

DESIGNER INSIGHT

Three experts discuss the best ways to look after your wine collection



CRAIG DAVIES
CEO and president for Europe, Sub-Zero,
020 8418 3800,
westye.co.uk.



LUCY HARGREAVES
Director,
Spiral Cellars,
0845 241 2768,
spiralcellars.co.uk.



TOM CAVE
Cellar plan manager,
Berry Bros & Rudd,
0800 280 2440,
bbr.com.

WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING WINE STORAGE?



CD It is a common misconception that wine simply needs to be stored at the right temperature in order to be preserved correctly. Four elements are crucial when safeguarding a wine: temperature, humidity, light and vibration. Make sure you go for a specialist storage unit that has been designed to preserve wine in the best possible conditions.

LH If you are buying wine for personal consumption, consider the storage capacity you require: wine cabinets are ideal for around 100 bottles, while a spiral cellar (below right) can store between 650 and 1,900 bottles. If wine is being purchased purely as an investment, then we would always recommend that it is kept in a certificated specialised wine storage facility to maximise your return.

TC A constant temperature somewhere between 11°C and 14°C is crucial; it must not fluctuate, as this can damage wine. A humid environment (around 70 to 80 per cent humidity) is ideal, and light and vibration should be avoided. Bottles should be laid down on their sides, to keep the cork moist. Another benefit of storing wine horizontally, and not disturbing it, is that sediment forms in one place and this aids decanting later on.

ARE THERE ANY INNOVATIONS THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND?

CD Open-plan living has encouraged us to think about how we integrate more functional elements into a kitchen area or other room. The latest under-counter, integrated and free-standing wine storage models have been developed with versatility in mind and fit seamlessly into any room. Our integrated units can easily be incorporated within the overall design of a room.

LH Rather than use a utilitarian, dusty basement cellar, bear in mind that wine storage can be a stunning feature within the home. The trend for open-plan living spaces encourages entertaining at home. If you entertain a lot, having a tailor-made wine cellar with an electronic round glass trap door, steps with leather tread inlays and LED lighting will add a wow factor to any dinner party.

TC Wine fridges, spiral cellars and even converted outhouses with air conditioning can all work well at home. If you store your wine with a merchant, you can take advantage of new technologies. Berry Bros & Rudd has a brand new, high-tech storage facility in Hampshire that even has an "acclimatisation zone", allowing wines to come down gently to the correct temperature before being squirrelled away for their long hibernation.



WHAT, IN YOUR VIEW, IS THE BEST WAY TO STORE WINE?

CD Specialist storage units are unrivalled. Sub-Zero's range offers supreme humidity levels along with precisely controlled individual temperature zones, enabling red and white wine to be stored in the same unit. Additional features include illuminated display shelves and alarm systems. Bronze tinted and argon-filled glass is used on all doors to filter out UV rays, which can harm stored wine.

LH Keeping your wine collection close to hand is important – a well-stocked cellar not only enables you to plan ahead and enhance your meals, but it also gives you the opportunity to transform an ordinary evening into an instant celebration simply by opening a bottle of something special. Make sure you have enough capacity for your growing collection.



TC Unless you are lucky enough to have a cool, dark, deep cellar at home, it is best to store high-value wine with your merchant or specialist storage company to ensure it is kept in optimum condition. Security is another issue, and storing in a specialised warehouse will considerably reduce the risk of theft. ■

Visit homesandgardens.com/shop for great buys and brilliant offers. A must-have for wine connoisseurs, the Screwpull corkscrew by Le Creuset is now just £69.99 – a saving of £30.