

Innocent Bystander/ Giant Steps Winery

The theatre of winemaking is the key to this building in Healesville, says architect Martyn Hook, who accommodated a cellar, open kitchen, cheese-maturing room and wood-fired oven.

“The discussion of the winery itself evolved over several years and it became part of a tourist facility that was proposed to replace a dodgy hotel on the site. It was designed as part of a complex that would showcase food and wine from the region and provide a clear destination.

“Phil [Sexton, owner] was explicit about what he needed but wasn’t imposing in terms of an aesthetic or direction. The focus of the building was to provide a factory for winemaking, so the process is revealed through a large glass wall that divides the factory from the eating area.

“Rather than tasting the wine in isolation, it becomes part of the theatre of how wine is made. It becomes more about a food-and-wine experience rather than a refined notion that you are engaging with a connoisseur. It tries to demystify a romanticised process.

“If you’re there when they are moving barrels around, you see that. If there are grapes coming in, you see that, and you can also see them washing out barrels, or the press working. It’s a warts-and-all display of the factory that makes wine.

“At the Cellar Door, you can eat freshly baked bread, drink coffee that’s roasted on the premises and eat great pizza from the wood-fired oven.

“The Cellar Door was designed as a simple glass box clad in recycled timber screens. We used a standard

warehouse construction, but we were seeking a level of refinement—from the way a fixing was applied to the way an air-conditioning duct would run through the space. It was orchestrated to use ordinary elements in a refined manner.

“There’s no paint finish on the exterior; everything’s galvanised or aluminium. It’s a notion about commodity—it does what its supposed to do, but does it elegantly.

“All the timber on the outside is recycled jarrah floorboards from WA. It’s been left to go grey naturally rather than sealing it with polyurethane. The flooring is a cut-concrete slab, with a polished Hyper Floor finish that doesn’t scratch.

“The benches are big jarrah slabs—chunky recycled timber that reflects the environmental agenda of the whole building.

“Since we tend to underlight most of our buildings, we experimented with the battens on the walls in to get the right amount of natural light. That’s supplemented by industrial lights normally found on factory floors. That light is reflected up off the Colorbond metal ceiling.

“I’ve dined here few times. The food is fantastic and I’m a big fan of Harry’s Monster—a blend of cab sav, merlot, petit verdot and cabernet franc.

Overall, Innocent Bystander is not about the building; it’s about the food and wine and experience. If we can facilitate that with the architecture, we are more than happy.” □



Innocent Bystander/ Giant Steps

336 Maroondah Highway
Healesville, VIC 3777
Phone: (03) 5962 6111
Fax: (03) 5962 6199
www.innocentbystander.com.au

Iredale Pedersen Hook Architects

Level 2, 41 A'Beckett Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9600 2454
Fax: (03) 9654 4663
www.iredalepedersenhook.com

