



Concrete puts its stamp on Shaw Wines' success

Background

The cool climate region around Canberra might not be as well-known as other wine-making regions across Australia, but one family in particular is doing its best to change that.

AT A GLANCE

Project: Shaw Wines new Cellar Door

Main concrete elements:

- Concrete slab/footings
- Off-form concrete vertical 'spine' wall and feature wall

Architect: Ozta Architects – Dean Kensit / Nick Pelle

Builder: Pier Projects

Images: Adrien Labutte - Evolve Timelapse

The Challenge

Shaw Wines recently opened a stunning new Cellar Door on its Murrumbateman estate – a building that says as much about the family's confidence in this still emerging wine-making region as it does about their own business model.

Solution/Outcome

The building was designed by Ozta Architects to take full advantage of the location and views, as well as make a bold architectural statement that would draw people to the estate.

The building's clean, straight lines belie an attention to detail that marks this building as something special.

It also contains elements of surprise and levity, exemplified by the sculptured window made from wine glasses in the cellar area.

Visually and structurally, the design is dominated by a monolithic off-form concrete spine. Running east to west, this spine not only grounds the building into the landscape but effectively partitions the internal space and creates a circulation spine for visitors.

On the southern side of this divide is a large, open tasting room and wine 'lounge' - the perimeter of which is almost completely glass. Here, visitors can sit, sip and enjoy the elevated views across the vineyards to the distant Brindabella Ranges.

The main entrance, private tasting room, office, wine storage and amenities is on the northern side of the spine.

As you approach the building from the northern carpark, an off-form concrete blade wall reaches out through the

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glass-framed entranceway to greet and draw you inside, where you're met by a display of award-winning wines.

On the opposite side of this entranceway, kiln-dried timber wall cladding provides a softening, textural contrast to the concrete. The wedge-shaped roof sits lightly atop this solid structural base, the two elements separated by a narrow curtain of glass.

As you walk through this main entrance you come to another section of concrete blade wall that creates something of a pinch-point, concentrating your view through the tasting room to the vineyard vista beyond.

The off-form concrete elements of the building feature a Class 1 finish. (A concrete prototype was constructed to provide assurance for the owner that a hi-quality finish was achievable.)

The concrete pours for the spine were set up and scheduled in such a way as to distinguish the horizontal lines and minimise vertical lines. Notwithstanding, the finished forms don't attempt to shy away from the essential characteristics of the raw material.

"One of the beauties of concrete is that it shows up the differences created by the pours and joint lines," says Dean Kensit, who with Nick Pelle designed the building.

That's one of the reasons we wanted to use it. It's consistent and homogenous and yet displays little inconsistencies that add to its character."

One of the things not immediately obvious about the spine, especially when viewed from ground level, is that it contains a void that houses air conditioning units and other services.

One of the aspects of the materials palette that appeals to the architectural team is the inevitability that time and the elements will leave their imprint on the building.

In other words, it will mature and improve with age – much like the wines it showcases.

BENEFITS OF USING CONCRETE:

- Aesthetics
- Durability and low maintenance

