

Spring-Summer 2007

TRIBUTE: PART TWO

Four years ago my father had a solar powered electrical generating system installed at his home in San Mateo. He loved the idea of generating his own power and even more, loved bragging about the fact that he no longer had to pay the utility company anything for it. And though my father would certainly never be accused of being a fan of Al Gore, installing this system pleased his natural conservative sense of protecting the environment.

So with system installed and his meter spinning backward he began to regularly bug me about installing a system at the winery. "Too expensive," I replied, "and unlike you, I have to worry about my budget and have too many other pressing issues to address right now." When I looked at my end-of-the-year expenses and saw what a small percentage my utility bills were of my overall costs and combined that with what I thought it would cost to install solar it seemed unfeasible at best.

When my father got a good idea (or thought he had!) he could be very persistent. So he kept bugging me. I knew he would not stop until I did something about it. So last summer I had two companies give me a proposal to install a system at the winery that would meet all our power needs for the winery and the houses on the property. I was convinced that when I had these proposals in hand I could then show my father in writing how expensive and therefore unfeasible his "great" idea was.

Imagine my surprise when, after meeting with Katrina and Rob from Sunlightelectric last July, installing a photovoltaic system suddenly seemed not only do-able but a darn good idea to boot. Not only did all the numbers make sense, but also Sunlightelectrics' pole-mounted design was an inspired solution as to where we could locate the solar panels.

Well, with Dad's all to pleased blessing last July I signed the contract with Sunlightelectric and now the system is complete and we are spinning the meters backwards!

Cheers Dad, good one.
-Michael Keenan