

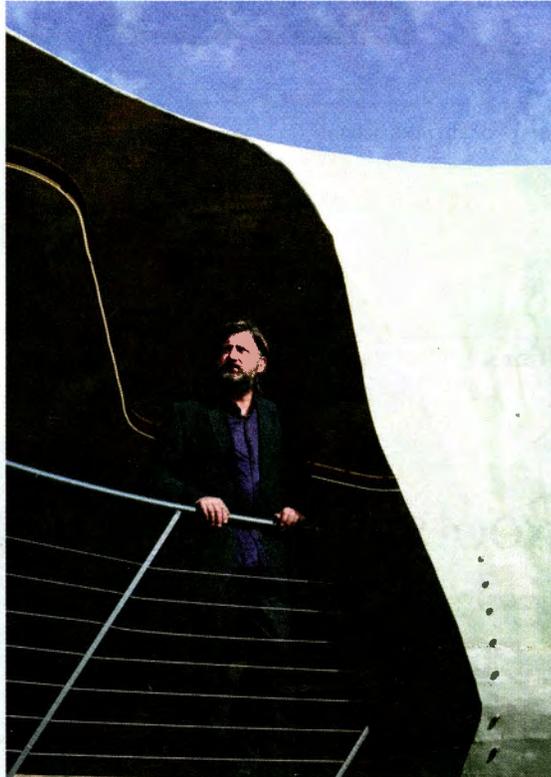
## Home

### Q&A A Rock Star Among Architects

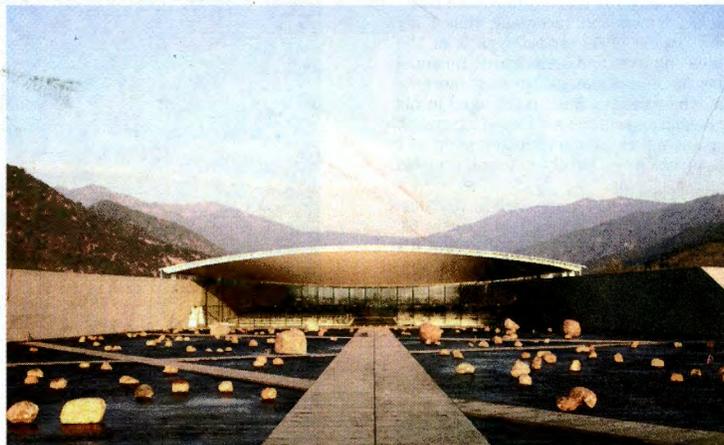
Two weeks ago, a translucent pod of glass-reinforced plastic, poised atop enormous sandstone boulders, appeared on a curve of lawn in Kensington Gardens in London. The folly, which one reviewer called “a collision between an extraterrestrial egg and a Neolithic burial site,” is by the Chilean architect Smiljan Radic, whom the nearby Serpentine Galleries chose to create a temporary structure in its front yard. It is the 14th year that the museum has commissioned a Serpentine Pavilion, always turning to an architect who has not previously built in Britain, and the unveiling of the park installation has become a closely watched summer ritual.

Although the project has thrust him onto the international stage, Mr. Radic, 49, has spent most of his career in his native land, quietly building a diverse body of intriguing work reflecting his interest in form, material and meaning. His House for the Poem of the Right Angle, evoking Le Corbusier’s writings, has truncated cones poking from the roof framing views of the treetops. Another residence is clad in copper panels. For the Mestizo restaurant in Santiago, he used granite boulders as columns to support a flat, black concrete roof.

The largest building he is working on right now, the VIK winery, will open later this month. Developed by the owners of the Vik Retreats hotels, it is set on an 11,000-acre estate in the Millahue Valley, south of Santiago. The winery’s front courtyard is a sloping pool of rippling water crisscrossed with poured-cement pathways that look like airport runways gone amok; large stones are strewn about as if some giant were playing marbles. Behind the courtyard, a white fabric roof curves over the winery, most of which hunkers underground. Mr. Radic provided details of the design by phone and email. (This interview has been edited and condensed.)



The Chilean architect Smiljan Radic, left, inside the pavilion he designed in Kensington Gardens in London for the Serpentine Galleries. The largest building he is working on now, the VIK winery in Chile, uses rocks in the exterior design, below and bottom, instilling a sense of the primitive in the new.



**In some projects, you’ve used large stones as supporting elements. Here, you’ve put stones in the pool in a collaboration with your wife, Marcela Correa, a sculptor. Are they found or fabricated?**  
They all come from the site and were brought to the pool by truck. We ordered them in a random way.



DAVID AZIA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES (RADIC); CRISTOBAL PALMA (WINERY AND ROCKS)

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**Q. The project seems as much about landscaping as architecture.**

**A.** The landscape in Chile is really beautiful, so the challenge is always to do less to it. We put the building underground to save energy and keep the temperature stable for the wine. But it was also to preserve the landscape. You can see through the building to the mountains with snow.

**Tell me about the courtyard pool.**

It has walls on either side so it is like you are in an interior space, but you are actually in an exterior space. The water helps keep the barrel room underneath it cool. As the water moves, the waves make sounds, like a waterfall. It's a calming atmosphere.

**You've used the term "boulder architecture" for your work. What is it about rocks that interests you?**

They are strong, and they give you the sensation of the primitive, of time, because they are weathered and have been around for so long. Depending on how you use them, you could transfer that feeling to the new building: something permanent in the middle of the new.

**In contrast to the heavy stone, there is the winery's fabric roof.**

We wanted natural light for the workers in the building. On the sides of the building you have windows under the roof that you can open in summer for cooling. In winter you can close the windows to maintain the temperature inside. Because of the windows, it looks like the roof is floating.

**What is it like inside the winery?**

Normally wineries in Chile have just a small showroom or shop for

tourists. Here, visitors get to see the stainless-steel tanks and the whole production process. They can smell the wine all around.

**A resort on the estate, not designed by you, is scheduled to open this fall. Until then, visitors can book a modernist guesthouse you designed on the property. What was its original purpose?**

When we started the project, the owners wanted a small place where they could spend more time in the field. So we did this cabin up on a hill. It has a beautiful view of the lake and winery.

**Are you a wine drinker?**

Everybody thinks because I designed a winery I know a lot about wine, but I really don't. The wine they produce here tastes — how do you say? Elegant. I feel good drinking it. I cannot say any more than that. *JANE MARGOLIES*