

Borden Ranch

Lodi American Viticultural Areas (LAVA) Steering Committee

c/o Markus Bokisch

18721 Cherry Road

Lodi, CA 95240

phone (209)368-4669, (209)614-4600

MB
27 July 2003

Nancy Sutton, Specialist
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB)
Department of the Treasury
946 NW Circle Blvd. #286,
Corvallis, OR 97330

RE: Additional information you requested February 6, 2003 for proposed
Borden Ranch Viticultural Area, California

Dear Nancy:

We are happy to provide you here with the additional information you requested on February 6, 2003 for our petition to establish a Borden Ranch American Viticultural Area. We are addressing each question in the order presented to us. If we can provide you with further information, do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours truly,



Markus Bokisch
LAVA Steering Committee

c: LAVA Steering Committee

Leslie Crow

Debbie Elliott-Fisk

Petition to Establish the BORDEN RANCH American Viticultural Area
Additional Information Requested by the TTB as Provided by the Petitioner

NOTE: In our original petition (submitted 12 September 2002) to establish 7 new viticultural areas in the Lodi AVA, in "section I. Introduction", we presented key information on the (1) use of historic and current names, (2) agricultural, viticultural, and settlement histories, (3) geographical factors influencing viticulture, and (4) the distinguishing characteristics of both the entire Lodi AVA and for each of the proposed AVAs within the larger Lodi AVA. Several summary figures were used. Some of this information is repeated herein in reference to the questions on each AVA, and we refer back to key figures (such as figures 2, 3, 4 and 6) in the original petition providing information for each proposed AVA and the larger Lodi AVA. We hope that reiterating this information and further expanding upon it within proposals for each of our newly proposed AVAs provides you the supporting historical and geographical information you require to support our application.

1. Additional Borden Ranch name usage evidence.

Several examples of the common usage of Borden Ranch (see attached), include the citation in the *Wine Institute: The Voice for California Wine's Harvest 2000* in an article by Tom Smith, from the Delicato Vineyards. He states that innovative viticultural practices introduced into the Lodi-Woodbridge viticultural area had led to the harvest of better quality grapes. This, in turn, led to the "vintage of the century" in 1999 for this area. By 2000, the techniques of "leaf pulling, shoot thinning, and sunlight exposure onto the fruit" had become common practices in this region. Indicative of the expansion of grape growing acreage was the development of the Borden Ranch area. Along with the introduction of new techniques such as "microboullage, copigmentation, delestage, extended maceration and rotary fermenters..." was the development of this new acreage. "Equally exciting has been the discovery of the enormous quality potential of newly bearing grape growing areas such as the Borden Ranch, located in the Lodi District northeast of the town of Lodi" (www.wineinstitute.org/communications/statistics/harvest_2000_sacto_lodi_new.htm).

Parts of the extensive Borden Ranch holdings were developed into vineyard beginning in the 1970s by Bob Burton. These vineyards were own-rooted, and the quality of their fruit was quickly realized by winemakers. Mr. Burton sold to the Robert Mondavi and Sutter Home wineries that further developed vineyards on what had been Borden Ranch property. The latest to invest in developing the old Borden Ranch property as vineyard is the Delicato Vineyard, as outlined below.

The Cinnabar label featured a 1999 Lodi Syrah made from grapes grown on Watts-Borden Ranch land, part of the Lodi winegrowing region. Described as "well-drained sandy clay-loam...deposited by the Mokelumne and Cosumnes rivers thousands of years ago. It is ideal for growing medium-to-full bodied reds like syrah and zinfandel" (www.cinnabarwine.com/single-vineyard-1999.html).

In the spring of 2003, Delicato Vineyards launched their new label called Clay Station. This land, part of the Borden Ranch, has morning fog, evening breezes from the coast and rich, red clay soils. The *Stockton Record* reported that the Borden Ranch was once "known for its Herefords and thoroughbred trotters, stands 200 to 300 feet above the valley floor, its rich, reddish clay soils studded with large stone 'cobbles' providing a good-draining soil for grapes" (www.recordnet.com/articlelink/040803/businessarticles/040803-b1.php).

Newly planted, Delicato Vineyards cultivates Malbec, Shiraz, Pinot grigio and Petite Sirah, some of the classic Mediterranean varietals. The climate in the Borden Ranch area is conducive to growing excellent fruit. Indeed, the Delicato Vineyards 2001 Clay Station Viognier was named best viognier in California during the 2002 judging for the State Fair. (*Stockton Record*, 4/8/2003)

Borden Ranch was established in the 1860s by Ivey Lewis Borden. This site was near the Clay Station stagecoach stop established on the run between Galt and Lone in Amador County. Borden used this land to raise the thoroughbred livestock for which he became famous, including Hereford cattle and race horses. The land purchased by the Delicato Company in 1995 had never been ploughed and remained covered by indigenous grasses which had served as rich fodder for grazing (www.delicato.com/cs_vineyard/history.asp; see also www.modbee.com/columnists/moran/v-print/story/6575459p-751567c.html).

Borden Ranch's association with thoroughbred horses and cattle was additionally substantiated by an article in the August 16, 1929 *Stockton Daily Evening Record* where it was reported that the famous horse Pegasus belonging to I. L. Borden had been killed by a fire in the large stable on the Borden Ranch, "on Dry creek, twelve miles east of Galt. The property was formerly the Crabtree place."

As recently as June 2, 2003, the Woodbridge Winery, acquired by the Robert Mondavi family in 1978, announced the Woodbridge Select Vineyard Series of varietal wines from selected vineyards within the Lodi Appellation. Among these is the Borden Ranch where Select Vineyard Series 2001 Ghost Oak Chardonnay benefits from the mesoclimate and gravelly or sandy loams ranging to denser clay loams inherent to this area (www.robertmondavi.com/AboutCompany/release.asp?releaseID=179).

The University of California, Davis held an "immersion" tour of the Lodi area, including a visit to the Borden Ranch, as reported in *The V & E Trellis Wire* newsletter of Spring 2002. Described as a "4,000-plus acre area of vineyard development where over the last 10 years, Robert Mondavi Woodbridge has implemented various trellis systems and grape varieties on foothill soils." (2)

Another common usage of the Borden Ranch name was found concerning a 1997 United States Supreme Court decision concerning the *Borden Ranch vs. the Army Corps of Engineers*. This case concerns a suit brought by Angelo Tsakopoulos, a Sacramento developer who owned Borden Ranch acreage, against the Army Corps of Engineers over wetlands issues. The Corps alleged that Tsakopoulos violated the Clean Water Act when he undertook deep-ripping of slopes and seasonal wetlands on his property. This type of plowing on wetlands was deemed detrimental to the wetland swales. The U. S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Corps "has the authority to regulate deep plowing on wetlands that may drain into navigable waters, including Borden Ranch's swales." This ruling was appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court, whose deliberation resulted in a 4-4 tie due to the fact that Justice Anthony Kennedy removed himself as he was personally acquainted with Tsakopoulos. The result

was that the 9th Circuit Court's ruling was upheld
(<http://sacramento.bizjournals.com/sacramento/stories/2003/01/06/story7.html>).

Sources (see attachments):

http://www.delicato.com/cs_vineyard/history.asp

<http://www.modbee.com/columnists/moran/story/6575459p-7515697c.html>

<http://www.californiawineandfood.com/wine/delicato-clay-station.htm>

<http://www.recordnet.com/articlelink/040803/business/articles/040803-b-1.php>

http://www.wineinstitute.org/communications/statistics/harvest_2000_sacto_lodi_new.htm

<http://www.cinnabarwine.com/single-vineyard-1999.html>.

2. More information on the viticultural history of Borden Ranch.

It would appear from published literature that the Borden Ranch was originally established as range land. Ivey Lewis Borden had considerable acreage on Victoria Island in the San Joaquin Delta and in the Fresno area in addition to this land in Sacramento County. The property on Victoria Island was principally devoted to row crops, while the uplands near Clay Station Road and Dry Creek at the Borden home ranch remained in native grass land used for grazing livestock. As Borden was a leading breeder of trotting horses, this was no doubt the principal location of his equine stock. In the 1970s, plantings of wine grapes on the historic Borden Ranch were undertaken by Mr. Bob Burton, as well as by Mr. Dedomenico (of the family that owns Rice-A-Roni products as well as the Napa Valley Wine Train). Sutter Home and the Robert Mondavi Winery later bought vineyards here. As evidenced by the contemporary record, it would appear that the acreage planted to vines by the Delicato Vineyards in the mid-1990s was on land previously untilled. Many of the plantings of wine grapes have occurred here in the last 10 years, with the single, largest vineyard expansion in California history occurring with new plantings here in 1995-1996. The quality of fruit from this viticultural region is gaining recognition rapidly to the extent that vintner's are making wines from the Borden Ranch and using this geographic place name on their labels

(http://www.delicato.com/cs_vineyard/history.asp,

<http://www.californiawineandfood.com/wine/delicato-clay-station.htm>,

<http://www.recordnet.com/articlelink/040803/business/articles/040803-b-1.php>,

<http://www.cinnabarwine.com/single-vineyard-1999.html>).

