



Photos Winery by Chilean architect Smiljan Radic channels nature's raw power



A dramatic water plaza punctuated by rocks greets visitors to Vik Vineyard in Chile's Central Valley. The winery complex was designed by Smiljan Radic, who did the Serpentine Pavilion in London in 2014. (Carolina A. Miranda / Los Angeles Times)

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One in a series of dispatches by Carolina A. Miranda on the architecture of Chile.

Wineries used to be buildings of almost pure industrial functionality: a space in which to truck in grapes and smash them, rooms of fermentation vats and cool, underground warehouses where the product ages in wooden casks.



HIDE CAPTION ^

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Vik Vineyard

(Carolina A. Miranda / Los Angeles)

A new boutique winery in Millahue, in the coastal hills south of Santiago, Vik grows a combination of Carmenere, Merlot, Cabernet and Syrah grapes. Last year, architect Smiljan Radic completed the winery, where the grapes are fermented and aged.

But in recent years, wineries have also become a site for all kinds of starchitectural practice. Frank Gehry has designed a buoyant winery hotel for [Marqués de Riscal](#) in Spain. Zaha Hadid created a decanter-shaped shop and tasting room for [R. Lopez de Heredia](#), also in Spain. And, in the hills of Tuscany, Renzo Piano did the winery building for the [La Rocca](#) vineyard, a partnership between Paolo Panerai, of Castellare di Castellina in Chianti Classico, and Baron Eric de Rothschild of the Domaines Barons de Rothschild-Lafite.

Chile, land of spicy Cabernets and punchy Merlots, is also home to one intriguing winery building — designed by Chilean architect Smiljan Radic, who last year created the architectural pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery in London. (I did [a post about his redesign of Santiago's pre-Columbian museum](#) a couple of weeks back.)

Radic is the designer behind a dramatic building for [Vik Vineyard](#), a new winery founded by Norwegian-born business mogul Alexander Vik.

Tucked into the coastal hills at Millahue, southwest of the Central Valley city of Rancagua, the winery was completed last year, and crews are now at work adding the finishing touches: parking, lighting and a new restaurant, where the public will be able to have lunch in view of the plantings. (It's all scheduled to be completed sometime in May.)

The building offers a dramatic reveal. Drive through the vineyards and you barely see the curving roof line peaking above the vines. From the parking lot, a short walk through the grapes leads to a break in a long concrete

wall. Step through and you are transported to another place entirely: a large water-covered plaza studded with rock monoliths. It feels contemporary and prehistoric all at the same time.

Moreover, the water feature serves a function — to cool the chamber that resides just below ground level. In fact, much of the building resides there to help preserve temperatures for the fermentation and aging of Vik's blended red wine.

But the building offers other delights, too: a light, tent-like roof and a transparent glass walls that allows you to see right through it, which means a visitor never loses sight of the surrounding hills. Combine this with a degustation of all of Vik's varietals — Merlot, Syrah, Carmenere and the Cabernets, Sauvignon and Franc — and it's hard not to be completely and totally seduced.

See my slideshow above for my tour of the site. The Chilean architecture website [Plataforma Arquitectura](#) has additional images.