

SONOMA COUNTY: THE NEW BURGUNDY?

A dialogue between Jean Charles Boisset, President of Boisset Family Estates, and Rajat Parr, Wine Director of Michael Mina Restaurant, about Sonoma County's emergence on the world stage of Pinot Noir.

RP: The Boisset family is one of the premier wine families in France, and now you have a strong presence in Sonoma County, California as well. Why Sonoma County?

JCB: The *terroirs* of Burgundy and Sonoma County share many similarities. The confluence of the river, the mountain slopes, and the soil create perfect conditions for growing world-class Pinot Noir. The resemblance was clear to me on my first visit to the area, and I quickly became as passionate about Sonoma County as I am about Burgundy, and equally at home in both.

RP: With your 2004 DeLoach 30th Anniversary Cuvée Pinot Noir you clearly showed the world that Sonoma County can produce wines to rival the best in Burgundy.

JCB: We were ecstatic. We received a variety of accolades for that and many other DeLoach wines. To me it proved that the *terroir* of Sonoma County, combined with our traditional Burgundian winemaking techniques, can create truly magical wines.

RP: How do your Burgundian roots set you apart in the New World?

JCB: Our family of wineries dates

back to 12th century Burgundy. We are guided by many generations of winemaking tradition and bring that heritage into each and every bottle we create today. For example, at DeLoach Vineyards we use French open-top wood fermentors for most of our Pinots and Zinfandels.

RP: Of course I have enjoyed your distinctive Pinots from both regions. What's your secret?

JCB: We believe passionately that wine must reflect the unique *terroir* from which it comes, and our wines express that dedication. As a Burgundian family we pride ourselves on our expertise in Pinot Noir and have enjoyed bringing that to Sonoma County and showcasing the unique characteristics of its *terroir* on our beloved Pinot grape.

RP: You speak about your heritage and tradition, but I am also impressed by your innovative moves. It must be hard to innovate in an area so bound by tradition.

JCB: While we truly honor our deep Burgundian roots, we also acknowledge our environmental obligation to take advantage of recent progress in the development of eco-friendly packaging. My family is proud to be leading the wine world

in a direction that will reduce its carbon footprint and protect our beloved environment.

RP: You are a strong advocate of sustainable and bio-dynamic farming as well.

JCB: We believe the earth is like a human being, and we need to nurture and respect her as such. Bio-dynamics is the ultimate environmentally-friendly approach to winemaking, and a practice we have embraced for centuries at our wineries in France.

RP: I understand you have brought those practices to California, too.

JCB: Yes, we have. For example, at DeLoach Vineyards we uprooted 17 acres of award-winning vineyards to begin transitioning them into bio-dynamic farming. That means 7 years in which those vineyards will not produce for us, but we believe it is worth the sacrifice.

RP: What's next for Boisset Family Estates?

JCB: We will continue our passion for Pinot, producing excellent wines of distinction in ways that will not only enhance dinner tables around the world but will ensure the health and vitality of our precious environment as well!



"The Russian River Valley is the jewel in Sonoma's crown. It's a landscape made for grapes. The dirt is magical."



"We want to make a wine with great potential, a wine that will blossom in ten to fifteen years."



"We have a vision from the past. Wine has to live in its own self. It's not fun to copy."

Jean Charles Boisset, *President*

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