



# BENOVIA WINERY

## Harvesting Sunshine

Benovia Winery has taken a major step forward in its sustainability program with the installation of solar panels that will produce most of the electricity the winery needs, according to Mike Sullivan, Benovia's co-owner, general manager and winemaker.

Benovia, a Russian River Valley vintner of premium Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Zinfandel wines, chose Real Goods Solar to install 171 photovoltaic modules on the roof of its winery, Mr. Sullivan said. The system will produce more than 60,000 kilowatt hours of electricity annually, reducing the winery's PG&E bill by at least 92 percent.

Rooftop solar photovoltaic modules absorb the sun's energy and converts it to direct current to power Benovia Winery's Russian River Valley winemaking facilities.

Benovia's commitment to solar power benefits the planet as well, Mr. Sullivan said, noting the installation will reduce its CO2 emissions by some 1180 tons over 25 years ~ the environmental equivalent of more than 20 acres of planted trees.

"Using the same energy that ripens our grapes to power our winery just made a lot of sense to us," Mr. Sullivan said. "We're making our CFO happy, and at the same time doing something good for the environment."

Also factoring into Benovia's decision were financial incentives available from the Federal government and State of California, Mr. Sullivan said, noting Benovia's new investment in renewable energy will pay for itself in a little over nine years.

The solar installation pairs perfectly with Benovia's continuing commitment to maintain good stewardship of the land and reduce the winery's carbon footprint, Mr. Sullivan added. "We take our roles as custodians of this beautiful Valley very seriously," Mr. Sullivan said. "By using environmentally sensitive technology and farming practices, we can not only produce wines our customers love, but give them a few more reasons to feel good about choosing Benovia."

Some other initiatives Benovia Winery has undertaken in its ongoing sustainability program at the winery and its three estate vineyards include:

- Farming the winery's Cohn Vineyard organically
- Using organic mulch and fertilizer on all estate vineyards
- Erecting owl boxes and raptor roosts to encourage native predators
- Conserving water with dry farming techniques
- Controlling soil erosion with cover crops, straw mulching and drainage system maintenance
- Using wind machines instead of water for frost protection