3. Climatic documentation specific to the proposed Borden Ranch viticultural area.

The climate of the Borden Ranch viticultural area was characterized in the original petition on Figure 4 (schematic of climate gradients across the Lodi AVA) and in Figure 6 (the Lodi AVAs summary table). As stated in the petition on pp. 12-13, distinct climatic gradients exist across the large Lodi AVA, and the combination of climatological parameters (e.g., temperature, precipitation, wind, evaporation) provides the basis for distinctive local or topographic climates that characterize each of our proposed seven AVAs. We chose to represent these climatic gradients *graphically* in the original petition in section 1.D. that provided an overview of all of the AVAs. As shown using the standard climate parameters of temperature, precipitation, growing degree days, actual evaporation, and wind (in Figure 3 and Appendix D of the original petition), and as depicted graphically (in Figure 4 of the original petition), from the City of Lodi both inland (east) and to the north (towards Sacramento), the annual precipitation increases, mean annual temperature increases, mean seasonal temperatures (for winter, spring, summer and fall) all increase, growing degree days over a base of 50°F (as standardly used in viticulture, see Amerine and Winkler, 1944) increase, yet evaporation and wind duration/speed decrease.

As there are no long-term, climatological stations in the proposed Borden Ranch viticultural area, the Borden Ranch climatic parameters were estimated from the long-term station data for Lodi, Sacramento, Folsom, Camp Pardee (with Camp Pardee the closest station), and Stockton. As ratio data in comparison to these stations, the climate of the Borden Ranch AVA is characterized as follows:

(1) wind intensity and duration values are the high due to topographic acceleration of both Delta breeze winds and cold air drainage off the hills; they are most comparable to Lodi and the Mokelumne River, and the southwestern Cosumnes River, with much more wind than Alta Mesa and the Deer Creek Hills, which are less windy; estimated wind movement (mean hours > 8 mph) is 17.0 for the Borden Ranch region, but may be higher than this on the top of the Borden Ranch hills (inferred from Figure 3 summarizing the climatological station data in the original petition);

(2) moderate temperatures for the Borden Ranch region, slightly warmer than Lodi and the Mokelumne River, Jahant, and western Cosumnes River AVAs, but not as warm as the Deer Creek Hills AVA. For the Borden Ranch area as a whole, degree days totals are similar to those for the proposed Cosumnes River (as a whole) and Clements Hills AVAs, and about 100 degree-days greater than for Lodi and the Mokelumne River and Jahant AVAs, yet lower than the degree-day totals for the proposed Alta Mesa and Deer Creek Hills AVAs. Estimated temperature values from Figure 3 in the original petition are mean annual temperature 60.4 °F, mean winter temperature 47.3 °F, mean spring temperature 59.3°F, mean summer temperature 73.0 °F, mean fall temperature 62.8 °F, and evaporation 16.0 inches, due primarily to regular winds (please see Figure 3 for specific values in other regions); temperatures are further reduced with cold air drainage from the hilltops downslope in the summer and fall evenings, and by the winds accelerating over the hilltops in the day times;

(3) the estimated mean annual precipitation is 20.0 inches, similar to that for the proposed Clements Hills AVA and only significantly lower than for the proposed Deer Creek Hills AVA. However, both the stoniness of the soils and the relief of the high hills here with increased wind speeds decrease the effectiveness or availability of this water for grapevines, creating a high irrigation deficit (high actual evapotranspiration rates), restricting vigor. Because of this decreased vigor, rootstocks such as 110 R, 1103 Paulsen, and 140 Rugger are used, and vineyards are generally planted in a west-east row orientation with the wind, with vertical trellising.

As also noted in the original petition, the Borden Ranch area has a high diversity of topo-climatic sites, in other words, sites where vineyards may be managed as a block on a hill top versus a hill slope versus the relatively flat valley floor, or where slopes face different compass directions around the hills, from north to east to south to west aspects. This topography creates a gradient of conditions and challenges for the grape-grower, where south-facing slopes have higher temperatures year-round and lower soil water availability than north-facing slopes, and where east-facing slope receive more morning sun at lower temperatures than west-facing slopes that receive more afternoon sun at higher temperatures. None of our other Lodi area proposed AVAs have this same topography, and so they do not have this complexity of topoclimates. Clements Hills has the next highest diversity of topoclimates, with Deer Creek Hills third in

this diversity. As noted in our original petition, the hilltop topoclimates and terroirs are best suited to Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, with Zinfandel doing well on the hillslopes and (white Zinfandel) and white grapes on the valley bottom.

4. Approximate number of acres planted to grapes

Approximately 11,000 acres of grapes are currently planted.

5. Approximate number of miles from Sacramento and from Lodi to the proposed Borden Ranch Viticultural Area

From the center point of the proposed Borden Ranch viticultural area, it is 27.5 miles to downtown Sacramento and 15 miles to downtown Lodi (both city centers).

ATTACHMENTS



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LODI & THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY VINTAGE 2000

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By Tom Smith, [Delicato Vineyards](#), Manteca

It is an accepted fact among the locals that the 1999 vintage in Lodi and the Sacramento Valley was the "vintage of the century." Some real powerhouse wines were made in 1999 from this area. The only downside to such a great vintage is that when you raise the bar like that, everyone expects you to do it again next year. That was our challenge in the 2000 vintage.

What could be done to replicate in 2000 the near-perfect conditions that led to the great 1999 vintage? In a static world, that would be next to impossible, because 1999 was the year of La Niña, which expressed itself in the form of a very cool, dry summer. These are requisite conditions for a great vintage. By budbreak for the 2000 vintage, La Niña had retreated and more "normal" conditions were expected and experienced. In a static world, that would mean an average vintage. But growers and wineries alike in this region are anything but static.

Spurred on by the [Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission](#) and wineries demanding better quality grapes, every year growers in this region have aggressively investigated and implemented quality enhancing measure, such as regulated deficit irrigation and finding the best match of new rootstocks and clones for their vineyards. Findings from trials conducted in 1999 were implemented in the field in 2000. Further, in 2000 even more so than 1999, super-premium grapegrowing techniques such as leaf pulling, shoot thinning, and sunlight exposure onto the fruit have now become the norm in this region. Equally exciting has been the discovery of the enormous quality potential of newly bearing grapegrowing areas such as the Borden Ranch, located in the Lodi District northeast of the town of Lodi. Growers have actually raised the bar in the 2000 vintage above the 1999 vintage on many fronts.

Today, the region's wineries are also at the forefront of R&D initiatives aimed at evaluating and implementing cutting-edge winemaking techniques such as microboulage, copigmentation, delestage, extended maceration, and rotary fermenters. They are not tradition-bound and are therefore free to experiment with new ideas for making better and better wines.

The very definition of what constitutes a ripe grape has changed, too. Typically, that means grapes with higher sugar levels than ever before, but even more importantly, that means grapes with greater concentration of fruit, color, and silky smooth tannins. We like to say that if what we were making was just vodka, only sugar would matter. yes"> However, since wine also has things like color, flavor, tannin, and other "stuffing," much more than just sugar matters.

When you blend better grapegrowing, better winemaking, a spirit of cooperation between growers and wineries, and high quality potential new plantings and growing areas, what results is the ability to make better and better wines even in "normal" or average weather years. This happened in 2000 in Lodi and the Sacramento Valley. Look for highly expressive Chardonnay (often barrel fermented) and colorful and flavorful Syrah, Zinfandel and Merlot. It is too early to tell about Cabernet Sauvignon. At this writing, much is still on the vine or in the fermenter. One sure thing we know coming out of the 2000 vintage is that if (or when?) Syrah becomes the next big thing, Lodi and the Sacramento Valley will be able to satisfy the consumer's thirst for high volumes of great value, high color, wonderfully flavored, and richly textured Syrah.

See also:

- [Links to Regional Winery Associations \(Wine Institute\)](#)
- [Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission](#)
- [Delicato Vineyards](#)

###

Qualified journalists and Wine Institute members requiring further information may contact: [Communications Department](#).

Suggestions to webmaster@wineinstitute.org
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1999 Single Vineyard Wines

Cinnabar

Vineyards & Winery

Cinnabar's single-vineyard program

Our vineyard-designated wines start with grapes from a handful of California's most sought after vineyards. Like our estate vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains, they enjoy warm days and cool nights, have great soils, and are farmed by growers who are committed to producing the finest grapes in the land. Following harvest, fruit is rushed to the winery where it receives gentle handling by state-of-the-art equipment. Wines are carefully fermented, moved to our caves, and aged in choice French and American oak barrels. Each wine is characterized by the fresh off-the-vine qualities offered by the grapes on the day they were picked.

*Cinnabar***1999 Lodi Syrah**

Located near the San Joaquin River Delta, Lodi has been a major winegrowing region since the 1850s. Grapevines on the Watts-Borden Ranch benefit from warm, dry days,

cool nights and occasional morning fog. The well-drained sandy clay-loam was deposited by the Mokelumne and Cosumnes Rivers thousands of years ago. It is ideal for growing medium-to-full bodied reds like syrah and zinfandel.

Quite complex, our Syrah opens with aromas of cassis, brown sugar, baking spices and toasted oak. It tastes of blueberry, black cherry, mocha, black pepper and spice. Enjoyment is boosted by soft tannins, a big mouth feel and a long smooth finish.

