

Barossa Glass – Honouring Heritage

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The AGGA SA Design Awards for the Best Use of Glass and Glazing Under \$50,000 Commercial was won by Barossa Glass in 2016, for their inventive redevelopment of the historic Seppeltsfield Winery's cellar door and restaurant. Jerome Semmler, General Manager of Barossa Glass, explains how his company handled this seamless union of heritage and innovation.

It all started when Bartsch Homes, the company chosen for the redevelopment, approached Barossa Glass to provide the glass balustrade and internal glass partition dividing the cellar door from the restaurant. 'The balustrade is a standout component of the restaurant's internal glazing and fitout,' says Jerome. 'We worked closely with the engineers to devise a solution that reflected the architect's original concept. As the winery was heritage-listed, we treated the project with great care.'

It was a complex brief. 'The architect envisaged a balustrade constructed from powder-coated 50mm x 12mm flat steel bar, with 10mm toughened clear glass infill supported by a U-channel on its top and bottom edges,' says Jerome. 'When this proved impractical, I proposed altering the design to a narrow 50mm x 20mm hollow steel section. This offered the same slimline effect, while concealing all fixings and providing a much neater, minimalist finish.'

Each steel section was fabricated in the Barossa Glass workshop, constructed from toughened glass to meet Australian Standards and customised to reflect the winery's varying dimensions and changing levels. 'We designed and prefabricated every balustrading panel, before powder-coating and assembling them neatly onsite,' Jerome recalls.



Yet installing the balustrade proved to be a complex process. 'The floor fixings for the balustrade were concealed under the French oak flooring, requiring modification during construction to spread the load over several floor joists,' Jerome explains. 'This allowed the balustrade to sit neatly on the edge of the mezzanine timber floor, with only a thin laser-cut dress ring at floor level.'

To respect the building's dual role as a restaurant and cellar door, Barossa Glass had to work creatively. 'Underneath the restaurant and cellar door sits several wax-lined concrete wine vats, now converted into a rustic underground dining area,' says Jerome. 'These have been divided with frameless floor-to-ceiling toughened glass partitions of very low light reflectance, acoustically isolating the dining area from the cellar door while maintaining a visual connection between the separate spaces. The partitions enclose a frameless hydraulic closing door, making the building's heritage visible while retaining its open interior feel.'

A section of the glazed partition flows on to meet a long feature fireplace, clad in recycled slate vat lids from Seppeltsfield Winery. 'The architect wanted a frameless glass gate to slide into a hidden cavity within the fireplace,' says Jerome. 'Height-adjustable bottom rollers with anti-derail safety features were used, resulting in a streamlined frameless look. All guides, stops and catches required to securely hold the gate in the open or closed position have been fully concealed.'

The timeline for this aspect of the project was extremely tight. 'This final partition section could only be measured after the fireplace cladding was installed, requiring an early morning trip to collect the 12mm toughened glass straight from their furnace and install it immediately prior to the opening lunch,' Jerome recalls. 'The winery management was very thankful for our dedication to realising these plans on schedule.'

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(Seppeltsfield Winery, continued)



The renovation's visual centrepiece is a striking glass-headed wine barrel with laser-cut logo, placing the vineyard's defining product on full display. 'The cooper approached us to assist with constructing a custom barrel to sit on the restaurant countertop,' explains Jerome. 'This unique barrel houses a sample of the vineyard's renowned fortified wine, showcasing its long tradition of wine tastings dating to 1878.'

Designing the composite barrel presented significant challenges. 'It had to be watertight without the use of sealant, so the timber had to be tightly compressed against the glass,' Jerome explains. 'We worked closely with the cooper during construction to make sure all components fitted together as snugly as possible. We precisely matched the profile of a timber barrelhead, then bevelled two 10mm glass circles to the correct thickness. This created a watertight seal when the hoops were pressed over the oak staves.'

For Jerome and Barossa Glass, receiving the award for this inventive work came as an unexpected surprise. 'One day, one of my suppliers suggested that the work we did on this project was worthy of the nomination,' he remembers. 'I was thrilled to make it into the finals, and even more honoured when our project won on the night.'

Multiple elements of the project have been acclaimed. 'We have received very positive feedback regarding our collaboration with Seppeltsfield Winery, and we're more than happy to show off our work to clients,' Jerome concludes. 'This was a detailed and demanding job, and we're very proud of the results.'

The Seppeltsfield Winery project is a perfect example of a glazing company showing respect for a heritage building while adding an inspiring modern twist. **GA**