

## Architectural Design Statement

The design brief for the National Wine Centre called for a world class interpretive and educational centre representing the whole of the Australian Wine Industry. The building was required to house offices for Australia's peak wine industry organisations, an interpretive exhibition, educational facilities, function hall, restaurant, cellaring and tasting areas. (The site is adjacent to a major thoroughfare, offering limited access and restricted opportunities for car parking, and to the Adelaide Botanic Gardens.)

Just as wine reflects the characteristics of the soil in which its grapes are grown, key environmental features of the site guided the design process and influenced the resolution of the complex requirements. A number of elements including First Creek, the historic stables and heritage wall, a line of jacarandas bordering the Botanic Gardens, suggested a radial geometry originating from the South African acacias, which is now the focus of the Centre's northern forecourt.

One arc of this geometry defined the path along which visitors approach the centre, while other arcs stretch into the landscape, forming the layout of the vineyard. The generosity of the site allowed ramps to be used to interconnect the varying levels. The path becomes the entry ramp, contained within a curving timber screen, with glimpses of Yarrabee House and the gardens. A rammed earth wall rises along the path and leads into the interior of the main building.

The main building was designed to evoke a sense of space typically found within a winery. The materials and finishes gradually change from the course and robust to the fine and smooth surfaces, reflecting the increasingly refined aspects of the winemaking process. Initially a vaulted concourse admits filtering light and overlooks the large cellar. The external walls of the Exhibition Hall form a vat-like shape and the industrial qualities of the bridges and ramps crossing the space add to the impression. As the visitor moves towards the tasting areas, the scale of the space progresses from the public to the more intimate. This is reinforced by the layout of the exhibition, which takes the visitor on a journey from the vineyard, through the scale of production to the levels of wine appreciation.

The construction itself was formed by the materials and textures that can be found at any vineyard, such as rammed earth, stone, timber, steel and stainless steel. It takes its lead from the Australian Wine Industry in using a wide range of technologies from the traditional to the state of the art. Rammed earth and ancient building techniques are reinvigorated using steel that permits grand scale yet slender walls. The diagrid roof to the Hickinbotham Hall, with domestic scale timber elements, is precisely engineered to form a shell structure pre-stressed with stainless steel cables. The design exploits the innate quality of the materials in term of scale, texture and colour. As a good wine is clean, well structured, yet complex, the materials in this centre are exposed in their natural condition where possible, to display their intrinsic quality uncluttered by decoration.

The rammed earth wall consists of sand from Berri, clay from Gawler, and road base from Golden Grove, South Australia.

## **The Architects**

In 1997 the National Wine Centre steering committee commissioned Cox Grieve Architects (Adelaide) in association with Sydney's Cox Richardson to design the new 6000 sq metre National Wine Centre of Australia.

The Centre was officially opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2001, and was envisaged to be the flagship of the Australian Wine Industry, acting simultaneously as a cultural and educational centre, and a major tourist attraction.

As the first dedicated wine centre in Australia it was predicted that the centre would quickly become synonymous with the tourism industry and an iconic venue for the city of Adelaide. Visitors seeking information in every aspect of the wine industry including wine growing, winemaking and new technologies being developed could be satisfied.

The National Wine Centre contains an interactive exhibition, wine industry offices, a comprehensive range of wine tasting and function facilities, and importantly, extensive educational facilities.

## **The Site**

This was originally the first mental health hospital in South Australia constructed in 1856. The first building can still be seen on the corner of Botanic & Hackney Roads. The main hospital was built several years later, just inside the boundary where the main terrace area now exists. The hospital remained in operation until the mid 1920's and was then later demolished. Inmates constructed the stone fence that surrounds the property, which is now listed by The National Trust as a heritage icon. The site was then used as part of the tramway and barn facility before being acquired for the Botanical Gardens.

In its heyday many trams were built and were exported to America, several of the original trams can still be seen in operation in San Francisco.

By mid 1900 the site was planted as an orchard as part of the Botanic Gardens showcase.

Several options were presented to the government and the final discussion and decision for the site was made in 1997.

In return for claiming the site, the National Wine Centre Committee allocated funds for the refurbishment of the Goodman Building (on Hackney Road) and for the development of the Centenary Rose Garden.

## **Award Nominations**

The National Wine Centre has been nominated in many architectural award categories and in 2002 won two of those categories.

