



GARDENS, ARCHITECTURE & ART

The Peju Province Estate

Approaching Peju Province Winery on Highway 29, the visitor is greeted from a distance by a row of unusually pruned 40-foot sycamore trees. After entering the winery's gate, the trees create a whimsical towering border on the vineyard's southern edge, giving a foretaste of the experience to come.

It is upon entering the grounds of Peju Province that the meaning behind the winery's name becomes apparent. Vineyards, landscaping, art and architecture seem to form a separate world, created by the Peju family. Tony Peju's background is in horticulture, having founded a successful nursery operation in Southern California in the 1970s.

Peju's interests are reflected everywhere in the property's design. Peju Province is an environment of impeccable lawns, immaculately pruned trees and a bounty of flowers. Mature perennials range everywhere; roses and dahlias mingling with other seasonal plantings of colorful annuals to create a dazzling and fragrant display. There is the man-made "Willow Creek" with its charming footbridge, a number of splashing fountains, and footpaths meandering throughout, leading the visitor from one idyllic vignette to the next. And in any one of these areas, visitors may find Mrs. Peju herself, digging in the soil to add colorful new plants or pruning showy roses.

A prominent feature of the gardens is the work of sculptor Welton Rotz. His large, flowing works interpret stories and deities of ancient Greek mythology in a thoroughly modern way. Graceful figures appear in relief, seeming to flow spontaneously from the deeply carved carrera marble. The sculptures are placed in the gardens in such a way as to make each feel perfectly matched to its setting, enhancing the gardens as much as they are enhanced by them.

The centerpiece of the Peju estate is the new tasting room, completed in the fall of 2003. Envisioned by Tony Peju even before he purchased the property, the 50 foot tower was designed by Southern California architect Calvin Straub in 1980-81, and its rendering has graced the label of every estate-bottled Peju wine. Resembling a French Provincial tower, the structure encloses 1600 square feet with mezzanine and is built from stucco and stone. Posts and beams are made of lumber salvaged from old Midwestern barns and the building's 10'x20' stained glass window was created in 1906. The building is topped with an elaborate copper roof, patinaed with a verdi gris finish of copper-green, creating a Napa Valley landmark to be enjoyed

for generations to come.

“We feel that the winery should be an expression of how we feel about our wines,” says Peju. “To make great wine is to take nature’s processes to their maximum and create from them a complete esthetic experience. Grapes will grow without our help and grape juice will ferment on its own, in unpredictable ways. But to take those natural processes and control them, steer them to their full potential, that is art whether it be in winemaking, sculpting or gardening.”

* * *