroshi Vineyard Vineyard Designate 2009	91	\$44
Pinot Noir Russian River Valley O.F.S. 2009	91	\$40

ments with the help of local grower Steve McHenry.

As an archeologist, Thomas has a teaching post at the University of Texas, Austin, and he runs two excavation sites in Italy, including one that appears to have been a wine distribution center that was destroyed by the Mount Vesuvius volcanic eruption in A.D. 79. Thomas

Lucas' new walker Ranch.

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barbara ds in 2007 the 68-acre ing improve-