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**BENZIGER FAMILY WINERY RECEIVES  
SUNSET MAGAZINE GREEN AWARD**

**Glen Ellen, CA, August 16, 2005**—On behalf of Benziger Family Winery, Winemaker Mike Benziger received *Sunset* magazine’s 2005 Green Award at a reception marking the first annual Sunset Western Wine Awards last week. Held on Friday, August 12 at Sunset’s offices in Menlo Park, Calif., the ceremony drew approximately 75 wine industry professionals, including winemaker and winegrower award nominees from California, Washington and Oregon.

“There were several finalists for the Green Award and the judges were quite passionate about the category,” said Sunset’s Food and Wine Editor Sara Schneider. Sunset’s Green Award recognizes the winemaker or grower who is “going the furthest with sustainable winemaking and winegrowing methods that make sense.”

The Sunset Western Wine Award winners were selected by a panel of judges comprised of 15 sommeliers, wine educators and wine writers from the three western coastal states. Judges were asked to nominate an unlimited number of worthy candidates in 10 categories such as Wine Destination of the Year, Up and Coming Winery of the Year, Wine Celebrity of the Year and the Green Award. Their final choices, including Green Award winner Mike Benziger, are featured in the September 2005 issue of *Sunset* magazine.

“It’s a great honor to be the first recipient of the Green Award and to have our Biodynamic farming efforts recognized by *Sunset* magazine, a publication synonymous with land stewardship,” said Mike Benziger. “My family and I believe Biodynamic farming is the best way to craft wines with personality that promote a healthy environment and authentically reflect the variety, vintage, estate and passion of the people who make them.”

The Benzigers began conversion of their 85-acre Sonoma Mountain estate to Biodynamics in 1996, and in 2000 the property became one of only a handful of vineyards in North America to be certified Biodynamic by the Demeter Association. Today, Benziger makes four certified Biodynamic wines from estate grapes, including Tribute, a blend of classic Bordeaux varieties; *Paradiso de Maria*, Benziger Estate Sauvignon Blanc; Sonoma Mountain Red; and Joaquin’s Inferno Estate Zinfandel.

“*Sunset* has long been solidly behind taking care of the earth and reporting on people who are doing so,” noted Schneider. “This care is important in the wine world, if we want to continue to have vineyards and wines to drink.”

The Benziger family invites visitors to their Sonoma Mountain estate this Labor Day weekend for a special tasting celebrating the new release of their certified Biodynamic 2003 Sonoma Mountain Red made from estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Join the Benzigers on September 3, for the official release of this exclusive wine available only through the Benziger tasting room.

*Biodynamics is a wholistic farming approach developed in the 1920s by the Austrian scientist-philosopher Rudolf Steiner. While it encompasses many of the principles of organic farming, such as the elimination of all chemicals, Biodynamics also emphasizes a closed nutrient and self-sustaining ecosystem and requires close attention to the varied forces of nature influencing the vine. The Benzigers are as attentive to the 30 acres of gardens, woodland, riparian areas, wetlands, cover crops and wildlife sanctuaries that comprise their 85-acre ranch, as they are the 42 acres planted to winegrapes.*

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