

CREATING KITCHEN KIT

Wine fridges

Whether you're a wine connoisseur, a frequent entertainer or appreciate a well-chilled bottle of fizz, a cooler is the must-have appliance for festive occasions and parties

As a nation we're drinking more wine than ever before and while just a few years ago most of us didn't know a Chablis from a Chardonnay, our enthusiasm for better quality wines is on the rise. As a result, professional wine storage is rapidly becoming a kitchen essential and it's easy to see why – coolers not only look incredibly stylish, they're also perfect for keeping your wine in tip-top condition without the need for a cellar.

There are now dozens of different chillers available – from wallet-friendly

freestanding designs to humidity controlled larders capable of storing hundreds of bottles at the ideal temperature. Top of the range models feature both storing zones (for the serious collector) and 'ready for drinking' drawers where every bottle is at the correct temperature for serving – great for unexpected guests and parties alike.

Cool customers

Unless you've enough space for a free-standing model in your existing kitchen or utility room, you'll almost certainly buy a wine fridge when you come to install a new kitchen. Just like most ovens, coffee

machines and microwaves, built-in wine fridges can be positioned at any height in your design. For those keen to maintain a seamless look, many wine coolers can be installed alongside coordinating appliances from the same range.

If you have limited space in your kitchen or are sticking to a budget, an under-counter model that simply slips in a standard 60cm-wide (or sometimes smaller) space may be a more suitable option. Alternatively, many fridge freezers now include a section for wine storage.

BEFORE YOU BUY

FEATURE CHRIS HASLAM

Capacity If you have an ever expanding collection, buy as big as you can fit in your kitchen.

Shelving For ease of access and flexibility, buy a cooler with telescopic and removable shelves.

Temperature zones If you want to store white and red wine together look for multiple temperature zones. White should be stored at 10°C to 12°C and reds at 12°C to 16°C.

Check your bottle size Look for models with a wide selection of shelf sizes and racks.

Humidity and ventilation Constant humidity levels and air flow is important. Top models even have air filters to prevent contamination.

Doors Glass will make a feature out of your collection but it doesn't insulate as well as a solid door. Check it's UV protected, too.

STORAGE OPTIONS

Dig your own wine cellar Not blessed with a basement? **Spiral Cellars** can dig a hole in your kitchen floor and install a watertight, prefab concrete cellar, right, with room for 650 to 1,600 bottles. Costing from £8,225, the cellars provide the natural (and ideal) conditions to store wine without mechanical cooling or heating.

Cellar essentials Wineware has a vast selection of racks and storage plus dehumidifiers and all the protective sleeves, labels and accessories you'll ever need. Racks start from £1 per bottle hole.

Purpose-built storage Vino Safe has designed a range of walk-in units for garages or basements. Complete with temperature and humidity controls, a VSM3850 storage unit costs from £5,510.

