“Antinory Winery, Bargino Italy”
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The European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award 2015 is, above all, the result of a collective, transversal process which gathers together the highest quality contemporary European architecture projects.

For the first time, the 420 Prize nominees are published. Grouped categorically into uses, the aim is to clarify the concept that has structured them, the building system employed and their current use. Additional written and graphic information provide more details about the context, the size of the project, the promoter, who was involved, its cost and the bond that the work has created with the surrounding territory. Considerations by the 2015 Jury members – Cino Zucchi, Margarita Jover, Lene Tranberg, Peter Wilson, Tony Chapman, Xiangning Li and Hansjörg Mölk –; and critical essays by well-known critics; provide a thorough insight on the works of the 2015 edition of the Prize.

420. Shortlisted & Nominees and 5+1. Winners & Finalists are twinned to form a unique monograph which, in 25 years time, will allow readers to have a better understanding of how European architecture was considered, how it was experienced and how it was transformed in the early years of a normalized globalization.
Antinori Winery
Bargino, Italy
Archea Associati
Laura Andreini, Marco Cassamonti, Silvia Fabi, Giovanni Polazzi

The site is surrounded by the unique hills of Chianti, covered with vineyards, half-way between Florence and Siena. A cultural and illuminated customer has made it possible to pursue, through architecture, the enhancement of the landscape and the surroundings as expression of the cultural and social value of the place where wine is produced.

The functional aspects have therefore become an essential part of a design itinerary which centres on the geomorphological experimentation of a building understood as the most authentic expression of a desired synthesis and merger between anthropic culture, the work of man, his work environment and the natural environment. The physical and intellectual construction of the winery pivots on the profound and deep-rooted ties with the land, a relationship which is so intense and suffered (also in terms of economic investment) as to make the architectural image conceal itself and blend into it. The purpose of the project has therefore been to merge the building and the rural landscape; the industrial complex appears to be a part of the latter thanks to the roof, which has been turned into a plot of farmland cultivated with vines, interrupted, along the contour lines, by two horizontal cuts which let light into the interior and provide those inside the building with a view of the landscape through the imaginary construction of a diorama. The facade, to use an expression typical of buildings, therefore extends horizontally along the natural slope, paced by the rows of vines which, along with the earth, form its “roof cover”. The openings or cuts discreetly reveal the underground interior; the office areas, organized like a belvedere above the barchette, and the areas where the wine is produced are arranged along the lower, and the bottling and storage areas along the upper. The secluded heart of the winery, where the wine matures in barrels, conveys, with its darkness and the rhythmic sequence of the terracotta vaults, the sensual dimension of a space which is hidden, not because of any desire to keep it out of sight but to guarantee the ideal thermo-hygrometric conditions for the slow maturing of the product. A reading of the architectural section of the building reveals that the altimetric arrangement follows both the produc-
The production process of the grapes which descend (as if by gravity) – from the point of arrival, to the fermentation tanks to the underground barrel vault – and that of the visitors who on the contrary ascend from the parking area to the winery and the vineyards, through the production and display areas with the press, the area where vintages are aged, to finally reach the restaurant and the floor hosting the winetasting, library, the wine-tasting areas and the sales outlet.

The offices, the administrative areas and executive offices, located on the upper level, are paced by a sequence of internal court illuminated by circular holes scattered across the vineyard roof. This system also serves to provide light for the guesthouse and the caretaker's dwelling. The materials and technologies evoke the local tradition with simplicity, coherently expressing the theme of studied naturalness, both in the use of terracotta and in the advisability of using the energy produced naturally by the earth to cool and insulate the winery, creating the ideal climatic conditions for the production of wine.

Archaeo Associati

Design of plants: M&P Management & Engineering
Paolo Baraglio, Stefano Mignani
Gardening plants: Enrico Bernardi & Associates
Antimott
General contractor: Vai
Commission dates: 2004
Construction dates: 2006-2013
Plot area: 126,300 m²
Cost: € 1,200,000
Total built surface: 387,700 m²
Buildings and parking area: 13,700 m²
Construction cost/m²: € 3,300
Photographers: © Leonardo Finotti, © Pietro Savorelli, © Architettura
The architecture doesn't just occupy the landscape; it becomes the landscape. The panoramic terrace is shaded by a curved deeply cantilevered canopy that is partly camouflaged under rows of young vines.
From the parking lot, visitors ascend the tour-de-force cork-screw staircase made of rust-colored steel and twisting upward like a strip of orange peel. It pops through one of those big cuts onto the terrace (back from dark to light), which is nearly the length of a football field and echoes the contours of the land.
Vines and Vintner
Beautify a Tuscan Hill

Michael Kimmelman

Archea Architects’ Headquarters for Antinori
Wine-makers

BARGINO, Italy. For all its beauty, Italy has suffered reckless development. Travel outside any big city, and you’ll come across aging sprawl—unplanned wastelands of shopping malls, factories and housing projects, many from the 1950s and ’70s. Florence, a dozen or so miles from here, is no exception. The city started developing into a mess of shabby suburbs years ago, nearby towns like Tavarnelle and Poggibonsi added industrial parks to historic centers.

