



STELLAR CELLARS

The appreciation of wine seems to date back to the beginnings of recorded history. The Bible makes it clear that wine is a gift from God, but should be consumed in moderation; in excess, it makes fools of the wise. And we have all played the fool at one time or another. And yet the truth of the matter is that wine enlivens the heart. As the adage goes, wine cheers the body and the soul.

Drinking wine, of course, is easy—tilt glass and swallow. Tasting wine is more of a challenge. That's why wine lovers learn to taste. No matter how complex or volatile the wine itself, wine tasting offers the best route to understanding the message in the bottle. Your taste buds seem to be going wild, but most of what we taste is actually perceived by our sense of smell—particularly the sweetness and acidity of the wine.

For most of us who drink young and simple wines, taste is about all that is important. But collectors and connoisseurs investing in topflight vintages not only enjoy drinking their wines, but also collecting and showcasing them.

You know you have been smitten with wine collecting when you begin filling your Sub-Zero wine refrigerator with fifty or more of your favorite wines. Next, instead of purchasing a couple of bottles of your favorite wines, you invest in a couple of cases. Now a buying pattern begins: You start purchasing wines that are destined to be valuable “holdings.” The serious investing has truly begun: holdings consist of wines that run in the thousands of dollars and are considered jewels in their class.

For dedicated wine connoisseurs, a wine cellar in the home is now the perfect fulfillment of their wine-savoring experience. No longer relegated to bleak, subterranean locations, wine cellars are a growing addition to many homes. Whether the cellar is a more modest, single-room affair or a vast cavern outfitted with table seating for 12, very specific display and storage conditions must be met. Temperature- and humidity- controlled cellars are considered the best, and most collectors want at least a small center “sipping” table for the convenience and pleasure of tasting. Additionally, practical considerations regarding display, layout, and comfort must not overshadow concerns for aesthetic appeal. In short, the collector's devotion should be reflected in the wine cellar's design and décor.

The appreciation of wine is a complete aesthetic experience. From collecting and showcasing to tasting and drinking wine, it can be a way of life that enriches our perceptions and deepens our connections with every aspect of the sensory world. That's a large claim for a common activity, but those who know wine well know it is true.

It is this fervent enthusiasm for wine and the complete wine experience that has shaped the exquisitely designed wine cellars on this page. •

For more information on wine storage systems, design and installations, contact New England Wine Cellars LLC, P.O. Box 257, West Cornwall, CT 800.863.4851

LINDA CORREIA