APPELLATION:
Lodi

HARVEST DATES:
September 28, 1999

FERMENTATION:
hand-sorted, whole berries, 6-ton
open-top SS tanks

AGING:
18 months in BBL (30% new Fr. &
Amer. oak)

FINISHED ALCOHOL:
13.5%

TOTAL PRODUCTION:
300 cases

RELEASE DATE:
September 1, 2001

*Cinnabar***1999 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir**

Garys' Vineyard, a joint venture of growers Gary Pisoni and Gary Francioni, is situated at 1,200 above sea level in the Santa Lucia

Highlands of Monterey County. The benchland soils are mostly a

APPELLATION:
Santa Lucia Highlands

HARVEST DATES:
September 20, 1999

FERMENTATION:
hand-sorted, whole berries, 6-ton
open-top SS tanks

combination of decomposed granite and gravelly sandy-loam. Planted with France's celebrated La Tâche clone, this east-facing vineyard benefits from extended sunlight and a cool, long growing season.

This wine boasts classic pinot noir aromas of ripe cherry, earth, spice and oak. Smooth, silky and elegant, its modest tannins support round flavors of plum, cherry and sweet subtle oak. It has a lovely lingering finish of fruit, spice and oak.

AGING:
11 months in barrels (60% new French oak)

FINISHED ALCOHOL:
13.5%

TOTAL PRODUCTION:
300 cases

RELEASE DATE:
September 1, 2001

The logo for Cinnabar, featuring the word "Cinnabar" in a stylized, cursive font.

1999 Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay

Sleepy Hollow Vineyards lie in the Santa Lucia Highlands above the Salinas Valley. These east-facing hillsides have often been likened to

Burgundy's Côte d'Or. The expected warm, dry conditions are interrupted each afternoon by cool Monterey Bay winds. The long growing season starts earlier and ends later than others in California, allowing grapes to develop a greater range of flavors.

The '99 vintage exhibits bright tropical aromas with hints of vanilla, butterscotch and sweet oak. Intense and lively, it has flavors of pear, melon and spice that are supported by a structure of bright acidity. The finish is long, clean and tropical.

APPELLATION:
Santa Lucia Highlands

HARVEST DATES:
October 11, 1999

FERMENTATION:
whole cluster pressed 100% BBL fermented native yeasts

AGING:
11 months in barrels (40% new French oak)

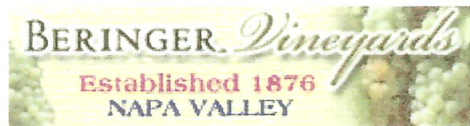
FINISHED ALCOHOL:
13.7%

TOTAL PRODUCTION:
250 cases

RELEASE DATE:
September 1, 2001

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Delicato offers new line of wines

Clay Station brand uses Lodi grapes

By Reed Fujii

Record Staff Writer

Published Tuesday, April 8, 2003

They could be called vintages for adventurists. Mass-market wine producer Delicato Vineyards on Monday introduced an upscale line of unusual varietals, all harvested from the Lodi appellation growing area and produced in limited quantities for sale in restaurants and fine-wine shops.

The Clay Station brand, named for Delicato's 1,600-acre estate vineyard east of Galt near the Rancho Seco Recreation Area, includes classic Mediterranean varieties viognier, malbec, shiraz, pinot grigio and petite sirah. All are grown in the Lodi area and targeted for the superpremium price category. The are intended to retail for \$13 to \$16.

These wines are sometimes referred to emerging varietals, which are beginning to gain acceptance among wine buyers. According to A.C. Nielsen Scantrak data, supermarket sales of each of the five types of wines increased last year from 10 percent to more than 60 percent over the previous year.

"These are all varieties that are just screaming out to be exploited in the marketplace," said Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. "As they become more popular, Lodi can just own the category."

Delicato's new line of wines can only further the commission's mission of improving the quality and public recognition of Lodi-area wines.

And the Clay Station varieties are particularly well-suited to the area's climate and soils.

"You'll see Lodi will be distinguishing itself with these Mediterranean varieties," Chandler said.

The winery's Delicato Shiraz has already distinguished itself, being named best syrah in the state two years in a row in the California State Fair wine competition. That wine sells for \$8 a bottle or less.

But what really helped spark the new brand was the success of Delicato Family Vineyards 2001 Clay Station Viognier, named best viognier in

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California at the 2002 state fair
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"That was kind of like the
spearhead of the Clay Station
(brand)," winery spokeswoman
Cheryl Indelicato said. Winery
executives decided they had to
take advantage of the
recognition of the quality of
Lodi wines.

Neither the slow economy nor
the flood of new, lower-priced
wine brands now hitting the
market affected the decision to
introduce a new,
superpremium line.

"Taste what's in the bottle, because it's really a phenomenal wine," Indelicato said. "It's really good quality for the price. We always try to overdeliver."

Admitting he might be slightly biased, Chandler agreed.

"They are exciting wines, every one of them," he said.

Delicato expects to limit production of Clay Station wines to 20,000 cases.

Grapes will be taken from Clay Station and other Lodi-area vineyards.

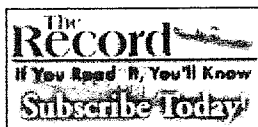
The Clay Station land, part of the Borden Ranch, known for its Herefords and thoroughbred trotters, stands 200 to 300 feet above the valley floor, its rich, reddish clay soils studded with large stone "cobbles" providing a good-draining soil for grapes.

Morning fog and evening breezes from the nearby Sacramento Delta moderate the afternoon heat and create cool nighttime conditions and an extended growing season.

* To reach reporter Reed Fujii, phone 546-8253 or e-mail rfujii@recordnet.com



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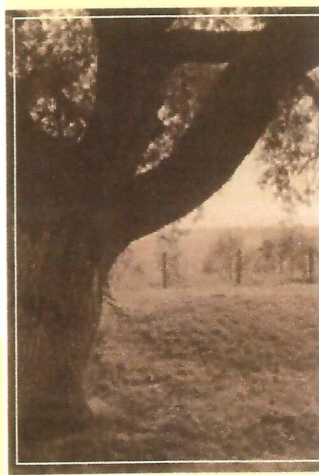
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VINEYARD HISTORY





Clay Station vineyard was once a stagecoach stop along the Galt-lone line in the mid-1800's and then became part of the large Borden Ranch, famous for its Herefords and Thoroughbred Trotters. Purchased by the Indelicato's in 1995, the ground had never been touched by a plough and was covered in the grasses indigenous to the Lodi region, making it perfect for a vineyard.

Located in the rolling foothills east of Lodi, California, Clay Station is quite different from most of the vineyards in the region. Situated on naturally terraced slopes rising 200-300 feet above the valley floor, Clay Station reaches for 1250 acres (505 hectares), bordered in many instances by Dry Creek. The creek connects the ranch to the cooling nighttime breezes that come from the San Francisco Bay and reach the higher elevations of the vineyard.

The Clay Station Story

Once part of the large Borden Ranch in the Eastern part of the Lodi Appellation, Clay Station Vineyard is named after a historic stagecoach stop that was a popular destination during the years of California's Gold Rush. Established in 1864 by Ivey Lewis Borden, a passionate horse-racing fan, the ranch was devoted to the breeding of high quality thoroughbreds and Hereford cattle.

During the mid-1990's, in a quest to produce the finest grapes

possible, the Delicato family was on the lookout for the perfect place to try something new. After 75 years of growing grapes in Northern California, they knew that they wanted to stay close to home, and unfailingly visited every piece of land that came up for sale. When they stepped onto Borden Ranch and walked what was to become Clay Station Vineyard – they knew they had finally found what they had been searching for.

Bud Bradley is head of grower relations at Delicato Family Vineyards, and just stepping foot onto Clay Station was all the validation he required. "I knew from the moment I took my first look that we could do something special with this piece of earth. There was a sense of awe about the place – the idea of terroir in all its aspects – walking on the soil, feeling the quality of the light and coolness of the air coming in from the bay, everything came together in this one place in a way that I have rarely experienced in my 35 years of grape growing. You could blindfold me and drop me down in the middle of a bunch of these vine rows and I would know in an instant exactly where I was."

Historically known for growing a grape known as Tokay – a table grape that was also widely used to make wine during Prohibition – Lodi growers in the late 1960's and 1970's decided to go in a different direction and plant world-class varietals. Following in this tradition and noting the commonalities between Clay Station and the southern Mediterranean, Delicato decided to take it one step further and focus on grape varieties that had rarely been tried before in Lodi – Viognier and Syrah (grapes of Southern France) Malbec (from Bordeaux), Pinot Grigio (Italy's premier white varietal) and Petite Sirah (California's own version of a Mediterranean varietal.)