- Royal Australian Institute of Architects – Award of Merit
- World Conference on Timber Engineering – Best Architecture Award

In 2003 the centre was again nominated for several awards including interior and exterior lighting.

## The Wine Discovery Journey

The design of the Wine Discovery Journey uses the most recent technology to profile Australia's prominence in the wine industry. Components of the exhibition are at the cutting edge of interactive displays, making them the envy of all nations and regions.

The use of hologram images is something most people associate with movies like "Star Trek" but after talking to a winemaker you will never want to watch a video again.

Use our touch screen computers to produce your own award winning wine, complete the series of questions and the computer will grade you and award you with a Gold, Silver or Bronze medal (faulty if it is really bad). Learn the importance of wine manufacture in one easy lesson.

Sit and watch our award winning movie on grape viticulture or peruse the antiquities of yesteryear, as it all comes together in the best exhibition of its kind anywhere in the world.

<b>The Map:</b>	Designed by Box & Dice The Map is the single most complex piece in the exhibition The Water and Ocean is a digitized duration effect
<b>The Grapes:</b>	Designed by Four Storey Creations It took sixteen weeks to make the model displays Mr Paul Laffen, head of Penfolds Wines, completed the phonetic pronunciation
<b>History Exhibits:</b>	On loan from the following galleries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nicholson Museum at the University of Sydney</li><li>• Powerhouse Museum Sydney</li><li>• State Library of NSW</li></ul> (The oldest evidence of winemaking to date was 7000 years ago in Northern Iran)
<b>Film:</b>	Designed and filmed by Kojo Whisson Lake, Adelaide Hills Film shot one day a week over the duration of a year
<b>The Vine:</b>	150 year old shiraz vine Taken from St Hallett's vineyard at Tanunda It took a team of people two days to dig out the root system
<b>The Vine Wall:</b>	Consists of over 600 vine cuttings taken from pruning of Yr 2000 Woven by three people over 8 days
<b>The Soil Panels:</b>	Reflecting the soil types in each growing region
<b>The Talking Head:</b>	Designed by Kojo It took two months of hard decisions for the final selection be reached: Wolf Blass Mick Morris Prue Henschke

**Touch Screens:** Design by Clinic Design  
The final questions were approved by the Australian Wine Research Institute

**The Smelling Pods:** Designed by Andrew Crick

**The Bottle Wall:** Consists of 3000 bottles in 3 different colours

**The Label Wall:** Consists of 748 labels

## **Costing**

The cost of the project inclusive of fit out and construction of stages 1 and 2 was near 40 million dollars. This came from the Centenary of Federation project and the South Australian State Government.

As a wine state the industry returns \$25 million to the state's economy every 10 days. Today and every other day of the year, some one million bottles of Australian table wine is being shipped to our overseas export markets, which is comprised of 81 different countries and still growing.

Each bottle is proudly labelled "Product of Australia" thereby enhancing Australia's reputation as a producer of quality product and proving our capability of competing and maintaining standards against the world's best.

## **Target Markets**

The National Wine Centre markets to a broad spectrum of local, national and international visitors, Chart representation of visitations to the National Wine Centre are:

Local SA	27%
Interstate	53%
International	20%

## **On Site Tenants**

The National Wine Centre is pleased to have close ties with the wine industry and many of the main bodies and organisations have centred themselves onsite as permanent tenants. These are the Winemakers Federation of Australia, Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation, South Australian Wine and Brandy Association and the Australian Wine Export Council.

## **The Cellar**

Capable of storing 38,000 bottles of wine, the National Wine Centre uses this facility to best represent the 64 wine growing regions, and at any one time would hold a variety from over 400 different vineyards.

The stock is used in the centre as part of every day trading, from the restaurant and function facilities to the retail outlet.

The cellar is thermostatically controlled and is maintained at between 17-19 degrees

## **The University of Adelaide**

On September 12<sup>th</sup> 2003 the University of Adelaide was given a 40-year lease on the National Wine Centre building. This will allow the University to actively profile wine education and wine marketing classes onsite, and to further enhance the Centre's reputation as being the leader in wine education programs.

The response from the general public on observing the upcoming winemakers in classroom mode has been extremely positive, and as the courses develop it is hoped that we may be even able to introduce some guest interaction.