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Wine of the week: DeLoach Vineyards, 2009 California Cabernet Sauvignon Heritage Reserve

By PEG MELNIK
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

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On the up side, Maloney said the spontaneity of winemaking "lends a bit of excitement to the job."

The most gratifying part of being a winemaker?

"When someone enjoys my wine," Maloney said. "There's nothing better than seeing a person light up after having a sip."

Wine writer Peg Melnik can be reached at 521-5310 or peg.melnik@pressdemocrat.com.

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Youth is revered in our culture and sometimes even in our wine culture.

Our wine-of-the-week winner is the DeLoach Vineyards, 2009 California Cabernet Sauvignon Heritage Reserve at the budget-savvy price of \$13.

Brian Maloney is the winemaker behind it, and he says part of the reason it's a standout is because the winery tamed its tannins.

"With this wine in particular we try and make it in a style that is a bit softer and more approachable at a young age, while still respecting the varietal character of cabernet sauvignon."

Maloney said the winery can offer the \$13 price point because it's relying on California fruit and because the cab spends less time in the barrel.

The most challenging part of making cabernet sauvignon, Maloney said, is achieving a softer style.

"Coming from a pinot noir winemaking background, finding the mid-palate softness I look for in a quality wine can be a touch difficult with cab," he said. "I think it naturally leads me towards a style of cabernet that is somewhat softer and more approachable when young."

As for the most exasperating part of winemaking, Maloney said it's the erratic nature.

"The lack of certainty in a given vintage and a given wine is one of the things I find most challenging," he said. "There really isn't an ability to plan with certitude what you're going to do, and being at the mercy of natural processes, whether the weather or the invisible microbiological and biochemical activities that can occur constantly within the wine, puts a winemaker in a reactionary position."

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