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## CELLAR



### **DeLoach Wines** **Sensual richness from organic vineyards in** **Russian River Valley**

By Simone Zarmati Diament

Unlike the cabernet sauvignon and full-bodied chardonnay-producing Alexander Valley, where the morning fog is burned off by the strong morning sun, the organically farmed, oak tree shaded DeLoach vineyards benefit from the cool climate in the Russian River Valley, in Santa Rosa, California, not too far from the Pacific Ocean.

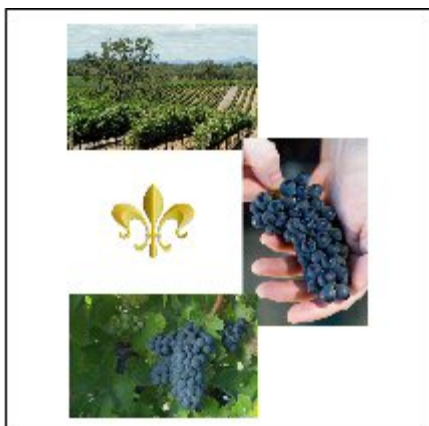
Marine fog creeps over the region in the early morning creating a micro-climate which is very suitable to the volcanic soils, similar to those found in Burgundy, thus producing some of the finest pinot noir grapes in the US and a less fat style of chardonnay. But oddly enough, in spite of the Russian Valley's cool climate, the DeLoach vineyards also produce sensual zinfandel and intense cabernet sauvignon, both grapes known to grow in warmer climate.

What seduced the Boisset America company - who, in 2003, purchased the vineyards still operated by the DeLoach family and by award-winning winemaker Greg La Follette - was the "terroir" propitious to Burgundian-style wines, and more specifically, pinot noirs.

The DeLoach family who had staked its claim in the wine grape business already in 1969, had employed from early on old-world Burgundian winemaking techniques and had a tradition of sustainability, shunning pesticides and additives.

They started producing wine under the De Loach label in 1975, and very quickly yielded distinctive wines. Today, the pinot noirs, chardonnays and zinfandels continue to be well-regarded and their OFS (Our Finest Selection) reserve wines, bottled only in years when the winemaker feels the quality represents "Our Finest Selection," get high rating scores in all the magazines.

La Follette is keen on biodynamic farming as the next step; "as the world moves toward an increasing globalization of wine styles, here [at DeLoach]



we're moving in a different direction. Our mission is to mine terroir."

Where many of the pinot noir producers in the Russian River Valley and the Sonoma Coast produce inky-concentrated and high alcohol wines with prices to match, DeLoach maintains a sober approach to traditional Burgundian wine-making with a wonderful quality-value-price equation.

**DeLoach Zinfandel Russian River Valley 2002 (\$18)**

This 100% Zinfandel, which won a Gold Medal at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair 2004, is a blend of five carefully pruned zinfandel ranches planted between 1895 and 1934 in the heart of De Loach Estate vineyards, which produce intense fruit from very low yields. With vibrant aromas of ripe blackberry, cassis and spicy cedar in the nose, the elegant and sensually rich dark red wine has dark fruit flavors by hints of clove and vanilla in the long, smooth finish. This hearty wine with 14.5% alcohol content has great tannin structure, and a velvety mouthfeel.



**DeLoach Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2001 (\$18)**

These estate-grown grapes were harvested in September, 2001. A warm summer followed by a cool September made it an excellent vintage for reds. This medium body 100% estate grown pinot noir, aged for 9 months in French oak barrels, exhibits complex aromas of black cherry, raspberry and spice, and on the palate develops strawberry and pomegranate with hints of licorice, cola and earthy spices. This wine has a supple mouth-feel, and a long rich finish.

**DeLoach Pinot Noir OFS Russian River Valley 2002 (\$29)**

The fruit for this classically styled 100% pinot noir was hand-harvested from DeLoach's various estate vineyards and selected clones. Deep garnet color and scents of dark cherry and berry fruit characterize this wine aged 10 months in Burgundian oak barrels. Full-on cherry flavor and rich fruit overtones, there is a slight smokiness, a hint of spice and layers of creamy cola notes. This wine is lush and silky with a sumptuous mouth feel and an elegant, lingering finish.

**DeLoach Chardonnay OFS Russian River Valley 2003 (\$29)**

This medium-full to full-bodied 100% reserve chardonnay made from the best estate grapes is aged sur lie for 8 month in chosen barrels. It has a brilliant straw-yellow hue and aromas of spiced pear, golden apple and honeysuckle with subtle hints of lemon zest. The tight acidity is balanced by a lingering finish of vanilla and banana cream.