

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Being a good steward of land and resources is a key practice in Clos LaChance's farming and winemaking methods. Owner's Bill and Brenda Murphy strive to maintain a beautiful and healthy environment for themselves, employees, neighbors of the winery, and visitors. As a family-owned and operated business, the Murphy's are especially vested in the sustainability of the winery and vineyard, with the hopes of creating a legacy for their children and grandchildren.

Sustainability is an ever-evolving practice. A member of the Central Coast Vineyard Team, Clos LaChance has also actively participated in the Wine Institute Sustainability Self-Assessment Program, identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement. The winery is proud of current achievements to create an environmentally, economically and socially sound business, and will continue working towards more sustainable practices in the future.

Natural Biological Control: Clos LaChance encourages the control of ground squirrels and other rodents via natural predators. The grounds bordering the Estate Vineyard are home to a number of hawks, owls and even a pair of eagles. The winery has posted raptor roosts throughout the vineyard, encouraging the momentum of the natural food chain.

Building Healthy Soils: Clos LaChance uses a variety of cover crops, including legumes, barley and clover, protecting and enhancing the productivity of the soil. In addition, the vineyard is regularly fertilized with organic matter—increasing the soil stability, tilth and diversity of microbial life. Chicken manure and mushroom compost are utilized from local farms, reducing their outbound waste. Grape skins, stems and seeds are also returned to the vineyard after fermentation.

Recycling Natural Resources: All water used to process wines at Clos LaChance's 60,000 case production facility is recycled to a series of onsite reclamation ponds. The water is used as needed to irrigate the vineyard.

Enhancing Surrounding Wildlife Habitat: Despite precision irrigation, rain is a cause of natural run-off. In 2005, due to heavy rains, it became necessary for Clos LaChance to install drainage into several lower vineyard blocks. Across the road from these vineyard blocks is a protected Wetlands area. Working in tandem with environmental teams, the winery was able to direct the run-off to the natural wetlands with a pump and underground pipe. Water then percolates through the soil (acting as a natural filter) prior to being passed into the Wetlands. The enhanced wetlands are now home to a number of birds and animals including ducks, snowy egrets, herons and endangered Tiger Salamanders.

Education and Community Outreach: In 2006, Clos LaChance planted a demonstration vineyard on the property, featuring various varietals and trellising systems that are located throughout the Estate Vineyard. The winery conducts regular vineyard management and training sessions from the demonstration vineyard, providing customers, neighbors and employees with a snapshot of the winery's agricultural practices.

Building for the Future: Clos LaChance's owner Bill Murphy currently sits on the Sustainability Committee at the Wine Institute. He plans to take a leadership role in developing standards and approvals for US Wineries in regards to sustainability. The winery has a long term goal of running entirely via solar power. Winery owners evaluate options on an annual basis and are anxious to working solar panel installation into future business plans.

“We have a responsibility to sustain—if not enhance —our natural environment and our nation's economy for future generations.”

—Steve Johnson, US Environmental Protection Agency