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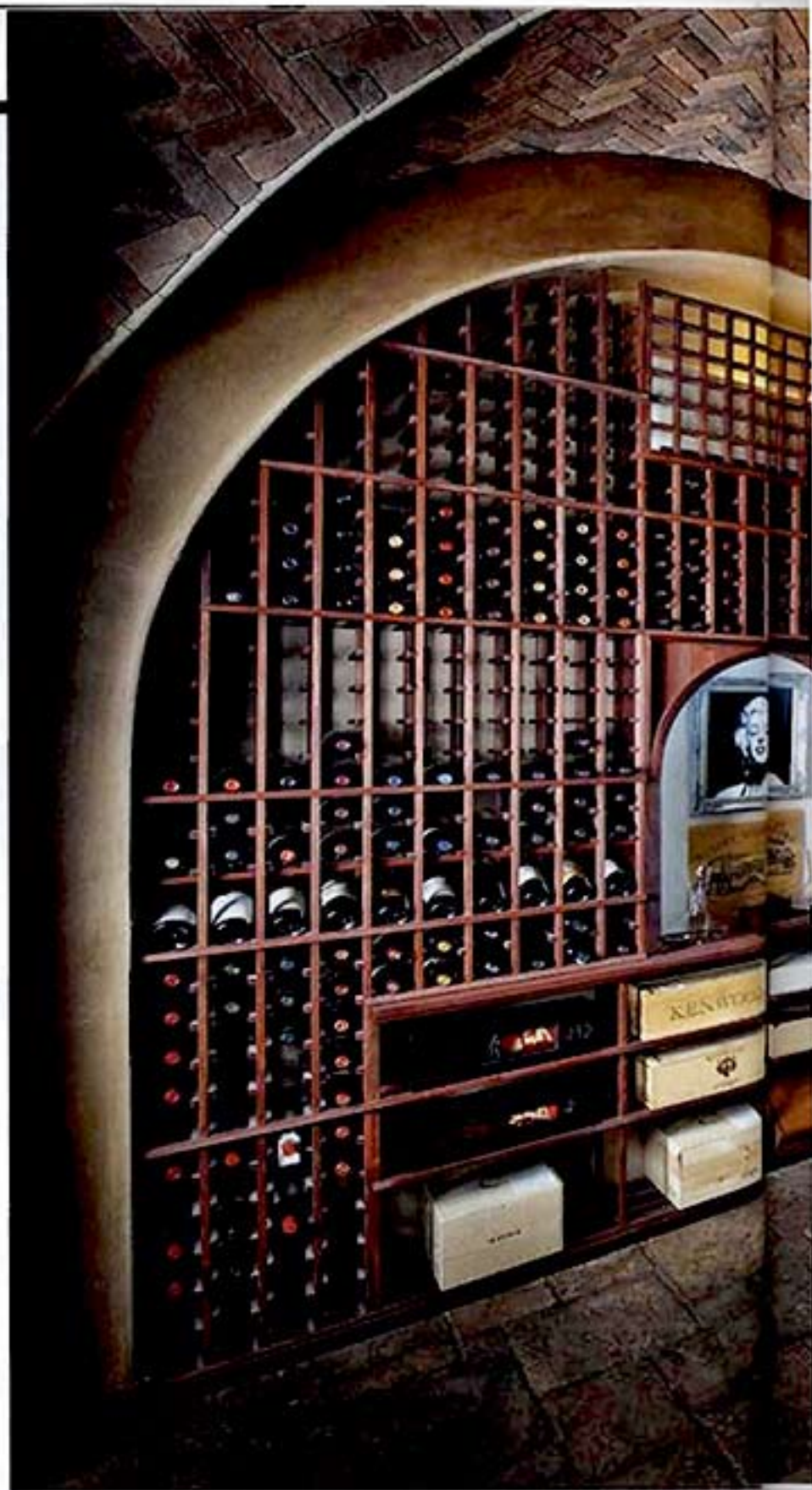
Cellars MARKET

The only thing more fun than amassing a wine collection is showing it off.

A WINE COLLECTION always is evolving. What constitutes a collection today may have no bearing on bottles purchased in the next six months, or the next few years. A great wine cellar, by decree, must be capable of accommodating all such fluctuations, including a fevered purchase at auction, and all those oddly sized bottles that vintners seem to love these days.

Equally important, however, a superb wine cellar should reflect the way a homeowner chooses to use it. Some may enjoy opening bottles in the same area used to store the collection, while others may prefer a separate tasting area removed from the cool climate. Some may desire to see the majority of their labels displayed, while others appreciate special shelving designed for cases that won't be disturbed for years.

In the end, wine cellar design—like wine itself—carries no single, winning formula. Individual tastes are never wrong, whether sipping from the glass or storing by the bottle.



FRONT AND CENTER

The first thing that designer Tyson Jones of Wine Cellar Innovations (www.winecellarinnovations.com) tells his clients is that they don't have to put their cellar in the basement. "If you collect wine, you want the wine near the center of the house, where you can see it and spend time with it," says Jones.

