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Personality: Justin Boeger

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By Elaine Smith
Photography by Jayson Carpenter

Personality: Justin Boeger

The Placerville winemaking heir talks about returning to his roots and the family business.

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He's young and charming, a skilled pilot and world traveler, yet he toils away in cold barrel rooms and sterile labs in mountainous terrain northeast of Sacramento. Winemaker Justin Boeger simply could not stay away from his family's well-regarded El Dorado winery.



"Get the hell out of Dodge" was the extent of Boeger's plans after he graduated from rural Placerville High School in 1990. In his first year at UC Davis, the one thing he knew, perhaps after spending too many school vacations pruning grapevines, was that he "just absolutely didn't want to be a winemaker." Plus, those 10 a.m. English classes were more attractive than chemistry first thing in the morning.

But as he worked to pay his tuition hauling tomatoes as a summer trucker and running the double-decker campus bus lines in Davis, Boeger soon recognized the familiar was also more fun. "It was the vit classes and winemaking I really enjoyed," he says, "and I realized I would be stupid not to go into the family business." So he got a degree in fermentation sciences and, armed with the technical know-how, set out to "learn the art of it" in real life.

Perhaps Boeger never had a chance to do anything else, being the child of El Dorado winemaking pioneers Greg and Susan Boeger and a descendent of the Nichelini Winery family, a founder of the Napa wine region. Even his first name came from Justin Meyer, famed winemaker of Silver Oak, his dad's friendly rival for top test scores back at UC Davis in the 1970s.

*** For the rest of this article pick up a copy of Sacramento magazine's April issue.**



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