

# A GALLERY OF WONDERS

THE CREATIVE  
SENSIBILITY OF  
**CA' DEL BOSCO** IS ON  
FULL DISPLAY IN THE NEW  
ADDITIONS TO ITS WINERY

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This corridor leads to the aging cellars  
for Cuvée Prestige.



This chamber is designed to resemble an inverted bottle of Ca' del Bosco Cuvée Prestige.

**If you've ever visited** the Ca' del Bosco winery in Italy's Franciacorta region, met its founder and family proprietor Maurizio Zanella, or even just scrolled through its website, you have an idea of how winemaking is regarded as an art form at this green oasis in the outskirts of Brescia.

When I heard that Ca' del Bosco was expanding its cellar and creating a new visitor's area, I suspected it would somehow reflect that vision. But despite the best efforts of Ca' del Bosco's U.S. importer, Santa Margherita USA, to describe it, I had only a vague idea of what to expect. Since I happened to be in Italy in June, I decided to go see it for myself.

To call this new addition a tasting room is like describing the White House as an office building. I expected to find touches of Zanella's flair here; little did I know how much he would infuse his personality into the space, outdoing himself yet again.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. The new space is not a standalone project but rather an extension and elevation of everything Ca' del Bosco stands for, and given that context, the pure innovation and creativity of it all is hardly surprising.

The first hint of Zanella's and Ca' del Bosco's style lies at the gates of the property; in fact, it is the gate itself. The gleaming, massive bronze sculpture Cancelli Solare is over 16 feet in diameter and weighs in at 3 tons; completed in 1987 by Arnaldo Pomodoro, it was commissioned by Zanella to represent the sun that nourishes his vineyards. When its two semicircles with arrow-like rays swing slowly open, the visitor enters a place devoted to honoring the rapport between wine and art.

As you drive toward the winery, a legion of bright blue wolves can be seen on the roof; called The Blue Guardians, they were made in 2010 by the Cracking Art group in response to

Zanella's request for an animal sculpture that would blend perfectly into the setting of vineyards and woodlands while simultaneously departing from the natural colors of the surrounding environment.

The walkway leading to the main entrance features yet another striking work, the Eroi di Luce, made in 1991 by Igor Mitoraj, known for his sculptures of fragmented human figures. Standing out against the blue sky and green vineyards, its white marble offers an unmistakable glimpse of the evocative face of Michelangelo's David from the cheekbones down to the neck; as Mitoraj describes it, "the unseen part is much more important."

Walking into the winery, you might be temporarily distracted from the bright stainless-steel fermenters by the huge rhinoceros sculpture suspended above: Il Peso del Tempo Sospeso, made by Stefano Bombardieri in 2003. The animal, symbolizing vitality



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and energy, is harnessed in the air to invoke the weight of time in suspension. Further in, another suspended sculpture, *Water in Dripping* by Zheng Lu (2016), depicts a splash of water in dimly lit silver. There are several other, similarly provocative pieces around the property.

Entering the barrel cellars, you'll spy the new *vinoteca* (wine cellar) down the hallway, where library vintages will be stored and made available for tasting. Steps away is the Ludoscope, the latest in a series of domes at the winery that are centered over well-like structures. Using neon lights and mirrors, it alters the geometric form of the well to give the impression of infinity.

In the Cupola dei Sensi, a quartet of side rooms is dedicated to four of the five senses (the fifth being taste, which is explored later in the tour). The tactile room presents the stony soil of the estate that visitors can touch, while the chamber of sound amplifies noises like the clip-clip of people harvesting; the act of *remuage* as bottles are turned in the *pupitre*; sparkling wine being

poured into a glass; and perlage as it rises up the bowl of a wine glass. Visual images are evoked next, depicting wine, tartrates, cork, and soil as viewed under a microscope. The final sense addressed is smell; this chamber holds four glass vessels, one with the final aroma of Ca' del Bosco Saten, a bottle-fermented blend of 85% Chardonnay and 15% Pinot Bianco. Preceding it are the wine's primary aromas: flowers and citrus; ripe fruits like pear and peach; and tertiary aromas such as spices, chocolate, and coffee. The aromas are released by lifting the glass dome covering each vase.

The denouement of the experience involves the simulated experience of entering an oversized, inverted bottle of Ca' del Bosco Cuvée Prestige in a chamber whose walls are made up of backlit punts of sparkling wine bottles. Upon entry, the stainless-steel platform becomes a slowly descend-



ing elevator—reminiscent of the repulsorpods in the Galactic Senate from *Star Wars* (IYKYK)—that transports you to the aging cellars for Cuvée Prestige, highlighted by a seemingly infinite corridor of bottles backlit to show off their golden color. The winery uses sodium-vapor lamps so the wine is not exposed to heat or strong LED light.

PR account Monica Faletti revealed that storage was the main reason for the new space, but somebody like Maurizio Zanella does not build a simple storage facility. The new cellar, which holds up to 4 million bottles, is a fitting way to communicate the Ca' del Bosco message and Zanella's passion. It is a perfect model of immersive art in perfect harmony with its environment. 