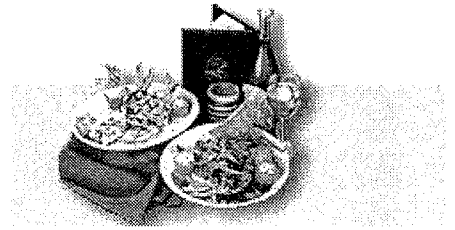
What had started out as a passionate experiment has turned into an unqualified success. The grapes that come from this region and the Clay Station vineyard have even our winemakers excited. As Tim Wong, Director of Winemaking tells the story; "We just got the most exceptional fruit from this vineyard. With very little intervention on our part, we discovered early on that we had created something out of the ordinary, especially with our Viognier. We weren't sure what the plans were, but the entire winemaking team went to the owners and said, '...we don't know how to do it, but this is the

best wine we've made this year. You have to bottle it – whether it's 5,000 cases or 50 cases. We'll come in on the weekend, whatever it takes. You've got a gem here." As a result, the first Clay Station wine, 2001 Viognier was released and won "Best of California" honors at the 2002 California State Fair Wine Competition.

That's how we feel about all our Clay Station wines - our main ingredients are passion, excitement and dedication – it's there in every bottle.

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Delicato Introduces Clay Station Brand; New Brand Targets Adventuresome Consumers

NAPA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 7, 2003--Delicato Family Vineyards is introducing Clay Station, a new wine brand created for consumers who want to move beyond more traditional grape varieties. This limited production 20 thousand case brand will be sold on premise and in fine wine shops both here and abroad later this month. The Clay Station wines, created from classic Old World grape varieties, include Viognier, Malbec, Shiraz, Pinot Grigio and Petite Sirah sourced from Northern California's Lodi wine growing region including Delicato's Clay Station estate vineyard. The wines will retail for \$12.99 to \$15.99.

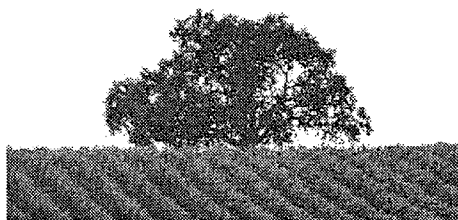
"Clay Station wines are crafted for the adventuresome wine consumer seeking something interesting, new and more intriguing than the usual glass of Chardonnay or Merlot," said Kristel Cerna, Clay Station Brand Director. "We believe these remarkable food friendly wines are exactly what the consumer is looking for."

The Clay Station wine types are sometimes known as "emerging varietals" as they gain prominence and grow in popularity and sales. According to A.C. Nielsen SCANTRAK data, supermarket sales of these wine types have enjoyed double-digit growth over the past year. Viognier sales volume is up 25.3%, Pinot Grigio is up 26.1%, Petite Sirah increased 18.7%, Malbec is up 10.2%, and Shiraz (also known as Syrah) is up 61.4%.*

The Clay Station brand is named for Delicato's newest estate vineyard located in the Lodi wine growing region of Northern California. The 1,600 acres of undeveloped land

purchased in 1994 has quite a history. It was once a historic stagecoach stop and part of the Borden Ranch known for its Herefords and thoroughbred trotters. The Indelicato family, with more than 75 years of winegrowing experience, understood the remarkable potential of the undeveloped site for a vineyard. Located 200-300 feet above the valley floor, the rich, reddish clay soils are studded with large stone 'cobbles' creating an excellent well-drained growing medium for quality wine grapes.

Morning fog and afternoon breezes from the nearby





Clay Station vineyard in the Lodi area.

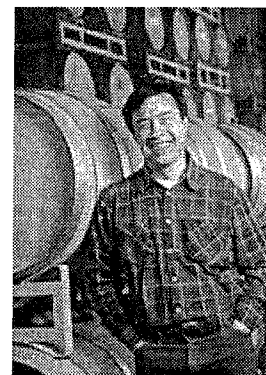
Sacramento Delta and the Carquinez Strait moderate the afternoon heat and create cool nighttime conditions and an extended growing season. The newly developed vineyard now produces elegantly aromatic white wines and powerfully structured reds.

"Most of the Clay Station varieties, especially Viognier, are new to the Lodi growing region," said Bud Bradley, Delicato Director of Grower Relations. "They are not the easiest grapes to grow and require constant coordination between the viticultural and winemaking team to turn these sometimes demanding grapes into exceptional wines."

At the insistence of Delicato winemakers, the first Clay Station bottling, 2001 Viognier, was released last year. The wine was awarded a gold medal and named "Best Viognier of California" at the 2002 California State Fair Wine Competition.

Delicato is one of America's leading family winerygrowers and it consistently ranks among America's top ten wineries. For more than three quarters of century, the Indelicato family has been growing fine wine grapes while assembling a portfolio of world-class vineyards. Today, Delicato harvests more than 5,000 acres of estate vineyards across the top wine regions of California.

The winery has been winning top awards and medals in both domestic and international competitions. Last year Delicato won the prestigious "Wine Producer of the Year" trophy at the International Wine and Spirit Competition for a second year in a row. Delicato Family Vineyards Shiraz won "Best of California" at the California State Fair Wine Competition in both 2001 and 2002!

Clay Station winemaker
Tim Wong

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New Delicato label has rich history

TIM MORAN
BEE STAFF WRITER

Riddle: What do stagecoaches, racehorses, red clay and viognier wine have in common?

Answer: They all factor into the past and present of a Lodi vineyard -- and a new wine label from Delicato Family Vineyards.

Clay Station is the name of a 1,250-acre vineyard in the rolling hills east of Lodi. Purchased in 1995 by Delicato, the property has a rich history.

Named after a stagecoach stop popular during the Gold Rush, the property was part of the Borden Ranch established in 1864 by Ivey Lewis Borden.

Borden was a horse racing fan who raised thoroughbreds and Hereford cattle on the property.

It was still grazing land when Delicato purchased it -- but it was ideal for vineyards, according to Bud Bradley, director of grower relations for Delicato.

The soil, a gravelly red clay, has excellent drainage and runs six feet deep on the property, Bradley said. Because the property is 250 to 300 feet in elevation, it runs two to three degrees cooler than the surrounding area, according to Bradley.

After conducting some vineyard experiments, Delicato made an unconventional decision: rather than devoting the entire vineyard to the popular chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon and merlot varieties, the winery planted viognier, malbec, syrah, petite sirah and pinot grigio.

The idea was to make wines to appeal to people who are more adventuresome, and perhaps tired of the chardonnay and cabernet that flood the market, said Kristel Cerna, Delicato's brand director.

The warm afternoons and cool evenings of the Lodi region lent themselves to the Mediterranean grape varieties, Bradley added.

"The Indelicato family farms an awful lot of grapes," Bradley said. "We have gone through and selected sites for particular reasons. It didn't mean we had to go along with what everyone else was doing."

It wasn't all that big a gamble, Cerna added. Several of the grape varieties like malbec, viognier and petite sirah are traditionally used as blend grapes, and the winery could easily use them for that.

But the vineyard people and winemakers were so enthused with the initial results from Clay Station, they almost begged Delicato to let the wines stand by themselves under a separate label, according to Tim Wong, Delicato's director of winemaking.

"We winemakers wanted to hand-bottle it ourselves if the owners didn't want to," Wong said.

Fortunately, the Indelicato family was on board with the idea. They released a 2001 viognier under the Clay Station name last year to test the market, and it was named "Best in Class" at the California State Fair Wine Competition.

So this month Delicato is releasing five wines under the new Clay Station label, a viognier and petite sirah at a suggested

price of \$16, and a malbec, pinot grigio and shiraz at \$13.

The labels are designed to help those adventuresome wine drinkers learn about the wines, Cerna said -- they even include a phonetic guide to pronouncing the varietal names.

A total of 20,000 cases have been made, and the wines are being marketed to restaurants and independent wine shops, Cerna said.

If the wine is well-received, the volume can be increased in future years, and the new label can be a platform for other wines, like an old vine zinfandel and blends, she said.

For those who can't wait until the wines get to local retailers, they are available at the Delicato tasting room on Highway 99 near French Camp Road, and at the Lodi Wine & Visitor's Center at the northwest corner of Turner and Lower Sacramento roads in Lodi.

P.S. -- You don't need a stagecoach or a racehorse to get there. But a designated driver isn't a bad idea if you plan to do a lot of tasting.

Wine Notes columnist Tim Moran can be reached at 578-2349 or tmoran@modbee.com.

Posted on 04/18/03 06:55:08

<http://www.modbee.com/columnists/moran/story/6575459p-7515697c.html>



About the Company

Press Release

6/2/2003

Contact: Tia Butts
(707) 251-4484

WOODBIDGE WINERY LAUNCHES SELECT VINEYARD SERIES WINES Wines Highlight the Lodi American Viticultural Area (AVA)

Lodi, CA -- Woodbridge Winery, the leader in the popular premium wine category, announces the launch of Woodbridge Select Vineyard Series, a line of limited-production, varietal wines sourced from specially selected vineyards primarily within the Lodi Appellation. In the winery's 25 years of winegrowing and winemaking experience, Woodbridge has discovered distinct vineyard blocks, located near the winery in Woodbridge, California, that demonstrate the quality and diverse expressions of terroir found in the Lodi American Viticultural Area (AVA).

"Working as a team with our growers, we identified vineyards that we feel produce wines warranting a special bottling because of their exceptional balance, structure and personality," says Winemaker David Akiyoshi.

The premiere vintages of Woodbridge Winery Select Vineyard Series wines – Ghost Oak Chardonnay, Clay Hollow Merlot, Fish Net Creek Old Vine Zinfandel and Red Dirt Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon– are produced from grapes primarily grown in six of the seven proposed districts in the Lodi AVA. The wines became available to consumers in select markets in May (Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Dallas, Phoenix, Raleigh-Durham) and will be available in markets across the nation by September at a suggested retail price of \$10.99 a bottle.

