

THE WINE NEWS

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Solar array shrinks Far Niente's carbon footprint, saves valuable vines.



OAKVILLE, Calif. — On May 29, Far Niente Winery was the site for an industry forum centered around the spring completion of the Napa Valley wine estate's Floatovoltaic solar array, a first-of-its-kind system that resourcefully saved valuable Martin Stelling Vineyard acreage from being sacrificed for land-mounted panels.

Jointly conceived by Far Niente management, SPG Solar and its sister company, Thompson Technology Industries, the innovative array features nearly 1,000 solar panels secured on pontoons that float on the winery's vineyard irrigation pond. Combined with an adjacent

land-based section of about 1,300 panels, the entire installation is expected to generate 400 kilowatts at peak output, enough to offset the winery's annual power usage and provide a net-zero energy bill.

Far Niente's conversion to solar is part of its integrated "conscientious luxury" philosophy that enables the production of luxury wines through sustainable measures.

"We made the move to solar [at a cost of about \$7 million], not because it made [short-term] business sense," said winery president Larry Maguire, "but because my partners and I felt it was the right thing to do from a social perspective." — KFS