



THE NAPA VALLEY WINE ESTATE
ESTABLISHED 1885

**NAPA VALLEY'S FAR NIENTE WINERY
INTRODUCES FIRST-EVER
"FLOATOVOLTAIC" SOLAR ARRAY**

Floating Panel Innovation Saves Valuable Vineyard Acreage

Oakville, CA – Napa Valley wine producer Far Niente has gone live with its “Floatovoltaic™” solar array, the first-ever system and technology of its kind in the solar industry. The Floatovoltaic installation creatively couples solar power with water, saving valuable vineyard acreage from being sacrificed for land-mounted arrays.

Far Niente’s Floatovoltaic system involves securing nearly 1,000 solar panels on pontoons, then floating the pontoons on the winery’s vineyard irrigation pond. Combined with a section of about 1,300 panels located on land adjacent to the pond, the array generates 400 kilowatts at peak output, enough to offset the winery’s annual power usage and provide a net-zero energy bill.

The Far Niente array is located in the 57-acre Martin Stelling Vineyard, which is the cornerstone of the winery’s Cabernet Sauvignon program and is located directly behind the winery. About one acre of vineyard was removed to accommodate the land-mounted portion of the system, but the floating array’s positioning on the pond saved another three-quarters of an acre of valuable Cabernet vines that would have been ripped out for a total land-mounted system. This is equivalent to about \$150,000 dollars’ worth of bottled Far Niente Cabernet annually.

“We made the move to solar, not because it made business or financial sense, but because my partners and I felt it was the right thing to do from a social perspective,” said Far Niente President, Larry Maguire.

While conventional wisdom holds that utility rebates and federal tax credits make solar a viable option, there is still a huge financial commitment involved.

“We have made a \$7 million dollar up-front investment in the solar systems at Far Niente and our sister winery, Nickel & Nickel. It will take about 12 years for the rebates and tax credits, combined with the savings from producing our own energy, for the costs to be offset,” said Maguire. Sister winery Nickel & Nickel installed a land-mounted system, which went live in October 2007, and brought in much of the harvest with solar power. Located in the Sullenger Vineyard on the Oakville winery’s estate, the array’s 1,904 panels generate 330 kilowatts at peak output, offsetting the winery’s annual power usage and providing a net-zero energy bill.

Human Interest

While the wineries’ mission has always included a healthy respect for the land and the environment, it was Maguire’s college-aged son, Michael, who helped put the move to solar into action.

“Michael came home from college around the time I had just bought a new performance car. I was so excited to show it to him,” said Maguire. “Instead of being impressed, Michael said to me, ‘Dad, you’re worse than the ignorant. You know better, yet you’ve chosen inaction.’ Those were tough words to hear and they led us to move ahead on a long-simmering plan to power the wineries with solar.”

The conversion to solar is part of the wineries’ collective movement toward an integrated program enabling the production of wines through sustainable measures affecting vineyard, winery and day-to-day business practices. While solar is the centerpiece, complementary practices include sustainable and organic farming, recycling and other environmentally responsible measures.

“We will always be committed first and foremost to producing great wines; it’s what we’ve been doing for over 35 years,” said Maguire. “Yet, we recognize that our environment is facing significant challenges, and as an agriculture-based business we have an obligation to do our part and take sustainable measures where possible.”

Far Niente was founded in Oakville, CA in 1885 and prospered until the onset of Prohibition in 1919, when the winery was abandoned. Sixty years later, in 1979, the old stone shell of a winery underwent a three-year renovation, restoring the estate to its original grandeur. Far Niente introduced sister wineries, Dolce, devoted to producing a single, late harvest wine, in 1989; single-vineyard specialist Nickel & Nickel in 1997; and Russian River Valley Pinot Noir producer EnRoute in 2009 and Napa Valley Cabernet maker Bella Union in 2015.

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