Select Vineyard Series 2001 Ghost Oak Chardonnay: This wine showcases the finest Chardonnay vineyards in several districts of the Lodi AVA, including Clements Hills, Janhant, Cosumnes (KOH-soom-nes) River, Borden Ranch and Mokelumne (muh-KEL-uh-me) River. These diverse mesoclimates and soils – from gravelly or sandy loams to denser clay loams –add layers of character to Ghost Oak Chardonnay. This wine takes its name from the distinctive Tule fog of the Lodi delta region that creates ghostly images in the vineyards and knolls.

Select Vineyard Series 2000 Clay Hollow Merlot: Merlot grapes prefer cooler climates, making the Clarksburg American Viticultural Area (AVA) near the delta at the western edge of the Lodi AVA an ideal source for Clay Hollow Merlot. The climate and clay soils here provide growing conditions similar to the cool, windy Carneros AVA at the southern tips of Napa and Sonoma Valleys, a growing region also known for Merlot. Clarksburg, designated an AVA in 1984, has heavier clay soils than the Lodi appellation and tends to experience slightly later budbreak and ripening due to the cooler temperatures.

Select Vineyard Series 2000 Fish Net Creek Old Vine Zinfandel: The old, head-trained,

- [Inti](#)
- [Ou](#)
- [Inv](#)
- [Fo](#)
- [Bic](#)
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spur-pruned Zinfandel vines that distinguish the Lodi AVA yield wines of great complexity. A majority of the fruit for the Old Vine Zinfandel comes from 50-to-80-year-old vines deeply rooted in the sandy loam soils near the Mokelumne River. Mokelumne is a Native American term for "the place of the fish net people." Years of flooding and subsequent soil renewal have created the classic alluvial fan with rich mineral deposits that defines the proposed Mokelumne River sub-appellation. These well-drained soils resist nematodes, helping the Zinfandel vines survive to old age.

Select Vineyard Series 2000 Red Dirt Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon: The grapes for this wine are selected primarily from the proposed Jahant District sub-appellation. This region's sand and clay loam soils appear rusty red in some areas from high mineral content. Twin Oaks, an outstanding vineyard in the Jahant district jointly owned by Robert Mondavi and the Lange families, has been recognized by the California Environmental Protection Agency for its sustainable agriculture practices.

As the top tier of the Woodbridge portfolio, the Select Vineyard Series wines receive special attention throughout winemaking and aging. Vineyard lots are kept separate from each other until final blending – a practice initiated and implemented in the region by Woodbridge Winery – so that winemaking practices may be tailored to the characteristics of each vineyard. The Old Vine Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot wines receive longer skin contact following fermentation than their classic Woodbridge counterparts, to give these wines greater extraction and a rich, smooth texture. All four wines, including the Chardonnay, benefit from prolonged aging in small French and American oak barrels with a higher percentage of new oak to enhance the rich vineyard personalities. The Select Vineyard Series Chardonnay also undergoes greater barrel fermentation and stirring (batonage) of the yeast during aging than classic Woodbridge Chardonnay.

The Select Vineyard Series wines are produced at Woodbridge Winery, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Formerly the Cherokee Wine Association, the winery was acquired by the Robert Mondavi family in 1978. Modernized and expanded, the winery applies winemaking techniques used in facilities a fraction of its size, earning it a reputation as the "largest boutique winery in the world".

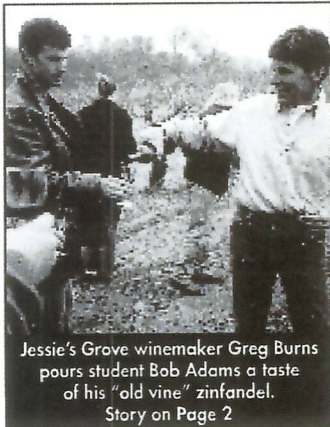
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THE V&E TRELLIS WIRE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY AND TRELLIS ALLIANCE - SPRING 2002



Jessie's Grove winemaker Greg Burns pours student Bob Adams a taste of his "old vine" zinfandel. Story on Page 2

PHOTO BY JACQUELINE YOKUM

Special Edition: Focus on Student Activities

Internship and Career Fair 2002

UC Davis' annual Internship and Career Fair was held on Thursday, February 21. Forty wineries and a large number of viticulture and enology students were on hand to benefit from the "one-stop-shopping" opportunity afforded to both. "It was great to see our alumni behind the tables, representing their wineries!" says a proud Judy Blevins, department staff advisor, "I think they have fun, coming back to UC Davis to recruit for harvest and permanent positions."

Student reactions were enthusiastic: "I attended both this year and last year," says viticulture and enology undergrad James Hendon, "that's how I obtained my recent internship at Gloria Ferrer, which was an incredible experience. This year I made numerous contacts, and have already had several interviews. This event has been very valuable to me." James says he's anxious to "begin repaying the generous people who provided all those student loans to enable me to attend UC Davis, and of course, to begin my career. The internship fair is a great opportunity to find the open doors."

V&E Student Chris Louton agrees: "The internship fair was a fantastic opportunity to meet and talk with various winemakers and staff from wineries throughout California. All were very willing to talk about what they offered for students, even if you did not fit what they were looking for. I made several great contacts and have already had one interview and have scheduled a second one."

Our warmest thanks to the wineries who attended this year's event.



PHOTO COURTESY: DEPARTMENT OF VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY

Rhone Adventures, please see page 3.

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Internship Roundtable 2002

Students Choose Theme for Spring Seminar Series

3 Hats Off to Matt

Rhone Adventures

Dinner in the Red Room 2002

Lodi "Immersion" Trip

On Saturday, January 12, a busload of 30 viticulture and enology students participated in an "immersion" tour of the Lodi-Woodbridge wine region, a trip sponsored and organized by DEVO.

The group left campus at 7:45am and traveled to Borden Ranch, a "4000-plus acre area of vineyard development," explains DEVO president Brennan Leighton, "where over the last 10 years, Robert Mondavi Woodbridge has implemented various trellis systems and



Brad Alderson, vice president and general manager of Mondavi Woodbridge, tells students how tastings are organized at the facility.

president and general manager of Mondavi Woodbridge. During the vineyard tour, students were able to participate in a lively discussion about Lodi-Woodbridge IPM Programs and explore the status of wine-growing in Lodi with Ohmart and Alderson.

Attendees then moved on to Robert Mondavi Woodbridge to tour the winery and enjoy a barrel tasting from the 2001 vintage.

The famished group was then generously supplied with pizza, compliments of the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission ("which we devoured," laughs Helen Dahl). After lunch, the students toured the Commission's wine center and tasted some local Zinfandel and Carignane wines.

The next stop on the tour was the Van Ruiten-Taylor Winery in Lodi, "a new small winery focused on a combination of custom processing and their own label," says Leighton. "We tasted wine outside with the winemaker while we were exploring the facilities," adds Dahl, "and we were able to learn a great deal about the winery's style preferences. We are grateful to the winemaker, who spent a lot of time with us."

The group then traveled on to Jessie's Grove Winery in Lodi. The lovely property boasted a 100 year-old Zinfandel vineyard, a ranch with farm animals and native oak grove preserve. "We were able to sample the wines in both the tasting room and in the vineyard," says Dahl, "and students had a good chance to talk to the two owners."

Aaron Finnegan, a viticulture and enology undergraduate, felt the trip was "a wonderful opportunity for us to see what's going on in the Lodi/Woodbridge area – sometimes we get caught up in the Napa Valley and forget that there are other interesting regions available to us after graduation."

grape varieties on foothill soils."

The tour of Borden

Ranch was led by Cliff Ohmart of the Lodi-Woodbridge Wine Commission and Brad Alderson, vice

Internship Roundtable 2002

On February 21, a group of 27 viticulture and enology students gathered on campus to swap stories and shell out valuable advice about winery and vineyard internships.

"The roundtable is an informal and informational meeting for students where they can learn from each other's experiences," says Judy Blevins, department staff advisor. "Issues they cover include everything from how to obtain an interview and how to deal with overtime to tips on finding housing, creating attractive resumes, and the many ways in which they can optimize their harvest opportunities."

Information about 17 internships from the previous harvest were presented, and students discussed job descriptions and how much contact they had had with the winemaker or vineyard manager. Recommendations were made for each winery regarding the level of viticulture and enology classwork an intern needed in order to be successful, and whether previous harvest experience was necessary.

Hillary Sjolund, the department peer advisor who organized the event, felt the evening was "a great chance to get together and find out where everyone worked, what they did and didn't like about their position and why." Sjolund, a senior, emphasizes that "it's a huge asset to have a harvest job under your belt before you take your winemaking classes. I found it very beneficial to have worked in a winery before I took Sue Ebeler's 'Analysis of Musts and Wines' class. I understood what I was supposed to be getting out of the class and why wineries do what they do."

Students Choose Theme for Spring Seminar Series

Each year, department students are given the opportunity to design a class around a subject they deem important for their education. VEN 190X, "the winemaker seminar," is offered each spring and is considered one of the most popular classes available in the viticulture and enology curriculum.

