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## Two Lamorinda businesses honored with CoolCalifornia Small Business Awards

By Sophie Braccini



Middle and right, Sal and Susan Captain.

The California Air Resources Board recently honored 13 California businesses for their remarkable practices as they surpassed others in their energy and water resources conservation, and in the optimization of their sustainable practices.

Among thousands of small California businesses from which the 13 were selected, two are from Lamorinda: Lafayette Car Wash And Detail Center and Captain Vineyards in Moraga. The business owners explain how their practices come from their desire to minimize their carbon footprint, and are also good for their bottom line.

Sal Captain and his wife Susan have been producing wine in Moraga for years. They are a recognized Contra Costa Green Business and have been honored often for their dry farming and organic practice of growing grapes.

Sal Captain says that reducing the greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts is natural to them. The winemaker was raised in England where being thrifty regarding use of electricity and water was simply the way of life. He and his wife joke on how inspectors can't get over the fact that they use so little water, and have been checking their water meter many times for malfunction. What they have done is train their vines to live on very little water, growing deep roots. They believe that what people say about their wines and their intense taste and color comes from the dry farming.

The Captains, along with Blake Wallen at Lafayette Car Wash, explain that they had to fill up a very lengthy questionnaire to compete for the award. They had to answer questions about their practices over time of course, but also about their employees, where they were coming from and how much travel they had to complete to come to work.

Wallen explains that most of the workers at the Lafayette Car Wash are families from the area that have been working with them for many years. The car wash is well known for recycling the water that is used to clean the cars. What is less known is that all the electrical apparatus used in the business such as the vacuums use less electricity.

Wallen adds that the desire to do their part for the environment is certainly a motivation for his family, but that it also makes sense from a financial viewpoint.

The businesses were honored in Sacramento on March 20 during an official ceremony. CARB Chair Mary D. Nichols said that the award winners were the best examples of how more and more Californian small businesses are making smart, climate-friendly choices.

"From Arcata to Los Angeles, from a craft distillery to a window and solar panel cleaning service, small businesses throughout the state are showing that environmental protection and innovation are also good for the bottom line," she said. More information at [www.arb.ca.gov](http://www.arb.ca.gov).



The gang at Lafayette Car Wash. Photos provided

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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