

RAISE A GLASS TO LIGHTING FOR THE HOME WINE CELLAR

As more oenophiles amass large collections, they are looking for the best ways to store and showcase these prized possessions.



LED down and accent lighting in a warm white adds ambiance while safely illuminating this wine cellar. LED ribbon lights highlight the reveal area.

By Stefanie Schwalb

Lighting never ceases to amaze, especially when its essential functions seamlessly blend with aesthetics. One area of the home where form and function can beautifully meet is in the home wine cellar.

Christy Lukemire, art director for Cincinnati-based Wine Cellar Innovations, has been overseeing the company's lighting division for nearly 20 years and has seen plenty of trends come and go. No matter what the illumination preferences, size of the project, or timeline, a lot of research goes into the lighting plan of every project Wine Cellar Innovations takes on. The project may require different lighting systems and fixtures for general illumination, setting the mood, and/or producing subtle accents. Several types of lighting can be installed including LEDs, fluorescents, and recessed.

"We always try to stay ahead of the competition by offering the newest technology," Lukemire notes. "We started offering LED display lighting many years ago, before most of the major lighting companies were even producing it. We had received word that it was going to be the hottest trend in the lighting industry, so we quickly searched for stylish options that could be customized to our cellar needs."

For Wine Cellar Innovations, choosing the right lighting means finding the right combination of



A painting in a niche is illuminated with LED accent lights while LED down lights overhead provide general illumination.

style, substance and sustainability.

"LED lighting is preferred overall, because the fixtures are rated for 50,000 hours or about six years and it does not die abruptly," Lukemire explains. She also appreciates that LED fixtures her company specifies are certified with the RoHs directive and are lead- and mercury-free. "LEDs are environmentally friendly and light up very quickly, much faster than fluorescents." Another benefit she points out is that LED illumination releases very little heat, no UV generation, and is resistant to vibration as well as humidity. But that is not the only light source in the company's projects.

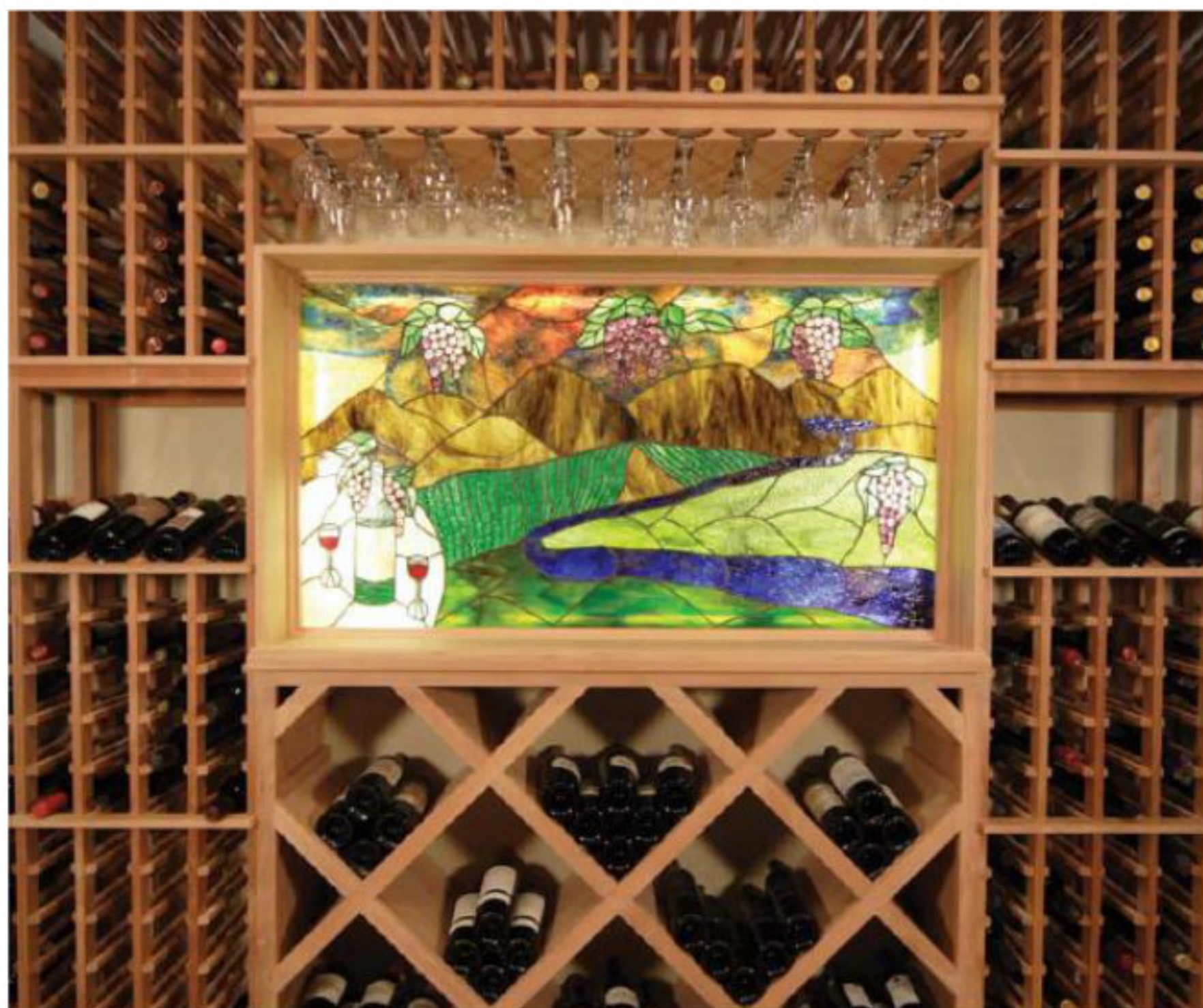
Fluorescents can come in handy as well.