"Choosing the theme has always been a joint decision between VITIS [the department viticulture and enology graduate student group] and DEVO," explains VITIS president Jeff Mangahas. "We solicit ideas at a DEVO meeting in the early fall, and hash out ideas about what subjects we think are compelling, as well as discuss which winemakers we'd like to invite to speak." The seminar, says Mangahas, gives students



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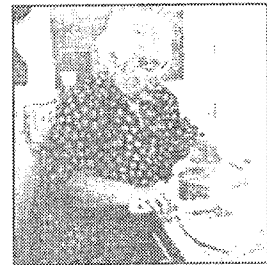
Our Family, Past and Present

The story of the Golden Grain Company is a classic success saga of an Italian immigrant family...

In 1890, 19-year old **Domenico DeDomenico** traveled to America from Italy. The immigration officer at Ellis Island, misunderstanding his Italian name, wrote "Charlie" on the immigration papers, so Domenico used the name Charlie for rest of his life. Moving from New York to Boston, he worked as a barber for three years until he could read and write English. In 1895, Charlie moved to California, where he heard the streets were paved with gold. He started a fresh produce store. Over a ten-year period his business thrived and he added three more stores.



In the tradition of family arrangements, Charlie's closest friend gave him a portrait of **Maria Ferrigno** from Salerno, Italy. Charlie sent for Maria, and after a brief courtship, they married and later produced six children. Maria's family sold their pasta factory in Italy to join the family in California. In 1912, Maria persuaded Charlie to set up a pasta factory, Gragnano Products, Inc., in the Mission district in San Francisco. The successful business sold 25 and 50-pound boxes of pasta to Italian stores and restaurants in the area. Four of Charlie's sons, **Paskey, Vince, Tom** and **Anthony**, worked with him to build the pasta business.



In 1934, the oldest brother, **Paskey**, proposed a new name for the company based on a newspaper ad for "Golden Grain" smoking Tobacco. The family agreed that Golden Grain was a good name for macaroni and the name "Golden Grain Macaroni Company" was adopted.

A neighbor's Armenian style rice pilaf recipe inspired the original idea for **RICE-A-RONI®**, a mixture of rice and macaroni. Tom's wife Lois served the dish at a family dinner, and it became a favorite of the DeDomenico families. In 1958, Vince mixed a dry chicken soup mix, made at the plant, with rice and vermicelli to create the San Francisco treat which he named RICE-A-RONI. The unique preparation of the dish, and its wonderful flavor and convenience, made the dish one of America's favorite products. The RICE-A-RONI jingle, The San Francisco Treat® slogan, "Saute and Simmer" and scenic San Francisco became familiar to every household in America in the 60's as the product was introduced through television advertising.



A trip to Italy in 1964 inspired Vince to develop **Noodle Roni Parmesano** based on the classic "Noodles Alfredo" dish served to him at Alfredo's restaurant in Rome. With the growing popularity of pasta, the line has expanded with new shapes and sauces and has been renamed to PASTA RONI to better describe its diverse shapes.

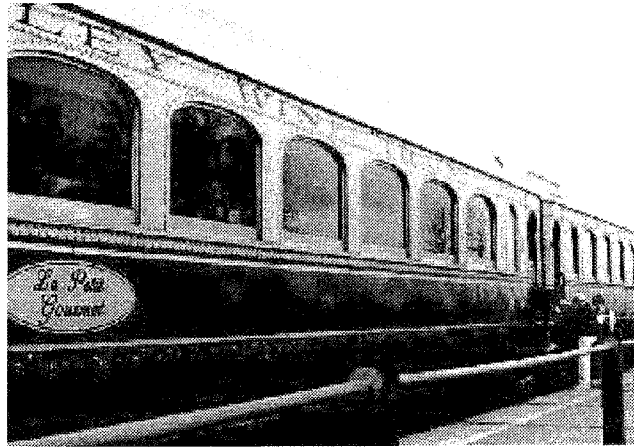
The Quaker Oats Company purchased the Golden Grain Company from the DeDomenico family in 1986. Vince de Domenico continues to promote beautiful Northern California through his venture, the Napa Valley Wine Train.

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An Afternoon's Journey on the Historic Napa Valley Wine Train



Text excerpted from a release by Ketchum Communications

Vincent DeDomenico, Chairman, Napa Valley Wine Train.

Vincent DeDomenico, chairman and principal shareholder of the Napa Valley Wine Train, is a consummate innovator and entrepreneur. His success with Golden Grain Macaroni Co. and its most famous product, "Rice-A-Roni," is a legend.

Founded by his Sicilian immigrant parents at the turn of the century, the small family business, Gragnano Products, sold pasta in San Francisco. Originally named for an Italian town famous for its pasta, the firm became the Golden Grain Company in 1934. Although his three brothers all contributed to the success of the family business, Vincent DeDomenico emerged as the principal decision maker in the family-held firm.

In 1957 after enjoying a rice pilaf dish at a family dinner, Vincent De Domenico began toying with the idea of packaging dry rice and seasonings as a single product. From experimentation came "Rice-A-Roni" and worldwide recognition for Golden Grain.

Vincent acquired Ghirardelli Chocolate Company of San Francisco from the family of Domingo Ghirardelli, who founded the company in 1852. The present Ghirardelli Chocolate factory was built alongside the Golden Grain pasta plant in San Leandro, California. A small Ghirardelli Chocolate plant, equipped with 100 year old cocoa bean roasters and mills remains in Ghirardelli Square and hosts over 1 million visitors per year in this San Francisco landmark. It is famous for its fine chocolate, ice cream, and soda fountain. A large selection of

Ghirardelli Chocolate and cocoa products is available for purchase in the Wine Train Emporium along with a selection of the finest gourmet coffees in the world.

In 1986, Quaker Oats bought Golden Grain during its 75th year of operation. Although Vincent DeDomenico recently retired as chairman of the board of Golden Grain, he has expanded his horizons in the Napa Valley Wine Country. As principal shareholder of the Napa Valley Wine Train, he now focuses his superlative business acumen to make the Wine Train Napa Valley's luxury transport system of the '90's.

Vincent DeDomenico was Vice President of the United States for the Confrerie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs - the world's foremost Wine and Food Society with chapters in 122 countries around the world. In Paris, Vincent received the Gold Medal of Honor for his efforts to promote the marriage of good food with great wines. Please enjoy the results of those efforts as you relax and dine aboard the Wine Train.

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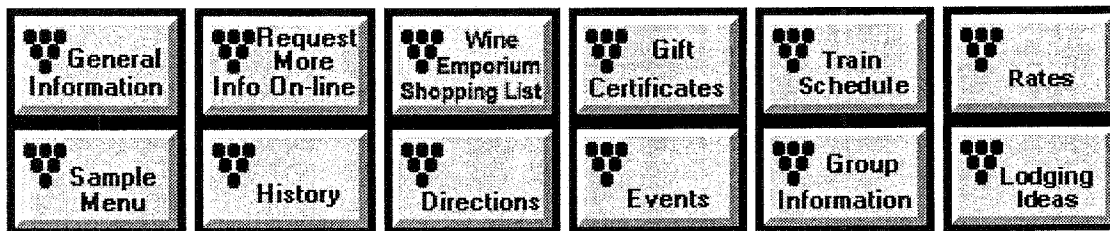
History of the Napa Valley Wine Train

The Napa Valley Railroad Company was founded in 1864 by Samuel Brannan. In 1885 the Southern Pacific Railroad Company purchased the line and it continued in operation for the next 102 years until sold to the Napa Valley Wine Train, Inc. in 1987.

Vincent DeDomenico, Chairman and principal shareholder of Napa Valley Wine Train, is a veteran of more than 50 years in the food business. His success with the Golden Grain Macaroni Company and its most famous product, "Rice-a-Roni" is legend. The delicious pasta dishes we serve are "Mama" DeDomenico's old family recipes.

As a principal shareholder and President of Golden Grain, Vincent acquired Ghirardelli Chocolate Company of San Francisco from the family of Domingo Ghirardelli, who founded the company in 1852. The present Ghirardelli Chocolate factory was built alongside the Golden Grain pasta plant in San Leandro, California. A small Ghirardelli Chocolate plant, equipped with 100 year old cocoa bean roasters and mills remains in Ghirardelli Square and hosts over 1 million visitors per year in this San Francisco landmark. It is famous for its fine chocolate, ice cream, and soda fountain. A large selection of Ghirardelli Chocolate and cocoa products is available for purchase in our Wine Emporium along with a selection of the finest gourmet coffees in the world.

Vincent DeDomenico was Vice President of the United States for the Confrerie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs -- the world's foremost Wine and Food Society with chapters in 122 countries around the world. In Paris, Vincent received the Gold Medal of Honor for his efforts to promote the marriage of good food with great wines. We hope you enjoy the results of those efforts as you relax and dine aboard the Wine Train.





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Chugging along
After 13 years, Napa Valley Wine Train rolls to a profit

By Jim Doyle

Vincent DeDomenico, who created Rice-a-Roni, sold his Golden Grain pasta company, along with the fabled Ghirardelli Chocolate Co., in 1986 for a whopping \$300 million.



