

EASTSIDE,

TASTEFUL

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NOVELTY HILL JANUIK WINERY

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A photograph of a modern winery building at dusk. The building features large glass windows and a wooden facade. In the foreground, there is a large, rectangular fire pit with a bright fire burning inside. The sky is a mix of blue and orange from the setting sun.

ART

EAST MEETS WEST AT WOODINVILLE WINERY

BY KATY KHAKEPOUR
PHOTOS BY JEFF HOBSON

BUILT ON THE SITE OF AN ABANDONED HOUSE, STABLE AND PASTURE, THE NOVELTY HILL AND JANUIK WINERIES IN WOODINVILLE COMBINE THE OLD WORLD WITH THE NEW, AND BRING THE OUTDOORS IN. WHILE TOURING THE SCENIC WINE COUNTRY OF WOODINVILLE, TAKE A SHARP RIGHT TURN AFTER CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE, AND YOU WILL STUMBLE UPON THE NOVELTY HILL-JANUIK WINERY, ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND THOUGHTFUL WINERIES THIS SIDE OF ITALY. >>



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NOVELTY HILL JANUIK WINERY



« Designed by a gifted team of six from Seattle-based Mithun (pronounced Methuen), a sustainable design firm, the Novelty Hill-Januik Winery is a showcase of nature and machinery.

The project began in 2005. Ground breaking was in April 2006, and the winery opened its doors last June. It was a crowning achievement for Tom Alberg and his wife, Judi Beck, owners of Novelty Hill Winery, and for Mike Januik, winemaker for Novelty Hill and winemaker/owner of Januik Winery.

"Even before we started talking about architecture, we just talked with Mike and the other owners finding more about what was important to them," explains Susan McNabb of Mithun, the lead architect for the project. "We really wanted to create a place that described who they were and what they were about and their brands were about."

"The owners had said that they were interested in creating a place that really had a connection to the outside as well as a connection to production," McNabb says. "So everything is very transparent so that there was a connection between tasting the wine and seeing production and being able to see outside."

If the winery says anything about the winemaker and owners, it's that they are open and inviting. Standing just inside the front doors, a visitor can peer into the fermenting rooms on the left and through the tasting rooms on the right to the garden area outside.

"(The owners) wanted a place where someone could, with ease, run in and grab a bottle of wine for dinner and head off – but also a place where you could stay and wander around and have your glass of wine and kind of explore," McNabb says.

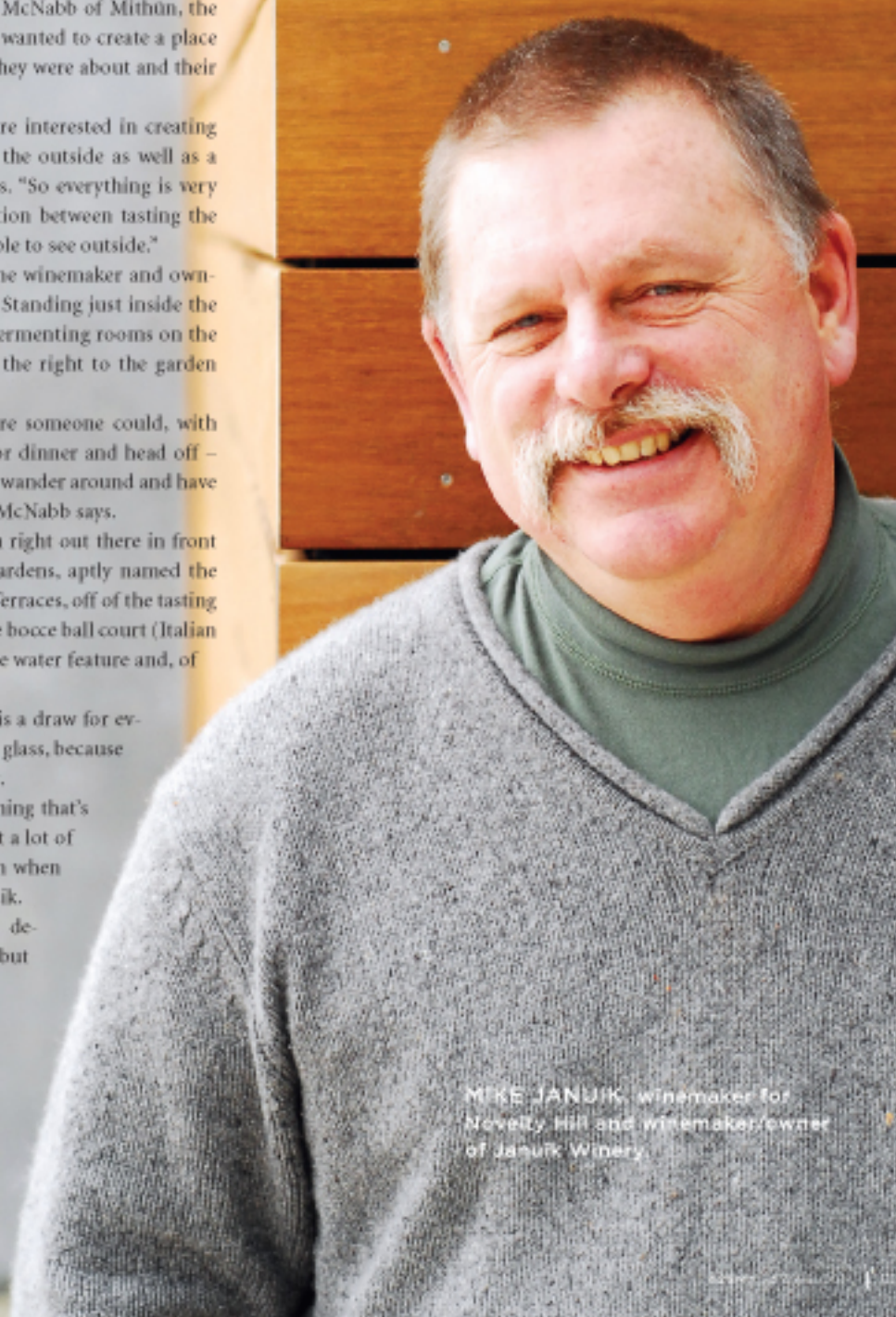
And while everything is pretty much right out there in front of you, there's plenty to explore. The gardens, aptly named the Shade Terrace and the Sun and Wetland Terraces, off of the tasting rooms, have interesting touches, from the bocce ball court (Italian lawn bowling) to the native plantings, the water feature and, of course, the fabulously linear fireplace.

