



# Port Phillip Estate The Dining Room

*When Roger Wood of Wood/Marsh Architecture designed the winery restaurant in the Mornington Peninsula, he drew inspiration from French châteaux and maritime references*



“**T**he clients [the Gjergja family] approached us to design a cellar door with a restaurant, accommodation, production and storage facilities. They had researched architects and approached us to design the new building.

“A careful demolition of the existing agricultural sheds was required. The benching on the existing slope was used to dig back into the ground to build the cellar door and then partially bury it.

“The design process took a year and the construction took over two years. The building, which now spirals out of the hill, was based on 17th- and 18th-century French châteaux. That’s how we designed the production and fermentation parts of the winery which was positioned underground.

“The building continues up the hill,

with offices, restaurant, the cellar door and six accommodation suites that sit beneath the restaurant. All have sweeping vineyard and coastal views.

“Our work is always sculptural, and this building is intended to resemble a prehistoric whale bone that’s been washed up, covered with earth, and a million years later eroded and exposed.

“The walls are made of rammed earth, a medieval construction technique. Apparently, these are the tallest rammed earth walls in the Southern Hemisphere. We altered the appearance of the rammed earth by adding different cement oxides, achieving a colour similar to that of bleached driftwood.

“The Gjergja family have a passion for maritime pursuits and this is embodied throughout the building. In the restaurant, for example, the chevron patterns on the ceiling not only allow for acoustic attenuation, but they look like a crafted hull of a timber boat.

“We selected the Accademia ‘Vela’ dining chairs from Space because of the knitting material; it refers to maritime items

such as fishing nets. The chairs are also very serviceable—they’re easy to maintain and easy to stack.

“The restaurant seats up to 115 guests, and the cellar door opens to an expansive outdoor timber deck, taking advantage of the sweeping views. It’s a versatile space for events and functions.

“Doors on either side of the restaurant bar allow staff to go into the commercial kitchen one way and out the other way. All kitchen supplies are loaded from the back of the kitchen from a concealed courtyard. There’s also a second smaller kitchen, which services the cellar door.

“With polished concrete floors throughout the public areas, the building presents a robust but elegant aesthetic. We like the rustication of it. I think if you speak with anyone who has worked there, they’d say it was a dream job. The restaurant is a very functional space, but whenever the staff turn their head, they’re looking all the way from French Island across Phillip Island to Bass Strait.” ●



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