The pasta whiz planned to relax with his wife, Mildred, on their 10,000-acre cattle, almond, grape and walnut ranch near Galt (Sacramento County), hang out at their villa on the big island of Hawaii, and enjoy their grandkids.

But Mr. Rice-a-Roni was antsy.

"I thought, 'What am I going to do now? I like to keep busy. I'm not a golfer,' " said the free-wheeling tycoon. "I heard someone up here had an idea for a wine train. I came up to check it out. I was looking for a fun, new thing."

A year later, when a developer's option on the Napa Valley Railroad ran out, DeDomenico paid \$2.5 million to Southern Pacific for the short line's right-of-way and its dilapidated tracks from downtown Napa to St. Helena.

With five decades in the pasta trade, DeDomenico was a seasoned tycoon. But he underestimated what it would take to establish the Napa

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Valley Wine Train.

"There are a lot of NIMBYs up this valley," said the spry, 88-year-old train baron. "We had to fight that. We're still fighting it in St. Helena. ... We're going to outlive them. The railroad has been here for 140 years."

Before his little choo-choo could even begin to blow its feisty whistle, DeDomenico faced an avalanche of opposition from vintners, landowners, environmentalists, and anti-growth forces.

"Everybody here in this valley is involved in the wine business, even the people who live on five acres and grow grapes in their backyard," he said. "When you sort of intrude on someone else's turf, you get negative reactions. We were competition. ... If I had called it the walnut train or acorn train, it would've been all right."

DeDomenico claims that one of his chief opponents was vintner Robert Mondavi, the legendary Big Kahuna of Napa Valley.

"I know him from way back. We were good friends," DeDomenico said. "But after what happened up there with the railroad, and I know that he and his family were involved, we hardly talk."

DeDomenico poured millions into repairing the railroad's ties, bridges and trestles, establishing new depots at Napa and Yountville, and purchasing rail cars.

"The major impact we feared was that they were going to turn loose a couple of thousand people a day to meander our streets," said Norm Manzer, a St. Helena insurance agent who in the 1980s co-founded Friends of Napa Valley, a coalition that opposed the train.

"We have fought very hard in this community to not become a tourist mecca or tourist destination per se," said Lowell Smith, a former mayor of St. Helena. "We don't want to be a Disneyland."

Smith said the train "originally wanted to hide behind federal legislation that allows railroads to run roughshod over local laws.

"One of the concerns I had early on was that Mr. DeDomenico chose to litigate rather than mitigate," he said.

Opponents succeeded in changing state law to have the wine train regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission via a bill by former State Assemblywoman Bev Hansen, R-Santa Rosa. The railroad fought the new law, but lost in the California Supreme Court. The PUC ordered the short line to produce environmental impact reports.

"They were putting all the roadblocks they could in front of us," DeDomenico said. "They thought that by having the PUC regulate us, they could more or less run the railroad. I'd hate to tell you how much we paid during the first few years in legal expenses. They thought they were going to drive us away."

The wine train's original backers had planned to run as many as nine roundtrips a day, with stops along the route. But the PUC limited the train to two trips a day on weekdays, and three a day on weekends. It

also forbid any stops between Napa and St. Helena.

Those restrictions have since been relaxed. Passengers can now get on and off at Yountville and the Grgich Hills Winery.

Herb Schmidt, a Mondavi Winery vice president, insists that the winery's aim was simply to mitigate the train's impact on the valley. "Our goal was to bring it under local control," he said. "Vince always thought our goal was to kill the train."

The train began its year-round, scenic gourmet service on Sept. 16, 1989. Signs along Highway 29 that once protested the wine train have been taken down, but critics haven't run short of ammo.

"Their insistence that they're a real train, simply because they have an engine, dining car and caboose, is absurd," Schmidt said. "This really does not provide public transportation. It's really, as some people would say, a restaurant on wheels rather than a train. Where's the public good?"

Most trains these days clank along on rusty, uneven tracks, relying heavily on government subsidies. The wine train, a very slow, smooth ride, is well on its way toward turning a hefty profit. The tourist-and-dining train carries 120,000 to 125,000 riders a year.

Prices for a three-hour ride on the wine train range from \$35 to \$110 per person. Passengers pay \$70 for a gourmet luncheon excursion, which includes a full-course meal with selections such as braised lamb, grilled pork, and salmon. Riders can also pay \$5 to sample Napa Valley wines.

A budget rate of \$35 is charged in the Silverado car, an informal railcar decorated with photos from old Westerns, where meals are served a la carte. Special packages include lunch tours at the Grgich Hills or Domaine Chandon wineries. Dinner trains start at \$79 per person. There are also brunch trains and, twice a month, a murder mystery night.

"We give people a top quality product," said DeDomenico, the train's chairman and chief shareholder. "It's a nice experience, a relaxing experience -- which you don't get anymore. Most of your railroads are set up for transportation only. We have good food, wine, music, entertainment."

But beware: the train's dress code forbids old or faded jeans.

DeDomenico's fashion-conscious train has been chugging up and down the valley for the past 13 years, but it has also become the railroad that many residents love to hate. Locals complain about the train's impact on traffic, air pollution, noise, and most of all, how it brings more tourists into their overcrowded valley.

"I put a lot of money in this venture. I sunk about \$20 million into it, at least \$30 million by today's values," DeDomenico said. "It got to the point where I told my wife that I didn't know whether we could overcome the obstacles. ... But we kept going." DeDomenico grew up in San Francisco's Mission District near the mainline trains that ran to and from the San Francisco terminal.

His father, Domenico DeDomenico, was a Sicilian immigrant who in 1912 had started Gragnano Products, which sold pasta to Italian restaurants and markets.

Vincent DeDomenico attended Mission High School in San Francisco before joining the family business in 1933. A year later, it was renamed the Golden Grain Co. The firm ventured far beyond the Italian trade. Spaghetti became an American staple.

The DeDomenico family had long enjoyed rice pilaf. In the late 1950s, DeDomenico began experimenting with the idea of packaging dry rice and seasonings as a single product. In 1958, he decided to take a recipe he called Rice-a-Roni and produce it for stores.

A national television advertising campaign for "the San Francisco treat" featured cable cars and the voice of Keta Bill, who sang Rice-a-Roni's catchy jingle.

In 1964, DeDomenico bought the Ghirardelli Chocolate Co., and built its main factory next to the Golden Grain plant in San Leandro. The chocolate maker had a smaller plant at Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco.

To find rolling stock for his new railroad, DeDomenico approached museums in the Southeast, train yards, and abandoned railroads. He mainly bought rustbuckets: railcars, circa 1915 to 1917, that needed restoration.

"I didn't want to do a honky-tonk railroad," said DeDomenico, who credits his wife with outfitting the interiors of the antique rail cars. "I wanted to do the Orient Express of the West."

The meticulously restored Pullman lounge, dining and wine tasting cars are finished with mahogany, grape-motif etched glass, and draperies. The railcars have air conditioning and plush bathrooms with marble and polished brass. Meals are served with fine linens, china, silver, and crystal.

But nothing quite prepared DeDomenico for what he calls "the political problems" of running the wine train. Vintners and landowners stepped forward to oppose the train.

St. Helena is the train's last stop before it turns around and heads south. The train sits at the station near Fulton Lane for 15 minutes while the locomotive is repositioned. Riders must stay aboard.

For years, DeDomenico has wanted to establish a train depot in St. Helena. Hundreds of passengers would have the option of visiting the town's quaint shops and restaurants, or take buses to Calistoga or select wineries.

St. Helena officials have blocked those plans.

"Tourism is a big part of our economy, but the focus here is on serving the local population first," said St. Helena City Manager Bonnie Long. "You don't want to kill the Golden Goose and let the town get too congested so that people don't want to come. ... Our

historical downtown is two blocks. There are limitations on the number of people we can handle getting off the train and spilling into the town. "

DeDomenico claims that St. Helena residents "think they're being exclusive by doing this. But the only entry into town is by cars, and they don't have the parking places for all of them. St. Helena was built because of the railroad."

The Napa Valley Railroad Company was founded in 1864 by Samuel Brannan, a Mormon leader and Gold Rush newspaper owner who ran trains to the spa town of Calistoga. He sold the short line in 1885 to Southern Pacific, which ran freight and passenger trains for 102 years. Riders at the McKinstry Street Station in downtown Napa are greeted by a wine buyer who gives a spiel on the art of wine tasting. They receive tastes of Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer.

It's a straight shot up the Napa Valley -- a 36-mile round-trip from Napa to St. Helena, mostly parallel to Highway 29. There are no tunnels, big curves, or mountain passes -- just a few small bridges and trestles over creekbeds. Much of the time, the train ambles along at less than 20 mph.

A mile or so north of Napa, the nine-car train passes rows of eucalyptus trees alongside the highway. The smell of crushed grapes fills the air. In autumn, after the vintners' crush season, the remaining leaves and flowers on the grape vines turn colors.

The rows of vines seem to climb the ridges. The train cruises north, past the Spanish tile roof of the historic California Veterans Home, toward Mount St. Helena, the North Bay's tallest peak.

Riders can observe executive chef Kelly McDonald and his culinary staff through glass as they prepare menu selections in the onboard restaurant kitchen.