Preservationists bemoaned some of the worst development with stricter zoning regulations. But tensions still persist between conserving the landscape and creating it to new business. Manufacturing and construction account for nearly one-quarter of the Tuscan economy. Those ugly industrial parks provide jobs. So what should smart growth look like in this region?

Canaria Antinori is one answer. From the highway, you can miss the new headquarters that Archea, a Florence firm, has designed here for this prestigious Italian winemaker. The highway runs by it, but the building hides in plain sight, buried into—literally inside—a hill. The architecture doesn’t just occupy the landscape, it becomes the landscape. The panoramic terrace is shaded by a curved deck cantilevered canopy that is partly camouflaged under rows of young vines.

Once you’re inside, the place turns out to be a soaring, light-filled work of contemporary design. At 540,000 square feet, the headquarters, which opened to the public this spring, includes a winery, a 200-seat auditorium (with custom-designed wobble-like focus chairs in keeping with the standards of Italian high style), a museum, a restaurant and a shop. The building, which took nearly a decade to complete and cost some $110 million, unfolds as a series of surprises. A snaking driveway, rising through newly planted olive groves, deposits visitors into an underground parking lot; you go from bright sun into sudden darkness. Light angles into the lot through circular cuts in the roof. These circles become a metope and combine with sinuous, sloping walls and the undulating canopy to create a formal language that can bring to mind the work of firms like UNStudio in Amsterdam: a vocabulary of sculptural, organic abstraction.

From the parking lot, visitors ascend the tour-de-force coiled staircase made of rust-colored steel and twisting upward like a strip of orange peel. It passes through one of those big cuts on the terrace (brick from dark to light), which is nearly the length of a football field and echoes the contours of the land. The plaza and canopy make a kind of clash across the brow of the hill, from which the view onto the countryside is wide open and spectacular.

Through a two-story glass wall lie the offices, museum, shop and the tasting rooms, which are theatrically cantilevered over the wine cellars. These are a series of sleek cases as big and somber as cathedrals—spectacular rooms tucked deep inside the hill and hidden behind discreet doors. To pass from the lobby through those doors is a bit like discovering Dr. No’s lair.

The detailing of corners, curves and edges is everywhere crisp and clean. A factory and office complex doesn’t have to be a cheap mirrored-glass box or a trumped-up Renaissance villa. It can be Architecture with a capital A. That’s the building’s message.

Antinori is a notable family with winemaking roots dating back 26 generations and is now a major exporter. Antinori has occupied one of the great palaces in Florence, designed by Giuliano da Maiano, since 1506. So the bar for the design of the company’s new headquarters was high. Pietro Antinori, the reigning patriarch now in his 80s, had first hired a local engineering firm to devise a conventional factory and then enlisted Archea to dress the factory up with a facade. But the architects balked.

"This is our oil," was the reaction of Marco Casamonti, a founder of Archea, who oversaw the project. He means that the region’s great cultural and economic resource is its combination of landscape and architecture. Thoughtless development had depleted that resource in this part of Tuscany. Architecture can, and should, help and bring progress. A home for Antinori could be conceived in terms of the hill, he argued.

That the Antinori family embraced a more ambitious project, allowed Archea to design everything down to the furniture and fittings, then paid the bills after the budget more than doubled from its original $45 million, and also endured years of delays because of construction problems, shows how much finesse, successful architecture depends on the right client. Since it opened, the building has attracted thousands of people, including many architects, who clearly don’t (just) come for the wine. They climb from the terrace to the top of the spiral stair and onto the planted roof. There’s a restaurant up there, with views over the hills. Materials are Cor-Ten steel, slated concrete, glass and terra cotta. Surfaces are eloquently rough. Sawn-oak walls in the museum allude to the wood barrels that store the Chianti. The terra cotta comes from just up the road. The project is all about the beauty of the region and blurring the boundary between landscape and architecture. The hill keeps the cellars naturally temperate. Those cellars are the big eye-opening: airy, filled with soft light and the smell of clay.

Some 17,000 miles had to be driven into the earth to secure the headquarters into what turned out to be unstable soil. Almost 35 acres were excavated, the building installed, then the hill restored on top of it. So it is purpose-built nature on a very large scale—and a factory. But it makes peace with its surroundings. And adds a landmark to them.