

## Digging deep for cellar

WINE buffs stuck for somewhere handy to store their vintage bottles in the perfect environment are commissioning a West Sussex company to drill a fairly big hole into the bowels of the earth within the boundaries of their home to create the ideal site for a prefabricated 21st century cellar.

'We've built lots in houses in Hertfordshire,' Kitty Brockband, Spiral Cellars' PR tells us. 'It's an extension built downwards. The cellar can be dug in any room where there's 2.5m space to excavate. Kitchens and garages are the most popular.'

A few years back housebuilder Nicholas King fitted a spiral cellar as part of the standard spec in million-pound new houses in Beaconsfield. As an incentive to purchase, he supplied each new owner with several dozen bottles to kick off their collection. The trap door was set into the parquet floor in the hall. Had it not been for the recessed brass handle you wouldn't have spotted it.

The Sussex company supplies three types of cellar capable of storing up to 1,870 bottles. The mini version stores up to 770 bottles. Prices start at £14,500.



## Fine award for agent

FINE & Country Berkhamsted won the regional title when the group's 2009 accolades were presented at the national conference in June.

Receiving the award on behalf of her colleagues, Jan Foo told more than 100 delegates gathered at the Millennium Hotel in Mayfair, 'Despite the most challenging market in living memory, the support of the brand has helped us achieve an extraordinary level of sales. The results are testament to the hard work and dedication of the whole team.'

Fine & Country's chief operating officer Mike Bidwell said, 'The Berkhamsted office is a cornerstone of our operation in the region.'

A charity auction at the event raised more than £10,000 for The Simon Lewis Foundation. The fund, dedicated to raising money for The Willow Foundation, is named after one of the group's most popular agents who died of cancer last year.

## Giving buyers peace of mind for price dips

BUYERS of six palatial new homes on a Hertfordshire development are being offered a deal to safeguard the present value of the properties in case house prices fall further in the next few years.

The future owners of the million pound houses built by Fusion Residential at Chenies Place in Arkley will have the assurance that they will get their money back if they want to sell at any time between three to ten years of buying their home.

The guarantee comes in the form of a Cenoption, a concept to provide today's buyers with peace of mind thought up by a company called Centrla Ltd, which undertakes to buy the house at today's market value, even if prices have dropped in the meantime.

However if values rise, owners will be

under no obligation to sell to Cenoption.

Gavyn Fresco, head of sales and marketing at Fusion, considers it a win-win situation for buyers. 'This is the first time a developer has been able to offer the Cenoption locally. We are proud to be the first to provide homeowners with such security and peace of mind by putting in place Cenoption free of charge.

'It gives purchasers the ability to commit to a property without worrying

about the uncertainty of the market, whether it has reached the bottom in terms of price and what impact this may have on them.'

The three storey houses on the private gated development each have more than 3,400 sq ft of living space. The specification includes air conditioning, walnut glass staircase, sauna, gym, study and Poggenpohl kitchen with Miele appliances. Prices start at £1.65m.