"Our slim fluorescent lighting works best to backlight the stained glass panels found in many wine cellars," Lukemire adds. "It is easy to install with low maintenance and has built-in electronic ballasts. It is energy efficient – using only 7, 10, and 18 watts." She specifies fixtures in three different lengths (10", 13", and 20") and a width of 11/16-inch. Most models have a slender profile of 1 1/4 inches. The bulbs are instant starting, tri-phosphor lamps that are quiet and flicker-free. One plug-in modular system is used for continuous lighting, and the bulb life is extremely long – rated 10,000 hours.

"We usually use up to four [fixtures], but sometimes only two or three," Lukemire reveals. "If there are high-reveal display rows in the racking, then most customers like

our LED display lights in those areas. We also used them to backlight crown molding. Our LED down lights are often installed in cellars that have soffits as well as archways. If there is a table in the center of the area or the cellar is used for entertaining purposes, then the client often chooses an ornate chandelier as a focal point."

Lukemire keeps up with lighting technology and fixtures by visiting the manufacturer booths at the International Builders Show. "It helps me stay refreshed and informed on what's new, stylish, economical, and environmentally friendly," she reveals. The art director also shops lighting showrooms for fixtures to install in projects the company is working on. For those cellars that



type of light in a cellar that gives off much heat," she notes. "Wine needs to be stored at a consistent temperature and humidity to age properly. Overheating a cellar will quickly spoil the wine; it's a delicate balance between good lighting and good temperatures. The ideal wine cellar temperature range is 55-58 degrees and between 55 and 75-percent relative humidity."

Wine Cellar Innovations has been guiding wine lovers through the intricacies of the building process and provides its own lighting packages, including LED display and down lights, plus fluorescent Slimlites. To help customers customize their cellars, they offer accent wine display racks and archways with a linear LED display lighting system, as well as illuminated stained glass or other decorative applications with fluorescent lighting.

Lighting's value on this area of the home continues to increase, and homeowners are looking to highlight their collections with lighting that is tasteful – and of course – *ages* well. ❖

Fluorescent lighting provides even illumination when backlighting a stained glass panel. The light source doesn't create extra heat and has a long life for easy maintenance.

Below: Accent lighting within the racks makes a dramatic presentation, but should not produce extra heat that could deteriorate the wine. LED light sources are a good choice.

have unique and special lighting requirements, Lukemire finds the advice from showroom personnel helpful. Lastly, she will research online catalogs and review new product alerts from vendors.

For those faced with designing a home wine cellar, Lukemire has several tips. She recommends first determining what the primary purpose of the cellar will be. "A space that will be used for basic storage will have very different lighting needs than that of a cellar being used as a focal point or for entertaining purposes," she advises. "A cellar built solely for storage will need minimal light, whereas a picturesque cellar should have general illumination to read labels as

well as accent lighting to show off the collection in the display rows plus any unique art pieces in the room." Decorative chandeliers and sconces are also fun, and an opportunity for customization.

It's also important to think of practical issues such as temperature, since it can play a critical role in wine storage, Lukemire warns. "You don't want to put any

