The Vision.
How do you make a dream come true? How does a flicker of a thought turn into a viable, physical reality? The Owner set out to realize his dream, to "safeguard the history" behind century-old brick buildings in Minden, Nevada. These structures were part of his childhood memories and once produced flour, butter and buttermilk - traditional food basics. His vision was to revitalize these same buildings to produce basics of a different sort - spirits essentials like whiskey, vodka, and gin. Three of the original seven buildings were selected to be renovated - the Minden Flour Milling Co. (Mill Building), Minden Butter Manufacturing Co. (Creamery Building), and the Minden Manufacturing Warehouse (The Warehouse). Chris Bentley’s one simple passion: “to make the best American Spirits possible ... with most of the components sourced from his neighboring ranch”.

The Site.
Situated along Highway 395 and nestled in the heart of the Sierras with the mountain range as a close back drop, this site emanates generations of people living off the land. The Mill building with its iconic grain silos has long been a landmark that inspires curiosity for travelers. The community today still thrives on the agricultural industry with a population of only 3,000.

Transforming the past to create the future.
The plan was to strategically deconstruct the four unusable structures on the site and reuse those pieces and parts as material for the new construction. Soon into the design process, the team became passionate about the possibilities of detailing with weathered and aged materials. It was a continual exercise of innovative thought to create a "new spirit of place".

Spirit of Place.
With three structures remaining, the spaces within and the spaces between became equally important. Not just a private business to make spirits, rather, the team embarked to create a new community icon in the center of town.

Beyond addressing the code compliance and agency approval processes, the team remained focused on creating a sense of place. The Mill Building along 395, the Creamery Building behind and the Warehouse structure as support space, collectively make up the new environment. The overall site concept and landscaping is developed as a community park. The team integrated plazas, tree lined walks, gazebos, and fire pits to act as a venue for larger events, as well as an invitation for a stroll as a detour off the main street.

The Mill Building, for single malt whiskey distilling, is the place for a welcome arrival with its broad front porch and tiered seating. The interior is a place for enjoyment with tasting rooms, a bar, and a view into the stills. The Owner's excitement of celebrating the spirit making process with state of the art, stunning equipment, inspired a place that equally celebrates the beauty. The team assembled spaces and details that engage the visitor with viewing windows, tasting rooms and warmth that makes for a revived environment and an appreciation of its history. The Creamery, is a separate building and functions as the workhouse of the distillery, creating clear spirits and bourbon - its detailing honest and raw. The support Warehouse which handles receiving and administrative functions is clad in metal panels and blackened re-purposed wood siding - a nod back to the Scottish distilleries of old.
The Distillery is an “Estate” Distillery. All the product that goes into the making of whiskey, vodka, and gin, is grown on the Owner’s 50,000-acre ranch. Barley, Rye, Wheat, Oats, Corn, Fruit, and even Sage and Manzanita for fusing, are grown and cultivated for production less than two miles from the Distillery.

The mechanical design is an integrated system that meshes the distilling process equipment with the space heating HVAC equipment to provide a redundant free system of re-use, recycle, and reclaim. All the excess water used for distilling is fed back into the HVAC system for its operation. The excess heat generated during the distilling process helps heat the buildings during the winter, then is recycled through a heat exchanger for cooling in the summer. A highly sophisticated computer control system orchestrates the energy interplay on a minute by minute basis. Also, all the landscape irrigation water is reclaimed “purple pipe” water.

The entire Bently Heritage campus has achieved a LEED Gold certification.
Materials used for construction were recycled wherever possible from materials salvaged from demolished buildings on site. Brick for the new portion of the Creamery was from an adjacent building that was torn down. The heavy timber beams in the Mill were salvaged, documented, stored, then re-worked and placed back into the building exactly where they were before. Wood studs (2x4) that made up old grain bins were re-purposed as wall paneling in the Mill. Metal panels taken from the four steel silos were used as the wall cladding of Well #One, the well that provides all the water on site for the distilling process.

The goal was to provide a progressive, modern design, that is integrated into buildings that are over 100 years old without compromising the historical integrity of what has become a community asset.
Its about 🍃SPIRITS🍃

Place
Making
Heritage
Gathering
Restoration
Transformation

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It's about its making heritage gathering restoration transformation.
MILL BUILDING silos

Before

After

SPIRIT of Restoration

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MILL BUILDING interior

Before

After

SPIRIT of Transformation

NVBCA-20126
MILL BUILDING plaza

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SPIRIT of Gathering
MILL BUILDING

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3rd FLOOR LOUNGE LOOKING INTO THE SILOS

SPIRIT of Gathering
MILL BUILDING
NVBCA-20126

2nd FLOOR LOUNGE LOOKING INTO THE SILOS

SPIRIT of Making
CREAMERY BUILDING

NVBCA-20126

SPIRIT of Restoration
CREAMERY BUILDING interior

Before

After

SPIRIT of Transformation
CREAMERY BUILDING

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SPIRIT of Restoration
SUPPORT WAREHOUSE

NVBCA-20126