

Joie de vivre: Winemaker adds French charm

By Melanie Franner



When the small, artisan winery and estate vineyard, Clos du Soleil, decided to add a new wine-tasting room and production facility to their offerings, they did so with the intent of creating a charming French façade and feel.

Features such as lighting features, exterior black chalkboard, retractable awnings, and original wood from the old barn used as the previous wine shop helped make this a reality. As did Norsteel Buildings Systems Ltd., the company tasked with the job of creating the pre-engineered building.

"The winery is built in a wind belt near Keremeos," explains Garrett Savard, project manager, Norsteel Buildings. "This is a positive element for the winery, as it helps reduce disease pressure due to the high winds. But it also means that the building

structure, features, and design elements also need to be able to withstand these forces."

Norsteel Buildings Systems is currently celebrating its 25th year of building within the B.C. area and beyond. This experience enabled them to easily incorporate the winemaker's particular design and architectural features.

"The flexibility of design and features available in our pre-engineered steel structures were an exact fit to what they needed," says Savard, who cites a long list of benefits that include unlimited colour options, energy efficiency, low cost in relation to other options, use of recyclable materials and minimal waste, maximization of daylighting options, and speed of completion.

"Design to wine took one year," says Savard.

A distinguished palette

The new facility at Clos du Soleil incorporates a 370-square-foot tasting room. The entire footprint of the main floor measures 3,850 square feet, which is complemented by a 565-square-foot mezzanine.

"One of the key benefits of going the pre-engineered route is that temperatures in this facility can be maintained at the optimum, regardless of the extremes in both seasons," says Savard. "Overall, there are 11 different heat zones throughout the building, all of which can be controlled individually by the winemaker and his team."

Other interesting features incorporated in the facility include an under-slab heating system, a water-filtration system, and an electric car station.

"The water-filtration system is critical in order to get the available water to the rigorous standards needed by the wine maker," says Savard. "This high-end system eliminates any turbidity and impurities in the water rendering it ideal for winery sanitation and winemaking purposes."

Norsteel Buildings Systems also brought in a 400-amp electrical service, with 2pole and 3pole receptacles located around the production area for the different machines used in the production of wines. This will also be useful for any future expansion.

A perfect finish

A large overhead door provided ready access to the new Clos du Soleil building. This particular project was carried out by ASSA ABLOY Entrance Systems.

"We were excited for the opportunity



to get involved with another Norsteel project," says Shane Kennedy, branch manager of the Kelowna ASSA ABLOY office. "We were tasked with the fabrication and installation of a 15' x 16' commercial-grade, steel-insulated overhead door. For optimal thermal efficiency, we provided a door with polyurethane-injected sections and for natural light and transparency, the door featured four double-pane clear-tempered windows at eye level."

The on-site installation of the door took a few days with a two-man crew, which included welding the door tracks with reverse continuous angle to the steel structure.

The client, Clos du Soleil, is more than pleased with the results.

"We chose to go with a pre-engineered building for cost reasons, as well as for the ability to have large, open spaces in the production area," says Michael Clark, wine maker and managing director, Clos du Soleil. "The pre-engineered building meant that we didn't have to have any in-

terior supporting pillars, which was a huge advantage to us."

In addition, Clark notes that it was an ideal solution for realizing the design work of architects Liana Sipelis and Chris Allen, both of whom contributed to the project.

Let the sun shine in

Today, Clos du Soleil can continue to produce the ultra-premium wines that it has become known for, one that borrows an aesthetic derived from the great wines of Bordeaux but stamped with the flavours and

aromas of the local rocky Similkameen land.

And, thanks to the hard work of various companies that helped make the winery's dream a reality, Clos du Soleil can continue to produce their fine array of wines in a first-class production facility that has been designed exclusively for them.

"We're thrilled with the results," says Clark. "The new wine-tasting room has a lot of charm but is still true to the Clos du Soleil character. It's elegant but understated and the new production facility is everything we could have hoped for – and more." ♦



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