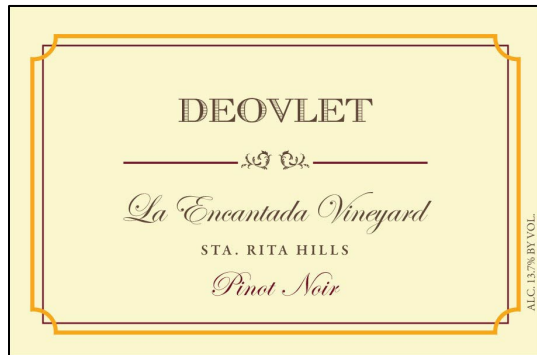


Deovlet Wines

California

(California sales only)



After a decade of work with Santa Rita Hills' most renowned chardonnay and pinot noir sites, Ryan Deovlet has chiseled into the elevated character of his wines.

–Wine & Spirits Magazine, Top 100 Wineries of the World 2019

In 2004 Ryan Deovlet traveled to Australia to work in vineyards under the auspices of World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. He went to find life after baseball, hoping that agriculture might fit the bill. He had been an infielder in the semi-pros, but an arm injury closed the door

to the majors, a fact that knocked him off his dime for a bit. He finished college with a degree in sociology, but academia never appealed to him like the game had. So he decided to take a journey to see where it might lead.

He took four books with him:

On the Road

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Rumi

The Prophet

Along with the books, his inspiration was the memory of going to Hawaii as a young man to stay with the family black sheep, an older cousin who had given him a Bob Marley t-shirt and who had three passions: fishing, growing pot, and growing coffee in the Kona district of the Big Island. One morning they went out fishing, and upon returning the cousin served him a cup of coffee made from his plantation beans. Ryan never forgot the taste, and he was fired up forevermore by the idea that it could only have come from Kona and nowhere else. Agriculture, he realized, could be so much more than cornfields and overalls.

In Australia, he did vineyard work in the Hunter and Yarra Valleys, waited tables in Melbourne, and worked the harvest on the Mornington Peninsula just south of the city. He read the story of Josh Jensen's struggle to start up the Calera Winery in *The Heartbreak Grape* and went on to New Zealand to work on pruning crews.

From 2005 to 2007 he worked with the highly respected winemaker Stephen Dooley, making wine along the Central Coast. He became assistant winemaker at the Red Car Winery, where he met consultant David Ramey and where he was further exposed to vineyard and soil experts. He went to a Pinot Noir conference and took to heart what Richard Sanford said on a panel discussion about the inspiration of Pinot Noir. He worked a harvest in Argentina at Vina Cobos with Paul Hobbs.

In the spring of 2008, he returned from Argentina. He was back in the game, determined to make his own wine. He knocked on Richard Sanford's door to ask how he might possibly buy some fruit. That took some brass, given that Sanford was the legendary pioneer of the Santa Rita Hills. But Ryan came armed with the very words that he had heard Sanford speak, framed in calligraphy as a gift for the crusty Vietnam Veteran: *Pinot Noir is about commitment, it's about persistence, it's about the journey. There's a magic in it, there's a magic in Pinot Noir!*

Sanford had been the first to see the potential for vines in the Santa Rita Hills, a unique coast range that runs east-west rather than paralleling the coast and so is directly open to the Pacific's cooling influences. He planted Sanford & Benedict Vineyard in 1971. He went on to establish the La Encantada Vineyard in 2000 just to the west of his original vineyard. He agreed to sell young Deovlet enough grapes from La Encantada to make around 100 cases of wine.

Since then, Ryan has fine-tuned things as he has gained experience, garnering a reputation as a star exemplifying the best of the new breed of California winemakers (although he's quick to point out that he likes the kiss of the sun on his fruit, and he's not orthodox in his methods). He's dialed back on new oak and extractions, he's become comfortable being among the first to start the harvest, and he has come to prize a collaborative relationship with Grace Kegel, his assistant in the cellar. She's done harvests in New Zealand, South Africa, and of course on the central coast, and she joined Ryan in 2013. Most importantly, he has come to concentrate on the vineyards in the Santa Rita Hills to learn their ways. Specifically, they are the La Encantada and Sanford & Benedict Vineyards on the south side of the valley, and the Zotovich Family Vineyard on the north side.

His name is pronounced *Dev-let*. His grandfather, Dewey Diran Deovletian, escaped Armenia in 1914 just before the Armenian genocide. In the early 1940s, struggling in his metal fabricating business and trying to look less foreign with the outbreak of war, he dropped the *ian* ending.

<https://www.deovletwines.com/>