

E D I T I N T E R I O R D E S I G N

A R T /

THE ART SHOW CHANGING HOW WE BUY ART

UNUSUAL WAYS OF DISPLAYING YOUR COLLECTION

INSIDE THE HOME OF ARTIST ANNA-WILL HIGHFIELD

NEGOTIATING OPPOSING TASTES IN ART

#34 /



/ DESTINATION ART /

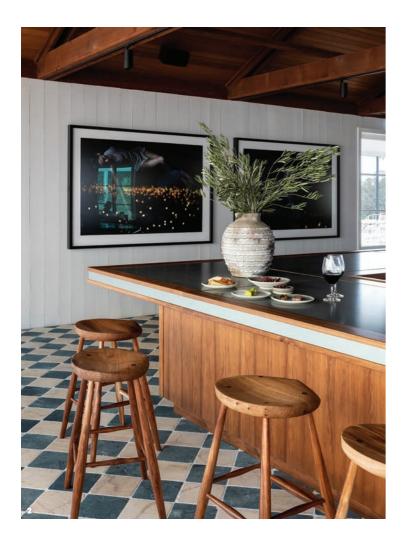
A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

A restored historic building on a Hunter Valley vineyard is brought to life by contemporary art. **Rose of Sharon Leake** writes.

A roll call of leading Australian contemporary photographic artists, the art collection at Mount Pleasant Wines seems almost out of place amidst the open-plan, laid back winery cellar door. Nestled within the Hunter region, the newly-reopened Mount Pleasant Wines pays tribute to its founding wine maker **Maurice O'Shea**, while showcasing an art collection worthy of international recognition. These bold conceptual works come from the vineyard owner's private collection (plus a few new additions), telling a story about the history of the site on which the vineyard stands, as well as a broader history of Australia – all from the perspective of contemporary artists deeply in tune with the context in which they work.

It was the job of curator **Jaklyn Babington**, who came from the role of Senior Curator of Contemporary Art Practice at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, to find a place for the 30 plus artworks (these being just a fraction of the owner, property magnate **Anthony Medich**'s collection) at Mount Pleasant Wines.

When I meet Babington at the cellar door and she guides me through the collection, I feel at ease. These conceptually rich artworks – some of which discuss complex issues around First Nations histories and culture – seem accessible to me. Amidst the warmhued timber-clad walls, stone floors, fireplace and leather furnishings, these works don't pressure me into feeling a forced sense of obligatory appreciation.







1 / In the cellar door hangs Rosemary Laing's groundspeed (Rose Petal) #15 and Hiromi Tango's Insonity Magnet #1 and Insanity Magnet #3.

2 & 4 / In the cellar door hangs Bill Henson's Untitled and Untitled #65, and Destiny Deacon's Under the Spell of the Tall Poppies.

3 / The white facade of Mount Pleasant Wines.

5 / In the cellar door hangs Petrina Hicks' *Venus* and *Serpentina I.*

6 / In the members Barn lounge hangs Rosemary Laing's groundspeed #1 and brumby mound #6. PHOTOS: TOM FERGUSON COURTESY: MOUNT PLEASANT WINES

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W: mountpleasant wines.com.au I: mountpleasant wines In this relaxed setting I can take my time to draw out from the works what I want, and to the extent to which I want. Babington tells me this was the overall aim of the collection at Mount Pleasant Wines: to subvert the unknown and make art a part of everyday encounters. As I wander through, works by **Destiny Deacon**, **Tracey Moffatt, Rosemary Laing, Petrina Hicks, Bill Henson, Shaun Gladwell, Angelica Mesiti, Hiromi Tango, Angela Tiatia, Garry Shead and Daniel Crooks** guide me along a journey of discovery – of identity, place and history. Each sparks an intellectual

conversation, charging the cellar door with a sense of vibrancy amid the wine tasters.

Sydney-based architecture and interior design firm Luchetti Krelle's revival of this historical homestead through a contemporary lens is what affords the art collection its chance to sing. With its crisp white façade and the full-bodied warmth of its interior where custom timber elements and furnishings convey a refined vintage splendour, Mount Pleasant Wines harmonises the site's history with its contemporary outlook. "We were tasked with extensively redesigning the winery's existing early nineties building to rid it of its appropriated colonial features (including its moulded external cladding and corrugated green roof)," write designers **Stuart Krelle** and **Rachel Luchetti**. "It was imperative that visitors felt as though they had arrived at a friend's country estate – one that they could move through freely."

Layering history with functionality and refined timeless design was a sentiment continued in Babington's curation of the art. In the members only Barn lounge and dining area she has hung Laing's series of landscape photographs, which engage with the politics of place and our contemporary cultural consciousness. Hanging upon sealed Oregon wall panels, the room becomes a forested extension of the works which feature Australian landscapes. Through to the cellar door, visitors are greeted with a carefully curated hang of works exploring identity in a multitude of ways. Deacon's Over the Fence leads to two works from Moffatt's Something More series, Hicks' highlyrefined commercial-like photographs, and a screen playing undoubtedly some of the highest regarded contemporary art video works of our time.

Of course, at a vineyard we mustn't forget about the purpose of this cellar door – the wine. Yet in my opinion, the vineyard's Old Hill Pinot Noir, Isabelle Rosé and Elizabeth Cellar Aged Semillon are decidedly improved by the cellar's remarkable art collection.

