

Development Ltd sold for £4.2 million last year, the new owner bought everything in it, down to the corkscrew.

Not all cabinets are wine cellars. Most are wine coolers, with mixed temperatures like fridges. Wine in one of these won't be ruined in a year, but it won't mature properly either. What you buy depends on your attitude to wine, rather than how much you drink. Smaller-sized cabinets with mixed temperatures holding 28 bottles, or a case of wine under the worktop counter, are more convenient than popping round the corner to the local off-licence. Fine, if you drink a lot of wine fast.

If buying in bulk is more your style, then you need a serious freestanding wine unit which lays down wine to mature. Wine cellars like these have a single temperature set at 12-13°C to bring on fine wines. You can even have a wine cellar from the Spiral Cellar corkscrewed into the foundations. Then tick the plusses like LED lighting that is always cool, temperature zones that are independently regulated, alarms that warn of sudden changes in humidity and even a humidor for a cigar smoker. □

THE EXPERT SAYS DANIEL PRIMACK

Around Wine, with branches in London and Manchester, is the home of EuroCave and the place to go to find out about wine storage and accessories. General manager Daniel Primack says:

'Wine stored properly tastes better. Simple. I have a EuroCave V283. It is the largest single-temperature 200-bottle-capacity wine cabinet. The bigger, the better value for money.'

'We don't recommend mixed-temperature cabinets unless wine is to be kept no longer than a few months. We strongly recommend buying a single-temperature cabinet, which can be more expensive than wine-serving coolers. If you mature wine, it should be cellared. Wine-cellar cabinets have a single temperature set at 12-13°C to allow fine wines to develop the right bouquet, taste and smell.'

'The lighter the wine, the colder it can be served. Richer and more complex wines need to be warmer to bring out the more dense and aromatic perfume. You would serve a Chardonnay

'FOR MOST SUPERMARKET WINES, THREE YEARS IS THE MAXIMUM STORAGE TIME'

warmer, a Pinot Grigio colder. The same goes for reds - so you would serve a Beaujolais colder than a Shiraz. Even when quality is not such an issue you still need a cellar. Three years is the maximum storage time for most supermarket wines. Red wines can be ready in one year in the right environment. They keep longer in a single temperature than in a mixed-temperature environment.

'Humidity controls are very important if you're storing wines for longer than a few months. In a fridge, where humidity is between 10 and 15 per cent, the cork deteriorates. Dry environments - and fridges - ruin wine. The majority of cheaper cabinets do not have humidity controls and customers can experience excessive humidity.'

Around Wine, 40 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 8UD; tel: 020-7935 4679. Or 1 Deansgate, Manchester M3 1AZ; tel: 0161-833 0701. Visit: www.aroundwine.co.uk

Prices given are the recommended retail price

OVER 1,000 BOTTLES

Spiral Cellar in depths of 2m to 3m. 1,600 bottles, from £13,500

- Red and white stored together in a naturally ventilated system
- Trapdoor reveals concrete cylinder sunk into the ground
- Concrete or wooden staircase
- Also available in depths of 1.35m or 1.6m to store up to 770 bottles, from £10,000
- 0845-241 2768; www.spiralcellars.com

OVER 100 BOTTLES

Gaggenau RW 464 Wine Storage Cabinet 103 bottles, £4,500

- Two independently adjustable temperature zones, from 5-18°C
- 10 extendable trays in beech and aluminium
- Visual and audible signal if humidity changes
- Optional humidor for 50 cigars
- 0870-125 4500; www.gaggenau.com

Amana W208CG

208 bottles, £3,000

- Stainless-steel trim around blackened glass
- 01737-231000; www.amana.co.uk

Liebherr Vinidor WT 4677

143 bottles, £2,755

- Three zones for red, whites and Champagne
- Stainless steel with double-glazed UV-filter door
- 0870-898 5050; www.liebherr.co.uk

Smeg SCCV 115

115 bottles, £1,140

- Stores reds and whites
- Black gloss sides; stainless steel with wooden racks inside
- Six freestanding, adjustable, removable wooden shelves
- UV-filter doors, auto-defrost
- 0870-990 9907; www.smeguk.com

UNDER 100 BOTTLES

AEG Electrolux Santo W9862041 36 bottles, £1,200

- Won iF product design award
- Stainless steel shelves
- Divider creates 1 or 2 zones
- 08705-350350; www.aeg-electrolux.co.uk

Rangemaster 50 bottles, £699

- Double-glazed UV-filter window on stainless-steel front
- Fan-cooled refrigeration
- Inside light activated on door opening
- 0870-755 6485; www.rangemaster.co.uk

Baumatic BW 28 bottles, £269

- Slender under-counter storage
- Tempered glass door hides chrome shelves or wooden rack
- Silent cooling
- Auto-defrost function
- 0118-933 6900; www.baumatic.co.uk

Sub-Zero 427R 78 bottles, £6,600

- Two individually controlled temperature and humidity zones
- Display shelf for 6 bottles shows labels
- Two refrigeration drawers for 150 litres of mineral water or canned drinks
- 020-8418 3800; www.westy.co.uk

Monogram ZW240 Wine Cooler 57 bottles, £750

- Stainless-steel trim, glass door with cherry-wood front
- Also cools 120 canned drinks
- 01908-366363; www.lsy-appliances.co.uk

Whirlpool ARC 226

44 bottles, around £10,000

- Built-in cellar with five oak shelves
- Temperature, from 6-20°C
- Low vibration system
- Black inner liner and UV-filter glass door
- A-rated
- 0870-600 8989; www.whirlpool.co.uk

Siemens KW 18WA40GB

32 bottles, £800

- Tinted, double-insulated, UV-filter glass door
- LED display for precise readings from 6-14°C
- 0870-840 3300; www.siemensappliances.co.uk

Miele KWT 4154

40 bottles, £1,000

- Two independent zones
- UV-filter door and temperature/humidity alarm
- 01235-554455; www.miele.co.uk



Transtherm Studio

36 bottles, £926

- Single temperature, 12-13°C
- Vibration-free
- Fits under worktop, either solid or UV-filter glass door
- 0870-060 3939; www.transtherm-uk.com

Falcon 50 bottles, £899

- Stainless-steel with shock and vibration dampeners
- UV-filter double-glazed door
- 0870-755 6486; www.falconappliances.co.uk

EuroCave V059 Compact 38 bottles, £1,450

- Compact cooling system
- Front venting for easy under-counter installation
- UV-free lighting, charcoal filter, active humidity controls
- 020-7935 4679; www.eurocave.co.uk

Marks & Spencer Home Wine Chiller/Warmer 6 bottles, £79

- M&S own-brand stores red and white wine
- Temperature range 7-18°C
- Includes a 12V-car adaptor
- 0845-603 1603; www.marksandspencer.com