The winery was buried throughout its length to avoid stealing the limelight from the landscape.

As a result, the vineyard itself – not the winery – remains the landscape’s main character according to VIK, which was established by Norwegian entrepreneur Alexander Vik. By submerging the 16,000m² building, the firm also avoided the need to install air-conditioning in most of its spaces, instead using a natural free-cooling system.

Radić was keen that the design of the building should show the manufacturing process rather than conceal it. The roof spans a vast vat hall of stainless steel fermentation tanks and overhead walkways. A tensile design formed by a double membrane of PTFE was the commonsense choice – both practically and conceptually – says Radić. He had previously considered using a pneumatically, pre-stressed roof structure with PVC but this proved too expensive, so instead specified a standard steel structure with two layers of PTFE membrane.

‘The membranes are a simple high-tech material and very easy to use when you choose the right project, although – oddly – many people do not consider them as permanent structures, but simply as something ephemeral. This reading is very important for me because it allows the building to be seen as something more tender, less invasive,’ says Radić.

Among other important factors were the