

**Winery VV for Vinetiq | VINCENT VAN DUYSSEN ARCHITECTS**  
Lizele - Puurs, Belgium

2020

Lizele, a small hamlet 30 minutes south of Antwerp, is a fertile area where small agricultural farmsteads are traditionally growing asparagus, where green fields, small streams, aligned with rows of willow- or poplar trees are defining the structure and mood of this beautiful rural Flemish landscape.

“Valcke Vleug”, the small stream/brook dividing and giving name to the **VV** winery, is “the flight of the Falcons” in old days typical birds in the area, an illustration of the rich natural beauty, an illustration of the character of the place. It’s this character on this specific location, close to the owners house, that starts the building of ‘a once in a lifetime project’ : an hedonistic estate that allows to grow 4,2 hectares of cool climate wines , to enjoy horse-riding in nature and enjoy life and culture in all its aspects with family and friends.

The architecture by Vincent Van Duysen is embedded in the same tradition of Flemish Farmsteads, archetypical in its form and sturdy functional in its setting, the same building elements were part of the demolished asparagus farm on the site, but also have been an integral part of the rural heritage for centuries before. The horizontal grand barn, typical for the traditional farm buildings is now combined with a small but vertical modern farmhouse and together they create a new hierarchy which dialogues with the strong horizontal lines in the open landscape.

The barn and the tower are the protagonists of the place and are defining, together with 4 massive concrete volumes, the central court, the heart of the winery, where all activity of Valcke Vleug Estate finds place. An open air empty square that gives hierarchy and organizes the farm , a place to gather the grapes during harvest or linking the wine tasting functions with the natural surroundings, the core of the project that allows for events or for quiet moments when the farmer, after a hard day at work, enjoys sunset when resting on the long wooden bench.

The benches, designed by Daniel De Belder, are part of embedding the grand architectural volumes to the human scale, even if the benches are sometimes 8 meters long, they feel in proportion and are creating ‘moments’ in the overall architectural project where the hedonistic, yet sober experience is taking over. It seems that the massive wooden elements of De Belder work together with the architectural volumes of Van Duysen to maximize the experience of the visitor towards the landscape, to link the buildings position to the Valcke Vleug stream and to relate the old magnificent oak close to the house, to organize the orientation towards the best sunset views etc. ... but as a matter of fact, it is the other way around, the project embeds to the natural beauty and by adding more than 50 newly planted poplar, willow, cherry and hazel trees it gives proof of the intention of the long-term integration of the new farm in its natural setting.

The color of the terroir, the soil of Valcke Vleug has inspired the selection of the lava stone soft scaping of the access roads and central court. This is an important aspect, the boarder between winery soil and functional soft scaping of the farm is invisible and the colortone continues into the concrete foundation, floors and walls. It seems that the architectural volume is part of its natural character of the soil (so important for the ‘terroir’ winemakers are referring to), it allows a continuation between the soil and the architectural, between the indoor and outdoor spaces, with only the metal clad black wooden roof structure above.

The same black colored wood of sustainable European Larch is used for the shutters of the barn and the cladding of the farm house. The black color refers to the “Flemish Barns” traditionally painted in coal tar to protect wooden structures for long time. A tradition of color that adds contrast to the green lush surroundings and giving the projects its sharp, edgy contemporary character.

The farm house and its private life is protected behind the concrete walls at the central court. The rooftop terrace gives a view on the far surroundings, overviews the farmstead activity and the winery beyond. This experience is in all rooms part of the private life, window bays give light and view, also at living room level where the ground floor is softly raised, just above 1 meter, to emphasize the experience of the owner, a long distance perspective on the strong horizontal landscape created by the 17.000 vines. This is an experience that relates the manmade farmland geometry with the beauty of the architectural form of volumes and into the sharp lines of its interiors.

The interior spaces are a continuity of the architectural language, the rough concrete floors are functional and yet warm sober at the same time, the open structural black wooden roof structures seem to merge into black wooden wall cladding, furniture and grand open fires, all elements creating spaces where wine tasting feels protected in an open shelter or where the wooden or stainless steel wine barrels are waiting for the next generation of Valcke Vleug wines to come.

TEKST Alessia .

Inspired by the atypical nature of the brief, Winery VV is a project that derives its individuality from its place and architecture. Located in the middle of the beautiful rural area of Flanders, old asparagus fields made place for the Valke Vleug Winery in Puurs, covering a vineyard of 17 000 vines. Respecting the Flemish tradition, Vincent Van Duysen Architects embedded the project in the existing landscape paying homage to the old agricultural buildings in the rural area of Klein Brabant. The design of wineries have received great architectural interest abroad, which in Belgium has still been exceptional so far. The project takes its name from the Valke Loop, a watercourse found on old registry plans as 'Valke Vleugel'.

The design approach reflects the concept of a traditional Flemish farmhouse, which forms an integral part of the rural heritage. By implementing volumes that forms a hierarchy in the existing open landscape, we have responded to the present horizontality and created a dialogue with the surrounding landscape. The main multipurpose building, the outbuildings for agricultural utilities and the house create a clear border around the courtyard – the heart of the winery - but the open side permits a connectedness to the surrounding nature.

Once entering the central courtyard through the passage of the main building, the viewer is alert to the coherence of the space and its configuration. A central courtyard covering in lava stone is formed, blurring the boundaries within the surrounding greenery. Protected by the functional buildings and monolithic concrete walls, the view opens up onto the vineyards, providing misty landscapes, sunrises, sunsets and the views on the undeveloped landscape.

The main building houses among others an area for the production of wine and a wine tasting space. The large sliding windows of the tasting area with its floor continuation blends in the extend of the outdoor terrace and the view on the landscape.

The main common factor of asparagus cultivation and viticulture is that both require linear plantings and ensure a horizontal image in the landscape. A tight flattened line in the landscape is present due to the uniform height of the vines and the long volume of the different barns. The horizontal character is interrupted by a dark wooden volume bringing verticality into the hierarchy of the different components. This results in a residence with a specific appearance and thus establishes a link with the stately connotations of a vineyard. The position of the old oak on the property provides a counterweight to the residential tower, providing shade to the horse slope and serving as a beacon for the vineyard.

A thorough approach with regard to details and purity of the materials strengthens the contemporary character of the architectural language. The foundation of the buildings is the brown-grey colour of the concrete which blends into the present earth tones. These elements provide a visual continuation between the indoor and outdoor spaces, creating blurred boundaries into the landscape. Making reference to the old barns, the dark wood contrasts with the landscape along with the use of the concrete.

It was vital to achieve a timeless but contemporary palette of materials, but it was also essential to attach importance to the ecological working method. The general sustainable approach is the basic design, investigating materials that would enhance the careful functionality of a vineyard. The structures are kept to a functional minimum, compromising with a durable yet powerful palette of materials. The concrete base is reusable, the pavement and heated zones are kept to an absolute minimum and all wood is sustainable. This palette of concrete, dark wood and lava stone is tempered by the surroundings – the green of the poplars and willow trees, the vines and the water feature.

From a distance the abstraction of the volumes is complete – but coming closer these shelter VVDA's first cool climate winery.