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**NATURAL, REGENERATIVE, SUSTAINABLE**  
Isabelle Legeron MW, Anne Jones



**ECO-HOSPITALITY**  
Job Seuren, John Hamel



eco-conscious  
*Sommellerie*





# Hamel Family Wines:

## Raising the Bar for Eco-Conscious Hospitality



John Hamel

Competitors, judges, the ASI Board and other attendees of the recent ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas enjoyed the hospitality of Hamel Family Wines in Sonoma Valley, where creating meaningful, lasting environmental change lies at the heart of the business. According to John Hamel, “sustainability is at the core of all our winegrowing practices and extends throughout every facet of our business.”

Since opening their Estate House and adjacent winery in 2014, the Hamel family has focused on creating guest experiences that reflect their commitment to environmental responsibility. “It is a natural extension to present our wines in a context that reflects our values and the way the wine was made,” says Hamel.

Designed by architect Douglas Thornley, the Estate House embraces eco-friendly design principles, featuring rammed-earth walls, a living roof, and FSC-certified wood. While Hamel chose not to pursue formal LEED certification, these features help integrate the building into its natural surroundings while reducing energy use. The winery caves also provide a naturally stable environment for wine ageing, reducing the need for artificial cooling.

While Hamel notes that sustainability in the vineyard and winemaking processes is guided by clear organic and biodynamic certifications, he acknowledges that creating a sustainable hospitality experience is more complex. “The scope of considerations can be so multifaceted and complex that it can feel overwhelming... the hospitality and business operations side is less standardised in terms of what sustainability means and which elements are most important to prioritise. Additionally, some decisions come with higher costs



*Verenadohmen Photography*

that need to be carefully weighed and managed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the business itself.”

Currently, the winery has yet to certify its hospitality programme against formal benchmarks, but Hamel adds, “we’re planning to explore measures like carbon neutrality in the future.”

Beyond the building’s design and energy use considerations, the philosophy extends to the estate’s kitchen, which focuses on seasonal produce grown onsite, expertly transformed into world-class cuisine by Chef Thomas Mendel and his team.

Ultimately, for Hamel, eco-conscious hospitality isn’t just about the environment —

it’s about creating lasting value for the land, the business, and every guest who visits. As those attending the recent ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas contest can attest, that commitment to sustainability translates into an unforgettable food and wine experience.

