



A FRUITFUL CONCLUSION

“Success in any architectural endeavour is the result of a collaboration between the right group of people to help clients and communities realise their visions.”

EDWARD BILLSON, DIRECTOR, MAP ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING LTD

SPIRITED ENTERPRISE

Inspiration for the redevelopment and modernisation of this Chinese distillery was drawn from its own history

Preceding pages Designed by MAP Architecture and Planning, the new administration centre at the Wen Jun Distillery embodies the corporate mission of modernity and assurance.

These pages As part of the stage 1 redevelopment of the distillery site, MAP Architecture and Planning designed a new visitor centre and main boiler house. Both structures have been designed in accordance with traditional distillery building forms.

Sichuan Province in southwestern China has long been known for its favourable climate and geographical conditions. Both aspects are particularly suited to the manufacture of white spirits.

The province is home to a number of distilleries, including the Wen Jun Distillery, a major shareholding of which was acquired by premium brand company Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton (LVMH) in 2007.

The first priority for LVMH was to create a corporate environment in keeping with its other premium brands.

“The Moët Hennessy vision is to create the first luxury brand of Chinese white spirits, and that required the redevelopment of the site,” says Mark Bedingham, managing director Moët Hennessy Asia Pacific (MHAP).

“MHAP selected MAP Architecture and Planning as lead architects for the project as they demonstrated from the outset an impressive understanding of the need to respect the traditions surrounding the white

spirits industry, balanced with the need for modernity to build the brand.”

MAP director Edward Billson says, “We researched the corporate culture of LVMH, the architectural styles and the living culture of Sichuan, as well as the manufacturing process of white spirit at Wen Jun, before we were confident in our design approach and could defend all the big decisions.”

The big decisions included the establishment of an administrative zone in the centre of the distillery. The office building was designed to be a simple edifice with V-shaped columns supporting a floating structure of two floors of offices, with a full-height atrium featuring a large oval skylight that allows natural light to filter throughout the building.

“The distillery is located in a seismic area and the V column design was chosen to minimise the number of footings required to support the building,” says Billson.





Left The gatehouse, with its traditional design and materials, welcomes VIP guests to the Wen Jun Distillery. It contains a lounge bar, dining room and music pavilion.

Above Two garden villas and a presidential villa make up the guest accommodations in the self-contained VIP compound.

Befitting its status as the distillery's headquarters, the building fulfils a number of important functions. The ground floor accommodates a lounge bar for corporate and staff entertainment and presentations, while a theatre on the first floor is used for training seminars for wholesale businesses. A large overhanging roof provides shade during the hot Sichuan summers.

"The brief also called for a new visitor centre," says Billson. "This was designed in the style of a traditional distillery building, with a tile roof, timber bargeboards and grey bricks. The centre accommodates a VIP tasting room that opens onto a large terrace."

In addition, self-contained VIP accommodation was designed for the northern arm of the site. This includes a gatehouse with a lounge and bar, dining room and music pavilion, as well as supporting facilities. There are also two large garden villas and one presidential villa, all in a traditional Sichuan style.

"Another aspect of the stage 1 redevelopment was

to design the main boiler house for the distillery, also in the traditional style. The result is an art gallery-like environment for the installation of some state-of-the-art energy efficient gas-fired boilers, replacing the existing coal-fired boilers," says Billson.

"We were also commissioned to masterplan the stage 2 works, which include a bottling and packaging plant, and a logistics centre with a public viewing gallery. The master plan includes way-finding devices and the storage facility for the beautiful traditional earthenware vats in which the white spirit is aged."

"The revitalisation of this 12ha site has provided MHAP with the necessary base to establish Wen Jun as a leading brand in China," says Bedingham.

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