

THAT LITTLE WINE BAR

James The Sommelier – Wine and Architecture

'Wine honors the soul, so honor it with yours.'

Wine Architecture

Wine and architecture couple together well as two constructs greater than the sum of their respective parts. The synergy of these two things means that wine becomes more than just grapes, acids or alcohol and architecture becomes more than just bricks and mortar. Both wine and architecture- as wholes- evoke emotion, thought and criticism (that great human talent). Grapes and bricks don't do that, unless you have a LOT of time on your hands.

But, beyond this metaphysical connection, wine and architecture seem to be inherently interlinked. Wine has inspired (and funded) grand architecture and visa versa. Like two peas in a pod or a comedy duo they often rely on one another to express the bigger picture and their full potential.

Before asking where these two appear to go so well together it is important to understand how they do, while at the same time avoiding the danger of making all of this sound a little superficial. Old World wineries located in ancient monasteries, historical castles and chateaux are the great edifices symbolizing some of the greatest producers of wine in the world and it all fundamentally comes down to economics. Those with the money to afford huge buildings, land and labourers were those who could invest in a wine business. In some cases, the wine industry created helped pay for the land itself.



Wiroa Station Wine Cellar in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand

In some ways, nothing much has changed in this respect. Modern-day wineries continue to be excuses for grand exercises of architectural aesthetics and vision in both the New World and the Old. Take, for example, one of the more minimalist designs from Wiroa Station Wine Cellar in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Concentrated on seamless invisibility, the tasting room backs out onto a crystalline bay interspersed with lone islands from an undercut in a hill. Essentially, the winery is built into the island. Hardly the big, bold and brash of the Old World but certainly maintaining, if not creating, the most modern atmosphere for drinking wine.

Whether it is a bicycle ride through the rolling hills of Burgenland- Austria, a vespa trip into Tuscany- Italy or quad biking in America's Napa Valley, the opportunity to see a hugely diverse amalgamation of natural and inanimate beauty is there.

Or, of course, you could just march straight in with a T-shirt in blurred lettering stating 'Where the wine at!'

For more information about wine join our wine classes at That Little Wine Bar, 54 Chow Thye Road, George Town, Penang

Email info@thatlittlewinebar.com for details