



UP ON THE ROOF

NorthBay biz takes a look at a growing architecture trend that's taking root here in the North Bay—living walls and roofs.

There's an old saying pack rats often employ to justify their obsession with saving everything: "If you wait long enough, it will come back in style."

The same could be said for one of the latest trends in green architecture—living roofs. While many promote them as a modern day antidote to reducing our carbon footprint, the fact of the matter is they've been around for thousands of years. A primary example is the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which was one of the original ancient wonders of the world.

Put simply, a living roof or wall is one that's covered with soil or another growing medium that allows for vegetation. There are two basic types: intensive, which are thicker, support more vegetation and are heavier and require more maintenance; and extensive, which have shallow growing mediums, smaller plantings and are much lighter.

Going gold in Healdsburg

While no one has tried planting vineyards on green roofs (yet!), Loomis reports that several wineries in Napa and Sonoma are taking a serious look at investing in living roofs. His firm is currently working on projects for Staglin Family Vineyard in Rutherford, Paradise Vineyards on Highway 37 in Sonoma and Kenzo Winery in Napa Valley, Angwin Ecovillage and the St. Regis Hotel in Napa.