



Epicurious
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October 28, 2008 | [✉ e-mail this story](#)

Benziger, Imagery and El Dorado Kitchen make biodynamic pact

Before we start the real stuff, I am flabbergasted!

This first Tuesday edition of the Sonoma Valley Sun coincides with my fifth anniversary – that’s five years of writing this column for the paper without missing one week! Somehow I have turned in my column written in our home office, or on other people’s kitchen table laptops, in five countries. Let’s see, there was Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Lewes, Sussex, England; Glasgow, Scotland; and Victoria and Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Someday we will take a vacation without a notepad, or even just take a vacation. Fortunately or unfortunately, food and travel are “grist for my mill,” as M.F.K. Fisher used to insist to me.

Farmers Market Halloween Alert:

Today, Tuesday, Oct. 28 is the final Tuesday market for the season, complete with a children’s Halloween Costume contest. Bring the kids and a picnic and enjoy our fabulous environs.

Benziger Family Winery, Imagery Estate Winery and El Dorado Kitchen just announced a “biodynamic culinary garden partnership.”

The Benziger family tends 168 acres of certified biodynamic vineyards and gardens, the latter overseen by Colby Eierman, former director of gardens at COPIA-The American Center for Wine, Food & Art in Napa.

Biodynamic gardening is a holistic farming approach developed in the 1920s by Austrian scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who also devised the Waldorf learning method. Much like organic gardening, biodynamics includes working with “varied forces of nature.”

Meanwhile, EDK general manager Jens Hoj said that when he learned of Benziger’s biodynamic seasonal vegetables and fruits, he thought it would make a great partnership, especially after all parties discussed the potential agreement “while breaking bread and enjoying Benziger wines at EDK,” according to Hoj. “With many Benziger wines on our wine list, we’re taking wine and food pairing to a whole new level,” Hoj continued.

EDK executive chef Justin Everett is offering a biodynamic tasting menu paired with biodynamic wines.

When asked by Epicurious whether Benziger would grow for Everett’s menus or if Everett would cook according to what Benziger grew, garden director Colby Eierman told Epicurious that “half the fun was sitting down with Justin and flipping through seed catalogues and planning,” often in late mid-summer for winter crops, and in late winter for summer dining.

Benziger also makes compost, uses sheep to mow the vineyards and then sells them as lamb to EDK.