One of the wine train's stops is Yountville, which some folks have dubbed Yount Vegas due to its downtown strip of new shops, restaurants and galleries. DeDomenico turned a caboos into the Yountville train depot.

The train rolls by the whistle-stop hamlets of Oakville and Rutherford. DeDomenico plans to restore Rutherford's abandoned train depot in front of the Niebaum-Coppola Estate Winery.

He also wants to build a boat dock at the Napa train station and eventually run a waterborne shuttle service to and from the San Francisco-Vallejo ferry dock, about 9 miles away.

And there's an ongoing study by local government agencies to determine if the railroad can sustain a commuter passenger line.

DeDomenico said he plans to run the railroad for "at least another five more years" before turning it over to his 44-year-old son, Vincent DeDomenico Jr. "He knows the railroad business. And he knows about the political problems that have to be solved."

The railroad has six locomotives and 20 rail cars, including a dome

car from the East Coast and several other cars under restoration. DeDomenico has turned spare rail cars into security and maintenance offices, food preparation centers, and storage areas.

In 1995, the railroad began an experimental program to retrofit one of its diesel locomotives to run a "dual fuel" system. Now, that locomotive runs on 100 percent compressed natural gas, which reduces nitrous oxide emissions and smoke exhaust. DeDomenico plans to eventually retrofit all of his locomotives.

The Napa Valley Sierra Club has praised the wine train for improving air quality by reducing car usage in the valley, but critics insist that the wine train continues to spew diesel smoke and soot.

They complain that the wine train causes traffic backups at points where it slowly crosses Highway 29 -- at Trancas Street in Napa, and again just south of downtown St. Helena -- and point to a study indicating that the wine train doesn't ease traffic congestion because folks who ride the train often return to tour the valley by car. DeDomenico said that traffic stops for the train take no longer than a 90-second stoplight.

By and large, vintners seem to have grown accustomed to the train. The railroad uses two freight engines and a boxcar to haul wine, grape stakes, glass, and cartons to various wineries.

But some Napa residents blame the train for causing a lot of turmoil. The Napa River Flood Control project is preparing to realign the railroad's tracks so that a river bypass can be dug out to help prevent flooding. One result was the closing of half of a nearby mobile home park.

At the Trancas interchange in Napa, Caltrans is building an underpass to sink Highway 29 below the railway so that motorists will no longer be delayed when the train crosses the highway.

"We just wish the train would absorb more of its cost in the community projects that are going on -- the flood project and Trancas -- and they certainly seem to be able to afford it," said Mondavi Winery's Schmidt.

Like many other tourist attractions, the wine train has been hard-hit by the recession and the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The train has a 360-seat capacity, but there were plenty of empty seats on a recent excursion.

"The first five years were pretty tough, but the last five we've been showing a profit every year. So we can't complain," DeDomenico said. "It's going to take a lot of time to make that money back."

Now and then, he boards the train with his wife and guests. "I like trains. They're a great way to travel," he said. "When you're flying, you don't see anything."

The best thing about trains, he said, is "there are no stop signs."

Train tracks

First trip: Sept. 16, 1989.
Initial investment: \$2.5 million for right-of-way.
Total investment: Approximately \$20 million.
Locomotives: 6
Rail cars: 20
Ridership: Up to 125,000 annually.
Route: Downtown Napa to St. Helena and back.
Distance: 36 miles.
Time of trip: 3 hours.
Average speed: Less than 20 mph.
Cost: \$35-\$70 for lunch excursions, \$79-\$110 for dinner trips,
depending on meal options.
Dress code: No denim.

Getting on track For information on the Napa Valley Wine
train's schedule and fares, call (800) 427-4124 or visit
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E-mail Jim Doyle at jdoyle@s...

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SACRAMENTO Business Journal

EXCLUSIVE REPORTS

More challenges to Clean Water Act seen

Celia Lamb
Staff Writer

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the Borden Ranch case, watched by the construction industry and property rights groups for its implications on private property rights, may not be the last word on whether the federal government can regulate deep plowing of seasonal wetlands.

And it may also be a keystone in other Clean Water Act cases.

Angelo Tsakopoulos, the Sacramento developer who owns Borden Ranch in southern Sacramento and northern San Joaquin counties, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1997 after years of haggling with the corps over wetlands issues. The corps had said Tsakopoulos violated the Clean Water Act by deep-ripping, without a permit, sloped, seasonal wetlands called swales.

In December, the Supreme Court affirmed a U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals decision that the corps has authority to regulate deep plowing on wetlands that may drain into navigable waters, including Borden Ranch's swales. The decision is binding in the Ninth Circuit and "persuasive" in the rest of the country, said Sylvia Quast, an attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

But the Supreme Court's decision was made on a tie vote after Justice Anthony Kennedy removed himself because he knows Tsakopoulos, and many legal experts await a challenge that would be heard by a full Supreme Court.

"Had Anthony Kennedy participated I think we would have had a 5-4 decision," said Art Coon, the attorney with the Walnut Creek firm Miller, Starr & Regalia, which represented Tsakopoulos.

In 2001 the court ruled 5-4 against the corps in a similar case involving the question of whether the Act allows the corps to protect seasonal wetlands called vernal pools. (Threatened and endangered species living in vernal pools are still federally protected under the Endangered Species Act.) If a suit emerges in another U.S. district court that raises the similar issues as the Borden Ranch case, the corps could lose a vote of the full Supreme Court.

"I'd be very surprised not to see something coming up," said Robin Rivett, an attorney with the Pacific Legal Foundation in Sacramento, which filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the Borden Ranch case. The challenger would have to be a landowner with the money and the wherewithal to withstand a court fight that could keep his land out of production for years, Rivett added.

Quast said the case won't result in any changes in the Corp's enforcement procedures. But the fate of the Borden Ranch case may impact other cases in which it's already being cited as legal precedent.

"It's cited in all kinds of strange contexts," Quast said, including a case she's working on in the 7th circuit involving sediment discharge from a dam.

more challenges to...
The opposition: The Borden Ranch case dealt with a very specific land alteration: deep-ripping. No direct challenge involving deep-ripping of federally protected wetlands has emerged yet in any other region of the country.

But a broader case brought against the corps by the National Association of Home Builders might present a challenge to the Borden Ranch decision, said Virginia Albrecht, an attorney with the Washington, D.C., firm Hunton & Williams, which represents the homebuilders' group. The case would have to be appealed all the way to the Supreme Court to have a nationwide impact, and that could take years if it happens at all.

Deep-ripping entails dragging four-to-seven-foot prongs behind a tractor or bulldozer to break through clay hardpan layers that create seasonal wetlands and prevent the kind of drainage needed for agriculture. Tsakopoulos deep-ripped part of his ranch to prepare it for planting grapevines.

The Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of pollutants, including dirt, rock and sand, into navigable waters or into adjacent wetlands that can drain into navigable waters. An exception is made for normal plowing as long as it does not violate other conditions of the act.

"In Borden Ranch one of the questions was, if you stir up the soil is that the kind of activity Congress was trying to regulate when they passed the Clean Water Act?" Albrecht said. "Is the test for the Clean Water Act the environmental outcome or the activity?"

The homebuilders' suit argues that corps and the Environmental Protection Agency have overreached their authorities by regulating earthmoving activities in wetlands. The suit was filed February 2001 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, which hasn't issued a decision.

"If these activities that are in dispute in the homebuilders' case were not to be regulated, then plowing would not be regulated," Albrecht contends.

The view from Borden Ranch: The Supreme Court remanded the Borden Ranch case down to the 9th Circuit to adjust Tsakopoulos' penalty, which was set at \$500,000 and the preservation of four acres of wetlands. It's expected the fine will be lowered because allegations of the destruction of a vernal pool no longer apply after the Supreme Court's 2001 decision in the other vernal pool case.

Tsakopoulos said he believes the media's coverage of the case has unfairly portrayed him as a destroyer of wetlands. His contractors did everything they could to follow the corps' requirements for protecting wetlands, including keeping deep rippers in their uppermost position when moving them over swales, he said. The dispute with the corps could have been avoided if the corps had offered him and his attorneys better regulatory guidance early on, he added. (Quast said corps staff provided him with relevant regulatory information and did their best to work with him.)

And, he emphasizes, only two acres were involved in the Borden Ranch case, tiny compared to the 1,368-acre preserve he agreed to set aside on the ranch in a May 1996 agreement with the corps.

"We were successful in avoiding 96 percent of the wetlands," he says. "We avoided the prime area that had vernal pools."

Tsakopoulos continues to believe that farming activities shouldn't be subject to the same kinds of environmental regulations as other land development activities.

"The environmental community and the regulatory community tried to portray farming (as) equal to development, equating an apple orchard to a building. It's not so," Tsakopoulos said.

And he clearly doesn't view the tie vote as a defeat. "The law is very clear to us, and the U.S. Supreme Court just agreed with us, that the government has no business interfering with plowing farmland to produce food and

fiber," he said.

His attorney has a different perspective on how the court's decision impacts farmers. The lower court decision affirmed by the Supreme Court said even normal plowing could be regulated under the Clean Water Act if it involved the discharge of dredged or fill materials into navigable waters under certain conditions.

"That's something that should concern all farmers and ranchers," Coon said.

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