This cellar is the centerpiece of a custom-built home in



New Mexico, where the temperatures surge above 100 degrees and the humidity is all but nonexistent. Still, a high-powered cooling system keeps this 12-by-14-foot room at the appropriate temperature and humidity, even though it sits on the ground floor of the house, adjacent to the kitchen and the living areas. The cellar has three separate areas, including a storage area for cases, a room reserved for custom racks,

and a dining area just outside the glass panels. Those panels allow guests to look in on the redwood racks capable of storing as many as 2,700 bottles, and the 14-foot groin vault ceiling gives the room the feel of an ancient wine cellar. "The homeowner wanted a dramatic showpiece for his collection," Jones says, "but something that was also functional."

Approximate cost: \$51,000

ROOM TO GROW

When designing a wine cellar, it's important to plan for an expanding collection. Regardless of the number of bottles in their possession, some oenophiles always will yearn for more. That was the problem presented to Evan Goldenberg of Design Build Consultants (www.customwinecellars.com). His client owned thousands of bottles of wine and had an unbridled passion to buy thousands more.

Goldenberg's solution was this cellar with three dedicated areas. An entertaining area sits outside insulated glass panels that reveal the cellar's exhibition area, which holds 3,000 bottles. Concealed from view is an aging area capable of holding more than 4,000 additional bottles. "The homeowner has friends with enormous collections of wine, and he may be moving in that direction," says Goldenberg. "When

his collection moves past 8,000 bottles, he wants to be able to convert this dining area into cellar space."

To prepare for that, Design Build Consultants installed ductwork into the overhead beams of the dining area, which eventually can be incorporated into the cellar's cooling system. The company monitors all of its cellars, and this one—like all others—contains an extra cooling system, in case the primary air handler malfunctions. Design Build's system uploads information about the cellar's temperature and humidity to a dedicated online monitor every thirty seconds. "That way we can monitor the client's cellar all the time," Goldenberg says. "If there's a problem, an electronic glitch, we know about it."

Approximate cost: \$175,000





THE VINTNER'S CELLAR

When a homeowner approached Doug Smith of Apex Custom Wine Cellars (www.apexwinecellars.com) and expressed a desire to feel like a vintner, Smith obliged him with elements that pay homage to California winemakers and created this 1,200-bottle, climate-controlled cellar that evokes Napa's wine country. Single bottles are stored on oak shelves, which were chosen because many Napa wines are stored in oak barrels. Smith also used the curved staves from actual oak wine barrels to create 27 bins, each capable of holding an entire case of wine. Continuing that theme, the cellar's center table is made from barrel tops that show cooperage stamps—the stamp of the winemaker or the barrel maker—in random places. “We sell a lot of cooperage-style tabletops and coun-

tertops because they are all unique,” Smith says. “People like something different from standard marble tops.”

In keeping with Smith's tendencies and preference to use untreated woods, all of the cellar's shelving is made from natural oak that is devoid of stains or lacquers. “Wine is a natural product,” he says, “and so the cellar should also be a natural product. You don't want to introduce a lot of lacquers and foreign smells into this environment. They could permeate the corks and interfere with the wine.” The unfinished oak, the barrel staves, and the cooperage stamps all contribute to an intimate setting in which the wine lover can appreciate his collection and feel a bit closer to the vines.

Approximate cost: \$40,000

OUTWARD APPEARANCES

The best wine cellars are designed for easy access and label visibility. Finding a bottle quickly and without difficulty is always the intent, and to do that requires a display of as many labels as possible. But a racking system with enough flexibility to accommodate a magnum, a split, or anything in between also is desirable, if not preferred. That's why Lisa Weiss, of the Wine Cellar Co. (www.winecellarsbylisa.com), used a Revel (www.revelcellars.com) racking system when designing this cellar. "Normally, you have to decide how much space you want to devote to magnums and how much to splits and standard bottles," Weiss says. "You don't have to do this with the Revel system."

In this cellar, dowels are spaced close enough together to cradle any sized bottle. With that in mind, the homeowner can continue to expand the collection without worrying about available shelf space. In addition, the bottles in this

cellar rest on their sides with the labels facing out, allowing the homeowner to readily identify each one. Revel shelving favors drawers that slide out over diamond bins, since the drawers provide better access to the bottles and can store entire cases, as well as individual bottles.

The Revel system also includes patented wine wheels that allow for the storage of racks of bottles in each of the cellar's eight corners. Each wheel holds up to 18 bottles of wine and prominently displays every label. All told, this 9-by-14-foot room can accommodate 2,700 bottles—plenty of room to develop an impressive collection. "The biggest benefit with these is label visibility," Weiss says of the shelving units. "In this cellar you can see 60 to 70 percent of the labels in your collection." And as any cellar designer knows, the most important aspect of any cellar is the wine itself. ☐

Approximate cost: \$100,000+

