

The image shows a modern architectural structure, likely a winery, with a wide, flat wooden roof and large glass walls. The building is situated on a paved terrace overlooking a vast landscape of rolling hills and vineyards. In the background, there are mountains under a clear blue sky. The overall aesthetic is clean and minimalist, emphasizing the connection between the building and the natural environment.

THE NEW ARCHITECTURE OF WINE

25 SPECTACULAR CALIFORNIA WINERIES

HEATHER SANDY HEBERT



QUINTESSA PAVILIONS

VALERIA'S VISION

LOCATION: **ST. HELENA**

ARCHITECTURE: **WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS**

For Agustin Huneeus Sr. and his wife, Valeria, Quintessa is the culmination of a lifetime dedicated to wine. The property that would become Quintessa—a self-contained property that feels a world apart—was one of the last great unplanted properties in the Napa Valley, a land of forested hills and verdant valleys within the nearly flat expanse of land. Agustin Sr. puts it succinctly: “This special property seemed to be waiting for us to fulfill its destiny.”

Before establishing Quintessa, Agustin devoted his entire professional life to winemaking, first in his native Chile, then as the head of worldwide operations for Seagrams, and later as the owner of numerous Napa Valley wineries. Valeria, a microbiologist and enologist who worked as a viticulturist in the Southern Hemisphere and later earned a degree in biochemistry, is an avid proponent of sustainable agriculture.

By all accounts, it was Valeria's perseverance and vision that enabled the couple to purchase the 280-acre property in 1989, when many before them had failed. The site is a tapestry of hills and swales, with a central lake that attracts a multitude of wildlife and birds. Valeria designed the vineyards and defined the approach to the land, planting forty

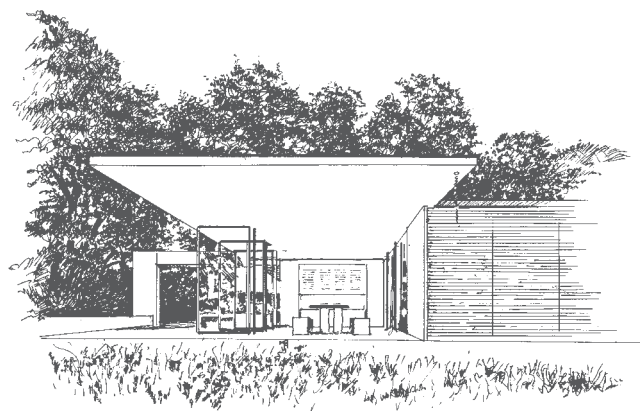
small, sustainably farmed vineyard blocks in harmony with the varied topography.

The couple chose San Francisco-based Walker Warner Architects to plan the property and design the original winery. Though well known for its masterful residences, Walker Warner had never designed a winery, but their clients were unfazed. The firm had shown an affinity for the needs of the land and place that spoke to them. Carved into the hillside, and practically sited to save the best land for the vines, the original winery has garnered media attention and design awards for over a decade—its simple, organic beauty a hallmark of a new era of winery design in California. So, when the couple wanted to expand the visitor experience, they turned again to the team at Walker Warner, led by Greg Warner and Mike McCabe. Together they explored ways to expand the existing winery, but, in the end, prompted by the couple's wish to provide visitors with a deeper connection to the land, the architects took the experience outside.

It had long been the senior Agustin's custom to walk visitors through the vineyards, a journey that often took them up the hill above the winery via a pathway lined with oaks to the ridgeline, where



Set within a landscape of native oaks, the indoor-outdoor wine tasting experience at the Quintessa Pavilions is quintessentially California.



they could survey the undulations of the property. As Greg and Mike describe it, their job was to define the patriarch's walk with architecture.

Their solution took the form of three small, nearly transparent boxes—each only 250 square feet but surrounded by nearly 400 square feet of terrace—that nearly disappear into the landscape. Although they are nearly identical, each was specifically sited to maximize views and minimize disturbance of the native oaks. Slight variations in design and differing orientations make each pavilion experience unique.

Solid rear walls, rendered in highly textured board-formed concrete, block the pavilions from view until the very last moment. Entering through a small portal in the concrete wall, guests are immediately initiated into the full grandeur of the view, reinforcing the sense of discovery and connection with the land. Mike McCabe describes the experience as almost spiritual.

Slight in their dimensions, and restrained in palette, the pavilions belie the amount of thought that went into them. In a perfect marriage of simple lines, each element unfolds to either provide shelter from, or welcome in, the elements. Impossibly slim 2-inch-square columns hidden within the door frames are nearly invisible yet support the flat roofs that cantilever out over the terraces to provide shelter from the elements. The architects describe the pavilions as “Swiss Army knives of buildings,” designed with precision to include everything they need and absolutely nothing they don’t.

