

AT CALIFORNIA ORGANIC VINEYARD, PUMP IS KEY PART OF SUSTAINABILITY



Peter Work inspects pinot noir grape vines a few weeks after harvest at Ampelos near Santa Barbara, California. "For irrigation, the most important thing for me is that the system is working and reliable. I never have to wake up in the morning worrying about it," he says.

THE SITUATION

Rain does not come often to the wine country in the Santa Rita Hills of south-central California.

"We still talk about that one day in June 2010 when it rained," says Peter Work, co-owner of Ampelos vineyard near Buellton in Santa Barbara County. "We have six months of the year where it doesn't rain. It's not like it doesn't rain a whole lot. It doesn't rain period."

At the same time, the area has brilliant conditions for growing wine grapes when you add irrigation, Peter says. It lies within

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Peter Work, co-owner, Ampelos Vineyard and Cellars

three low mountain ranges running from east to west to the Pacific Ocean. These natural troughs bring in a "marine layer" of moisture from the sea in the morning air, then again in the late afternoon and early evening after several hours of sunshine. "It provides amazing growing conditions that support the slow development of flavours and components in the grapes," he says.

At root level, Ampelos' 46,000 vines need half a million litres of water a week. The vineyard gets this from an aquifer 50 metres (165 feet) underground, brought to the surface with a Grundfos submersible SP pump.

"It's just crucial to have the pump, to have the water," Peter says. "Without our well, we couldn't farm here. If can't get water to our vines, we're done. It's absolutely important for us that the pump runs when we need it, four to five days a week." It is also vital to Ampelos that the company operates in a sustainable way. Ampelos converted to organic and biodynamic farming in 2006. It was the first winery in the USA to earn

all three certifications: Sustainability in Practice in 2008 and Organic and Biodynamic in 2009.

THE SOLUTION

The irrigation system includes both drippers at ground level and over-vine sprinklers. To power the pump, Peter and Rebecca built an 8 kW PV solar panel system. Combined with the high reliability of the Grundfos pump, the solar power adds security, he says. “As farmers, we want to eliminate as many things as we can that go wrong,” he says. “I never have to worry about whether the irrigation works. I have my solar panels, and I have my Grundfos pump.”

When Peter and his wife bought the property in 1999, there was already a pump installed in the well from 1995 – though they didn’t know what brand or model. It just worked.

It needed service in 2015, so they called the local plumbers. “They came out and decided to replace it. It had been running for 20 years non-stop. A crane lifted it out, and on the side of it was a Grundfos logo,” he says. “They didn’t even ask us what kind of pump you want to put back in. You got a Grundfos pump. Their customers want reliability and dependability.”

Topic: Irrigation at sustainable vineyard
Location: Lompoc, California, USA
Company: Ampelos Vineyard and Cellars



Peter Work checks the colour in a pinot noir from his vineyard during autumn in the Santa Rita hills of California.

THE OUTCOME

“The most important thing for me in getting these plants irrigated is that the system is working and reliable,” says Peter Work. “I don’t wake up in the morning worrying about it. I just know the irrigation is working. We’ve got to keep these vines alive in the middle of the season. We’ve got to have a good irrigation system and have the right pump out there.”

GRUNDFOS SUPPLIED

Ampelos uses an SP submersible pump for its irrigation system. [Read more about Grundfos SP systems here.](#)

See video



Peter Work gives the vines a final autumn soak before they lie dormant for the winter.



Peter Work, Ampelos Vineyard and Cellars