With its long, fire line, the fireplace is a draw for everyone; however, watch out for the safety glass, because even though it looks like ice, it's very hot.

"From a practical perspective, one thing that's nice about the fireplace is that it puts out a lot of heat, so you can stay pretty toasty-warm when you're out here in the evening," says Januik.

The water feature could easily be described as a single-lane swimming pool but with a depth comparable to >>

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MIKE JANUIK, winemaker for Novelty Hill and winemaker/owner of Januik Winery.



SCOTT MOELLER, winemaker.

« a wading pool. This water feature ties together old and new with basalt rock from Stillwater Creek, the vineyard in Eastern Washington owned by Alberg and Beck, where the Novelty Hill and Januik wine grapes are grown.

"We even brought (the basalt rocks) over in picking bins – bins that we brought our grapes over in," says Januik.

"We noticed right away that this site had the same slope as the vineyard itself," says McNabb.

"It was another opportunity to tie the wine back to where the grapes are from and the earth and we created a series of terraces once again to create difference experiences.

"We chose materials that reflected the light colors of Eastern Washington up here (the Shade Terrace) and as you get down here (the Sun and Wetland Terraces) the richer, darker colors of Western Washington," McNabb explained. "We really wanted to maintain that tie."

The backdrop of the gardens is a fascinating combination of lpe wood and brightly colored opaque acrylic walls that are reminiscent of a Japanese shoji screen. "It's nice out here in the evening, partly because these are back lit ... and you see the silhouettes of all these trees through it," says Januik. "It has an Asian feel."

The foliage continues the trend of both sides of the state, highlighted by the charming red-twig dogwood plants. "These maintain a color throughout the year," says McNabb. "We wanted to make sure there's a very seasonal rhythm to this project just like there is in the craft of wine makers."

That trend continues back on the inside of the building with the various party rooms for classes and events. The two terrace rooms strike a balance between the great outdoors and the winemaking facilities, while the Tree House Room >>



The fermentation rooms were built into the hillside, taking advantage of the natural cooling from the earth

« tips its cap to both high-tech and rustic innovations, and finally the Cellar Room with velvet-covered chairs and the wineries' private library looks like a medieval board room.

Given Mithun's eco-friendly business practices, the fermentation rooms, along with the bottling and shipping rooms were made to save the winery money.

"We built (the fermentation rooms) into the hillside, therefore using a lot of the natural cooling properties of the earth and therefore saving them a lot of costs on cooling," McNabb says.

Additionally the rooms where the wines are bottled and packed – it's rare for a winery to have its own bottling line – have natural lighting, so there are days when the light switches don't even have to be thrown.

This thread that is woven throughout the entire facility with the genteel use of concrete, wood, stainless steel and glass forever makes you feel as though you are outdoors while you are still inside.

And all with the thought of wine making, which is truly a craft of both art and science. "First and foremost we wanted to create the best place for Mike and the owners," says McNabb.

"That's really paramount – a place where they can work and do everything they need to do and make really high quality wine and be a great place for people to visit and explore – a place that really matches that quality of wine," McNabb said.

"This is a quality wine, (the facility) has to be a really quality place. All of those details do matter." ■■■

Katy Khakpour is a Seattle-based freelance writer.



Tours & Tastings:

Novelty Hill-Jenuik Winery
14710 Woodinville-Redmond
Road, Woodinville. Daily
tastings, cooking and wine
appreciation classes and
winemaker dinners are often
hosted. Details: 425.481.5502
and noveltyhilljenuik.com.