Though thoroughly contemporary, the pavilions incorporate subtle references to agrarian tradition, most notably in the massive slatted doors that slide open or closed across the 14 by 9-foot expanses of glass. The tonality and materials—glass and steel, roughly rendered board-formed concrete, and Napa Syre stone and natural wood—are driven by the terroir and impart a sense of refined rusticity. Materials and furnishings are spare and subtle. Sinker cypress derived from logs reclaimed from river bottoms lines the ceilings and defines the casework. Simple tables and accompanying benches are hewn from Aframosia, an African teak certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Landscaping is limited to drought-resistant native grasses.

With the new pavilions, Walker Warner has created a deeper connection between the winery and the guest, providing a journey through the land that means so much to the couple, who have poured their heart and soul into the land. The design of the pavilions carries on the tradition of stewardship that began when Valeria first planted vines here. Although she is no longer in the fields every day, she remains Quintessa’s vineyard master. This property is her vision.



PREVIOUS OVERLEAF: Carefully sited amid the oak trees, the three diminutive structures that comprise the Quintessa Pavilions are nearly invisible from the opposite hillside.

ABOVE: Though thoroughly contemporary, the pavilions incorporate subtle references to agrarian tradition, most notably in the massive slatted doors that slide open or closed across the 14- by 9-foot expanses of glass.

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BELOW: The huge slatted screens, which can be slid open or closed, create a striated pattern on the pavilion wall.

OPPOSITE: There is a sense of luxury in the sparseness of the architecture and in the way each pavilion feels completely private, as if it were sitting all alone on the ridge.



THE TEAMS

RAM’S GATE

LOCATION:
CARNEROS

ARCHITECTURE:
BACKEN & GILLAM ARCHITECTS / BGARCH.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN:
ORLANDO DIAZ-AZCUY / ODADA.NET

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
CLAUDIA SCHMIDT LANDSCAPE DESIGN /
CLAUDIASCHMIDTLANDSCAPE.COM

CONSTRUCTION:
LEDCOR GROUP / LEDCOR.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY:
ADRIAN GREGORUTTI / GREGOPHOTO.COM

DAVIS ESTATES

LOCATION:
CARNEROS

ARCHITECTURE:
BACKEN & GILLAM ARCHITECTS / BGARCH.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN:
ORLANDO DIAZ-AZCUY / ODADA.NET

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
CLAUDIA SCHMIDT LANDSCAPE DESIGN /
CLAUDIASCHMIDTLANDSCAPE.COM

CONSTRUCTION:
LEDCOR GROUP / LEDCOR.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY:
ADRIAN GREGORUTTI / GREGOPHOTO.COM

TRINCHERO NAPA VALLEY

LOCATION:
ST. HELENA

ARCHITECTURE:
BAR ARCHITECTS / BARARCH.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN:
ERIN MARTIN DESIGN / ERINMARTINDESIGN.COM

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
SURFACE DESIGN / SURFACEDESIGN.COM

CONSTRUCTION:
FACILITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY / FDC-COMP.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY:
MICHAEL

MACROSTIE WINERY

LOCATION:
HEALDSBURG

ARCHITECTURE:
GOULD EVANS / GOULDEVANS.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN:
GRANT K. GIBSON / GRANTKGIBSON.COM

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
ROCHE + ROCHE / ROCHEANDROCHE.COM

CONSTRUCTION:
WRIGHT CONTRACTING / WRIGHTCONTRACTING.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY:
BRUCE DAMONTE / BRUCEDAMONTE.COM

MELKA ESTATES

LOCATION:
ST. HELENA

ARCHITECTURE:
SIGNUM ARCHITECTURE / SIGNUMARCHITECTURE.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN:
CHERIE MELKA / WITH SIGNUM ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
BLASEN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE /
BLASENGARDENS.COM

CONSTRUCTION:
JASON HALL CONSTRUCTION INC

PHOTOGRAPHY:
ADRIAN GREGORUTTI / GREGOPHOTO.COM

QUINTESSA PAVILIONS

LOCATION:
ST. HELENA

ARCHITECTURE:
WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS / WALKERWARNER.COM

INTERIOR DESIGN:
MACA HUNEEUS DESIGN / MACAHUNEEUS.COM

LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
LUTSKO ASSOCIATES / LUTSKOASSOCIATES.COM

CONSTRUCTION:
CELLO & MAUDRU CONTRACTORS /
CELLO-MAUDRU.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY:
MATTHEW MILLMAN / MATTHEWMILLMAN.COM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

HEATHER SANDY HEBERT has spent her life immersed in literature, design, and wine. Raised in Marin County, at the southern edge of the wine country, she studied both literature and design and earned an MBA along the way. She spent over 25 years directing marketing for the San Francisco–based architecture firm founded by her father, Donald Sandy, FAIA. Throughout those years, she guided the firm’s marketing and brand identity and wrote about the firm’s multitude of projects, a great many of them in hospitality and wine. She left the firm in 2017 to pursue her love of storytelling and now works with numerous design, hospitality, and winery clients large and small to help them develop and convey their stories. *The New Architecture of Wine* is her first book. Heather lives in Marin County, California, with her husband and four children.

