

Oakland Magazine

Wente Vineyards Announces New Green Initiatives

Owl boxes, UV lights, and repurposed pomace are part of the plans.

By S. Rufus *Published: April 23, 2019*

Just in time for Earth Day, Wente Vineyards in the Livermore Valley has just announced an ambitious new series of eco-friendly green initiatives.

Now in its 136th year, Wente – hailed as America's oldest continuously operated family winery – is among only 2 percent of California wineries to have achieved the Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing (“CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE”) designation for both its vineyard and winery.

Wente's green updates in various categories include:

WATER-USE EFFICIENCY

• BlueMorph UV light system replaces a typically chemical/water-heavy rinse cycle during winery sanitation with a hot-water wash followed by UV sanitation, saving roughly 150,000 gallons of water per year. • All water used in the production facility is re-used to drip-irrigate the vineyards – and only when truly needed. • More than 10 million gallons of water used in the production facility are recycled/reused to irrigate the vineyards or used for dust control, and an on-property water treatment pond contributes to the reclamation of all production water used in the winery's facilities.

SOIL & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

• Roughly one-third of the grape tonnage that is processed is spread back into the vineyards as part of the soil-management process. Grape pomace is repurposed for beneficial uses such as composting. • Cover crops prevent soil erosion and provide a nourishing habitat for beneficial insects. Wente Vineyards recycles its cover crops into an organic fertilizer and soil enhancer.

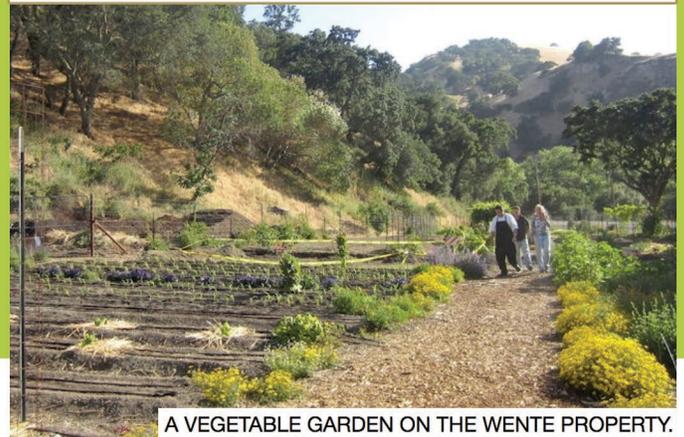
ENERGY EFFICIENCY

• STARS (Selective Tartrate Removal System) Filtration Unit reduces energy load during the winery's cold stabilization process which saves both energy and money, and saves workers from having to labor in frigid temperatures. • Incandescent and halogen light fixtures have been replaced with natural skylights and supplemental LED lights to improve energy efficiency.

BENEFICIAL PESTS & BIODIVERSITY

• Owl boxes and raptor perches naturally control the vineyards' destructive starlings, gophers and ground squirrels. • On-site weather stations use UC Davis-developed mildew pressure models to pinpoint exactly where to spray, if at all. Environmentally friendly stylet oil (a combination of natural oils such as clove, black pepper, and cinnamon) is used to smother mildew and control pests.

WENTE
VINEYARDS



A VEGETABLE GARDEN ON THE WENTE PROPERTY.