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DeLoach Vineyards celebrates the possibilities of fruit from the Russian River Valley and beyond

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Vineyards in the Russian River Valley and other Sonoma County appellations supply DeLoach Vineyards with fruit. The winery is especially known for its Russian River Valley releases and its vineyard designate pinot noirs. / Provided to the RGJ by DeLoach Vineyards

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Written by **Johnathan L. Wright**

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The earth was exhausted.

After years of farming spiked with chemicals, the 17 estate acres of DeLoach Vineyards, a pinot pioneer in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley, were spent. They could give no more -- and certainly not to needy grape vines.

"The soil was dying," winemaker Brian Maloney said one afternoon at DeLoach. "About the only things living in the soil at that point

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were nematodes."

But in 2003, the Boisset family of Burgundy purchased DeLoach and began the estate's conversion to certified organic and biodynamic farming.



Brian Maloney, winemaker for DeLoach Vineyards, was raised on a Sonoma County farm. "All of this feels natural to me," he said of his work at DeLoach. / Provided to the RGJ by DeLoach Vineyards

DELOACH VINEYARDS

Address: 1791 Olivet Road, Santa Rosa, Calif.

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Biodynamics is a "supercharged" system of organics in which the ban on chemical pesticides and fertilizers is combined with farming practices that incorporate diverse crops and livestock and native flora and fauna.

From about 2004 to 2006, the land lay fallow as cover crops and biodynamic preparations returned nutrients to the soil. In late 2006, vineyard replanting began.

The 2010 vintage, some of it heroically harvested during monsoon-like rains last October, will be the first biodynamic releases from DeLoach.

That vintage will join a family of DeLoach wines already recognized, many with 90 points or more, for exploring and celebrating the potential and character of grapes grown in the Russian River Valley and other Sonoma appellations.

This expansiveness is mixed with a measure of modesty, said Maloney, who grew up on a farm in Sonoma's Petaluma Gap.

"We want to put out wines that are less of me the winemaker and more of the terroir. Showing the terroir is what's important."

Sourcing the region

The Burgundian affinity for biodynamics and sustainable wine making is well known.

Such efforts at DeLoach include composting, irrigating with waste water, using ladybugs and lacewings to control pests and deploying tufts of nibbling sheep for pasture control.

A biodynamic garden composed of raised and irrigated beds supplies herbs, edible flowers, plants for biodynamic preparations, and produce like tomatoes, green beans, broccoli and beets.

But the Boisset family transplanted other, equally important



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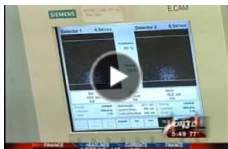
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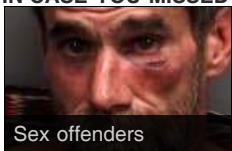
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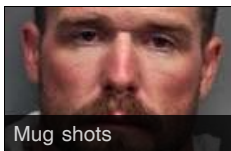
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