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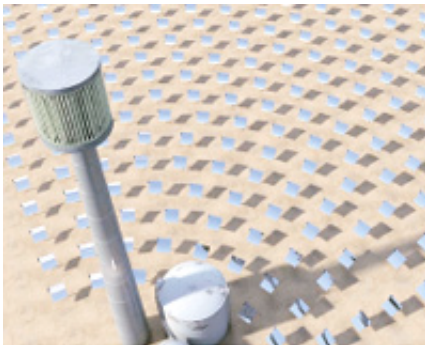
# Venture stores solar power with molten salt

by [Martin LaMonica](#)

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A newly created company called SolarReserve intends to commercialize a solar power plant capable of generating electricity and storing it in molten salt.



A solar tower from another solar thermal provider, BrightSource Energy.

(Credit: BrightSource Energy)

The venture was created by investment firm US Renewables Group, which has licensed technology from Hamilton Sundstrand, a subsidiary of United Technologies. A plant will be capable of generating 500 megawatts of peak power, the size of a typical power plant.

Solar thermal technology, which uses heat intensified by lenses and mirrors to create electricity, is being pursued by utilities because it is relatively cost-effective. It is also called concentrated solar power (CSP).

But because the sun's energy is intermittent, companies are seeking out [large-scale storage techniques](#), from [compressed air](#) to massive batteries. Molten salt storage is already used at the [Nevada Solar One plant](#).

SolarReserve's technology will use a tower with a holding tank of molten salt. An array of mirrors will reflect light onto the tank. The heated liquid is then pumped into a steam generator that will turn a turbine to make electricity.

The technology is expected to be available within three or four years. A representative said the company expects to realize revenue of more than \$1 billion in the next 10 years.



Martin LaMonica is a senior writer for CNET's Green Tech blog. He started at CNET News in 2002, covering IT and Web development. Before that, he was executive editor at IT publication *InfoWorld*. [E-mail Martin](#).