

EPILOGUE OF EARTH

«The earth's surface is yielding; things can sink through and permeate it. It can be sculpted, divided, and redistributed at our will. Humans make a habit of digging below, to bury, discover, examine, or extract.»
Acts of Revealing: Nobuo Sekine's Phase - Mother Earth
by Bernadette Klavins

A simple expression of tribute and adaptation. The building is conceived as a timeless sculpture, nestled into the clay-limestone soil terrain from where it was derived.

The excavated area is compacted and remains offset to the pavilion's boundary wall, both respecting one another. The adapted soil is converted into dry earth blocks of unique dimensions that is, quite literally, used as the sole building block of the entire room. This single earth block offers high thermal and acoustic insulation sheltering guests as well as the stored wines from harsh weather conditions. The multiple blocks laying orientations allow it to serve as external walls, flooring, internal partitions, wine storage, furniture to sit guests indoor as well as atop.

The choice of prefabricated earth blocks, as opposed to typical rammed earth construction, ensures quality control and reduces execution time, specialized labor, and equipment. The pavilion orientation was vital, transversely placed in response to the vineyards' -270degree views, enabling guests to enjoy the different views while taking advantage of optimal sun orientation.

The experience begins meters away from the almost invisible build - approaching the wine tasting room from the South East - the roof peaks out subtly by no more than half a meter, respecting the original site views. A slim iron cast slab bridges the flat land to the room's rooftop that would be utilized during the cooler days. The roof thick low wall doubles as a parapet at the borders as well as a communal seating table gathering guests around a linear skylight allowing sharp natural light to puncture through the tasting room.

Guests commence their journey by descending a deep cut stairwell, which exposes an excavated 3.6 meter of raw compacted earth layers. A narrow front yard invites them to pause and observe the duel between the raw, exposed earth walls and the adapted compacted earth blocks used to build the room.

A simple symmetrical approach was taken when it came to form and spatial finding. It conveys feelings of purity, balance, and, most importantly, invites guests and sommeliers to unwind and contemplate prior to a wine tasting session.

Guests are welcomed by two opposing austere monolithic volumes that mark the narrow entrance, which house a washroom and storage room. One may choose one of three paths, the left or right that leads one to the respective sides of the communal table or may continue straight in between the two lower walls, exhibiting up to 120 bottles of wine horizontally in punctured clay blocks. As one moves forward, the room's longitudinal form becomes apparent, creating a dialogue with the horizontal landscapes. Extending from the exhibition wall, lies an interpretation of a communal table. Contrary to a standard table depth, typically at 700mm, the table is split into two 350mm deep tables, allowing enough space to place belongings and enjoy the wine. Guests on the other side are close enough to share dialogue but far enough to enable a sommelier to circulate comfortably in between. This gesture was also essential to allow versatility of interaction where guests may move their seats to the other side of the table and face the view. The table's base is a simple extrusion of the floor; 2 earth blocks stacked as legs - every 600mm - allowing each guest to sit comfortably. The room's surroundings unfold cinematically through teak framed wall-sized expanses of sliding glass on the three sides, which further slide to facilitate an open air space.

The cycle of life narrative is told through the journey.
The origin of the clay, its use, and once the time arrives, the building is predominantly absorbed back into the earth.

