

Displaying A Love For Wine

BY LISA M. JENSEN

Whether you're inspired to begin stocking vino for the first time or want to take your present storage system to the next level, options abound.

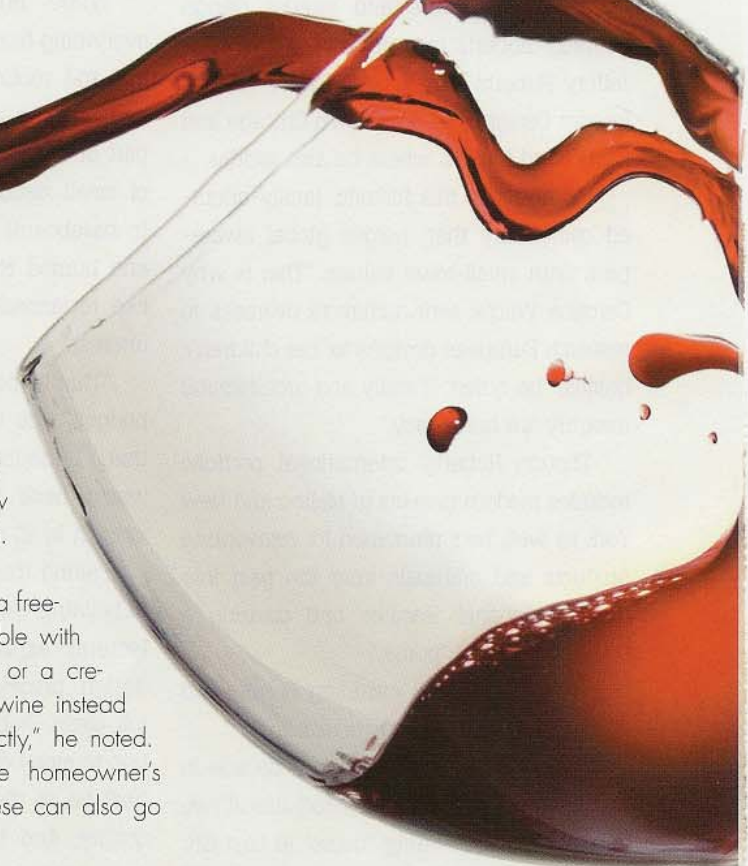
Choosing wine storage products for your home begins with two basic questions: How important is the wine? And, what system would best suit how you enjoy it?

"Before becoming a 'collector' who needs a home cellar, there is a process of learning and enjoying wine," said Jim Cash, owner of Revel Custom Wine Cellars in Grand Rapids. "Many people in this category are looking for more of a lifestyle experience with wine, and they are drawn to having a visible wine presence in their home as a design feature, a conversation

piece, and a place from which to choose a few bottles whenever they wish.

"A piece of wine furniture, a free-standing rack, a bistro table with wine storage underneath, or a credenza designed to store wine instead of books can work perfectly," he noted. "Able to complement the homeowner's taste and style, any of these can also go anywhere in the home.

"We consider our products to be wine furniture as opposed to wine storage racks,



Photography courtesy Revel Custom Wine Cellars



"Everything we do here stems from my ideas of what make a good wine cellar function well for a collector who spends a lot of time organizing and using it," notes Jim Cash, founder of award-winning Revel Custom Wine Cellars in Grand Rapids.

regardless of whether it ends up being in a cellar or not."

STARTING OUT

Cabinetry lines offer display racks and cubbies that hold bottles horizontally — the correct storage position for table wines, because it keeps the corks moist and prevents air from turning the wine into vinegar. But such wall-based or non-refrigerated island units are designed for looks and convenience — not enhancing your wine drinking experience.

If your goal is to note the subtle evolutions of a good wine as it matures into a great one (or just to make the most of everyday wine), storing it in a cool and constant environment is crucial. Fifty-five degrees Fahrenheit is ideal in general for storing wine,



although this varies by a few degrees from Vintage Port and Shiraz to Riesling and Champagne. The proper temperature — along with principally the right amount of humidity, darkness and lack of vibration — allows wine to age slowly, with greater complexity.

"A basic wine cooler has one temperature zone, and handles what the average consumer wants," said Esther Ritsema, a sales consultant at Gerrit's Appliances in Grand Rapids, which offers options from Sub-Zero, Greenville-based Marvel, U-Line and General Electric. "But a dual-zone cooler (or reserve) allows you to maintain and

serve more expensive reds and whites at the precise temperatures you want."

Products available through Gerrit's include Sub-Zero's stainless 424 Free-Standing Wine Storage unit, which stocks up to 46 bottles, and Marvel's Dual Zone Wine Cellar (Chateau Collection), which stores up to 44 in six glide-out maple racks that can be custom finished.

Three of U-Line's Wine Captain models feature triple temperature zones for further storage versatility. "Like Sub-Zero, U-Line also carries a wide variety of low- to high-end under-counter units," Ritsema added.

Outside of the kitchen and in outdoor rooms, under-counter units can also be incorporated into freestanding wine furniture.

"In an urban setting, a traditional cellar may not be simply feasible," Cash observed. "Many aficionados here opt for off-site storage of their collections, and a nice piece