

Eastern aspect of the mansion, after the first annexe (1879) but before the extension of 1906



designed with spiral staircases, sedilia and winding halls, which nowadays serve as conference rooms, administration quarters and offices. The cosy atmosphere created by warm-toned wood and an intriguing maze of rooms, but also by breathtaking views over the countryside, evokes associations with Wilhelm Hauff's or E.T.A. Hoffman's medieval fairy tales. Here in Kiedrich the rooms and tower rooms of the "Sage vom Hirschgülden" (The Legend of the Stag-Florin), the story of "Zwerg Nase" (The Dwarf Nose) or of "Der Goldene Topf" (The Golden Pot) seem close enough to touch.

The second annexe built in 1906 differs significantly from this picturesque part of the wine estate and represents a solemn and stern variation of historicism; nothing in that section of the building is cramped or interconnected, clear lines dominate. The connection between the annexe and the Tudor style part of the mansion is marked by an angular stair tower with a steep conical slate roof and weather vane. Attached to it and joined to the tower by a narrow transept is a rectangular administration building with a saddleback roof; the outer long side of its wall follows the course of the road and ends in lower outbuildings, while the front wall adjoins the main gate of the wine estate.

This ensemble evokes the Gothic style too. In particular the monumental stepped gable above the main entrance portal with its pointed arch gate and the courtyard facades with their massive, red sand stone corner ashlar and neo-gothic double and trefoil windows seem to be siblings of the gothic St Valentinus church and its annexes. But the abandonment of dainty details and introduction of functional plain outlines instead announces the arrival of Modernism, which twenty years later started its triumph as the so-called Neues Bauen, or Modern Architecture, in Germany.

The functionality of this annexe revealed what had been an important if not the most important, part of the architecture of the wine estate underground right from the beginning – the priority of winemaking. In other words: the new building of 1906 continues the functionality of the vast wine cellar and substructures of the estate above ground. Expanding to this day, they had their origins around the vaults of a central cellar, which is probably even older than the small winegrower's cottage which baronet Sutton had acquired in 1855. Two groined vaults represent the core part of that cellar. Next door stand, or to be more precise, lie the traditional wooden Stückfässer (large barrels holding 1200 litres) around an old red sandstone trough.

Western aspect of the mansion after the first annexe (1879) with adjoining buildings and ornamental garden



Around this central part the cellars of the following decades expanded like annual rings: first the precision-built brick arches and pillars of the 19th century, then the concrete structures with flat ceiling of the 20th century, and finally the latest buildings in which natural stone walls made from slate link up visitors' rooms and work areas.

In this underworld visitors played and still play an important but nevertheless secondary role. Its main purpose is wine production. And, if at times it wasn't about the processing of grapes and proper storage of the wine, then it was about building: the hillside position of the winery required and continues to require a vast amount of earth-works, excavations to considerable depths, massive retaining walls and continuous extensions (the most recent in 1991 and 2011). For a long time the full extent of architects' masterpieces created at this location were only seen by employees and selected customers of the wine estate. The reason that visitors who walk through this wine underworld are overwhelmed by amazement lies in the imposing structures – and not in tacky sceneries in the style of the Rüdesheim Drosselgasse: "For me it was crucial", Wilhelm Weil says, "never to slip into pseudo-romantic cellar atmosphere". However, by the time one enters the

central historical vaulted cellar, if not before, one cannot help but think of cosy ambience and the crazy wine ghosts Wilhelm Hauff mentions in his "Phantasien im Bremer Ratskeller" (Fantasies in the Bremen Ratskeller).

Despite all outward appearances to the contrary, a simple comparison of figures proves how important, indeed pivotal, the structures below and buildings above the ground are in terms of business: about 1,000 square meters of representation area compare with approximately 5,000 square meters of production area, which are divided into areas for grape delivery, pressing, collection tanks, fermentation cellars, bottle storage, as well as areas for bottling and labelling. The architecture of the wine estate clearly requires an appropriate balance between functionality and aesthetics and Wilhelm Weil is totally aware of this: "With regard to all the construction work I have been responsible for in the last 20 years, the extra aspects of functionality and clarity have been very important to me."

The many auxiliary buildings put up in the 30s and 50s were Wilhelm Weil's inspiration – simple rendered structures, which with their slate roof tiles as well as red sandstone window and door lintels and hence represent understated and unwavering