

# WA design firm builds castle for Sir Cliff

Anita Donaldson

When Mitch Hayhow set off to Portugal for a well-earned holiday in October 2001, he had little intention of even thinking about work, let alone creating another job for himself. And he certainly wasn't thinking about rubbing shoulders with rock stars.

Little did he know what was just around the corner.

Hayhow, managing director of Western Australian-based winery design and project management company Castle Rock Logistics, was visiting Portugal soaking up the sun and surf whilst girlfriend Amanda Kramer (now winemaker with Margaret River's Wise Wines) completed a short stint at Esporao in the Alentejo region of Portugal. Esporao is headed by Australian winemaker David Baverstock.

Here the story gets a little complicated, but essentially, through Kramer's Esporao connections, Hayhow was introduced to Nigel and Max Birch. The Birch family relocated to Portugal from England in the 1960s and has successfully operated several restaurants in Portugal, dabbled in avocado plantations and more recently, become involved in grapegrowing.

The Birch family has long been acquainted with legendary British rocker, Sir Cliff Richard, and the family is now a partner in Sir Cliff's vineyard and winery 'Adega do Miradouro' (Winery at Miradouro), in the Algarve region of Portugal.

Sir Cliff has owned his Algarve property for more than 30 years and has gradually restored the 300-year-old house and surrounds in authentic Portuguese architectural style.

Several years ago, Sir Cliff learned that the property was once dominated with grapevines and became inspired to restore it to its former self.

There has always been, and continues to be, a strong Australian influence in Adega do Miradouro. Australian viticultural consultant Dr Richard Smart was enlisted by Sir Cliff to assess the feasibility of the vineyard project and advise on appropriate grape varieties. Then, when the fruit of the first vines was ready to be processed, Baverstock was enlisted as consultant winemaker for fruit that was processed off-site.

Baverstock, the Birches and Sir Cliff were considering setting up a winery, all at about the same time Mitch Hayhow was relaxing on a Portuguese beach.

Hayhow takes up the story.

"During conversation with Nigel and Max Birch, I accepted their invitation to inspect the site for the proposed future winery," he said.

"Shortly after Amanda and I returned to Margaret River, David Baverstock and his co-winemaker, Luis Duarte from Esporao, visited Western Australia and took the opportunity to review a portfolio of Castle Rock Logistics' completed projects.

"I guess it's fair to say they were impressed enough to refer their positive recommendations to Sir Cliff and the Birch family.

"I think being an Australian also helped as there had been a strong Aussie influence on Sir Cliff's property to date through Dr Smart and through David Baverstock.

"He (David) certainly welcomed the idea of working with other Australians to build and establish the winery.



Sir Cliff Richard with managing director of Castle Rock Logistics, Mitch Hayhow.

"After I'd visited the site in Portugal, then seen David in WA for more discussions, we put together our proposal for design and project management for the new winery, and when this was accepted we commenced preliminary design on Adega do Miradouro in early 2003."

## The design and management process

Thanks to the wonders of modern technology, Castle Rock Logistics was able to complete the design process from its head office in Dunsborough near the Margaret River wine region.

"We did take several trips to Portugal during the project for design review sessions, value management studies and then during the implementation stage," Hayhow said.

The design brief was broad: to build a 100-tonne winery with capacity for expansion to 300-tonnes.

With partner and co-founder Sean McGarry, Castle Rock Logistics designed a winery that incorporates a combination of traditional elements and modern winemaking systems.

"The whole philosophy of the design is for gentle handling of the fruit, which gives the winemaker more options in winemaking style. This is consistent through the gentle nature in which the winery picks and processes its fruit," Hayhow said.

"The winery features a combination of static tank-style fermenters and open fermenters. Pumping over is done on the statics while mechanical plunging is done on the opens using our own innovative system." ▶

## GLD

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Tanks in the storage area.



The patented mechanical plunger.

## Wired for wine success

While the Castle Rock Logistics-designed winery has come through its first vintage with flying colours, Sir Cliff has also received accolades for his wines, according to the following report by Reuters from August 2002, 'Cliff Richard hits the spot with Vida Nova.'

*British pop legend Cliff Richard's latest offering called Vida Nova is going down very well with his legion of fans. But Vida Nova is no song - rather a fine red wine from the singer's vineyards near Albufeira in the Algarve region of Portugal.*

*The wine has become the fastest-ever seller on Tesco.com, the Internet shopping arm of the supermarket giant, and was sold out within 24 hours.*

*"The response is absolutely staggering. We could have sold the wine ten times over," said Carolyn Bradley of Tesco.com in a statement.*

*That the wine, which means New Life and went on sale two days ago, has proved so popular is no surprise to the crooner's army of loyal fans.*

*"It just goes to prove that Cliff Richard can outsell anyone, be it records, concert tickets or wine," said Carol Hall, president of Cliff Guaranteed Fan Club.*

Castle Rock Logistics has patented its own mechanical plunger design which incorporates a mechanical and pneumatic action with a unique cross-foot to plunge gently through the entire cap. Hayhow says three to four plunges per session is sufficient to completely wet and turn the cap.

"The plunger is also considered to be excellent for gentle extraction of fruit flavours without over-extraction of phenolic characters. The single plunger unit is mounted on a simple monorail beam to service multiple fermenters," he said.

The tanks, fermenters and structural steel were fabricated by a Portuguese company located in Porto. The press, crusher and must pump was supplied from Vaslin Bucher France while mechanical and electrical services contracts were carried out by local Algarve firms. A small amount of equipment was shipped from Australia including the tube-in-tube heat exchanger and the temperature control system.

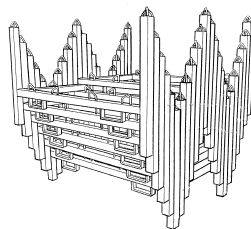
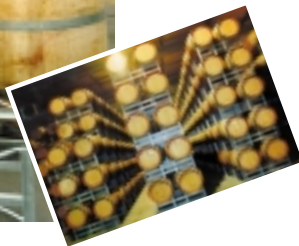
Adega do Miradouro's design incorporates gravity discharge of skins direct to basket press.

The basket press is one of a sophisticated new range made by JLB, a subsidiary of Vaslin Bucher. The press is constructed in stainless steel and features innovations such as water as the hydraulic medium in lieu of oil. This eliminates the risk of oil contaminants in the wine.

According to Hayhow, the extraction rates verses the press cycle times have been surprisingly good with the JLB press. ▶

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## winery design



And with one vintage under the new winery's belt, Mitch Hayhow says his latest boss has been "down to earth" and surprisingly "hands-on" in the vineyard and winery production.

"Sir Cliff spent a considerable amount of time at the winery both prior to, and during the 2003 harvest," he said.

"He's very passionate about his wine and excited about the new winery. He was actively involved in vintage 2003, plunging the cap and digging out fermenters.

"We know he's very proud of the finished winery - giving tours to his VIP guests. But I guess equally important from Castle Rock Logistics' perspective as the project manager, we know his accountants and managers are pleased the winery was constructed on time, and to budget!" Hayhow said.

*Castle Rock Logistics caters exclusively for clients who wish to develop wineries and associated facilities. The company services both domestic and international clients and has current projects in mainland Italy, Sicily and Portugal. For further information, contact Mitch Hayhow or Sean McGarry on (08) 9759 1888 or email: [inquiries@castlerocklogistics.com.au](mailto:inquiries@castlerocklogistics.com.au)*

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