

# Beyond the CELLAR Door

*Today's luxury wine cellars offer the perfect blend of form and function, made up of surprising spaces that are as much a part of the home's interior design as they are a functional place for collectors to store fine wine. Text: Kirsten Silven-Hoell; Photography: Madison Culler*

For centuries wine cellars have been essential for connoisseurs and serious collectors of fine wine around the world, but today they have also become a favorite among savvy homeowners throughout the Bluegrass state. At a basic level, wine cellars not only supply adequate storage for avid collectors of drinkable wine, but they also provide a place to properly store wine that is *en primeur*, or not yet ready to drink, which is generally a better investment. In addition, a well-designed wine cellar can provide a stunning complement to virtually any home's interior design, which has caused them to pop up in a variety of interesting new places.

## Design In Mind

Perhaps the most important thing to consider when designing a wine cellar is that it must be fully functional, so be sure to select decorative elements and non-toxic paints that do not interfere with the cellar's ability to protect wine from heat, light or humidity. In order to maintain an ideal temperature and humidity level, it is often necessary to install a cooling system, airtight door and special insulation on both the walls and the ceiling.

To accomplish this, green board is often used, and a vapor barrier may be added to the warm side of the insulation for added protection.

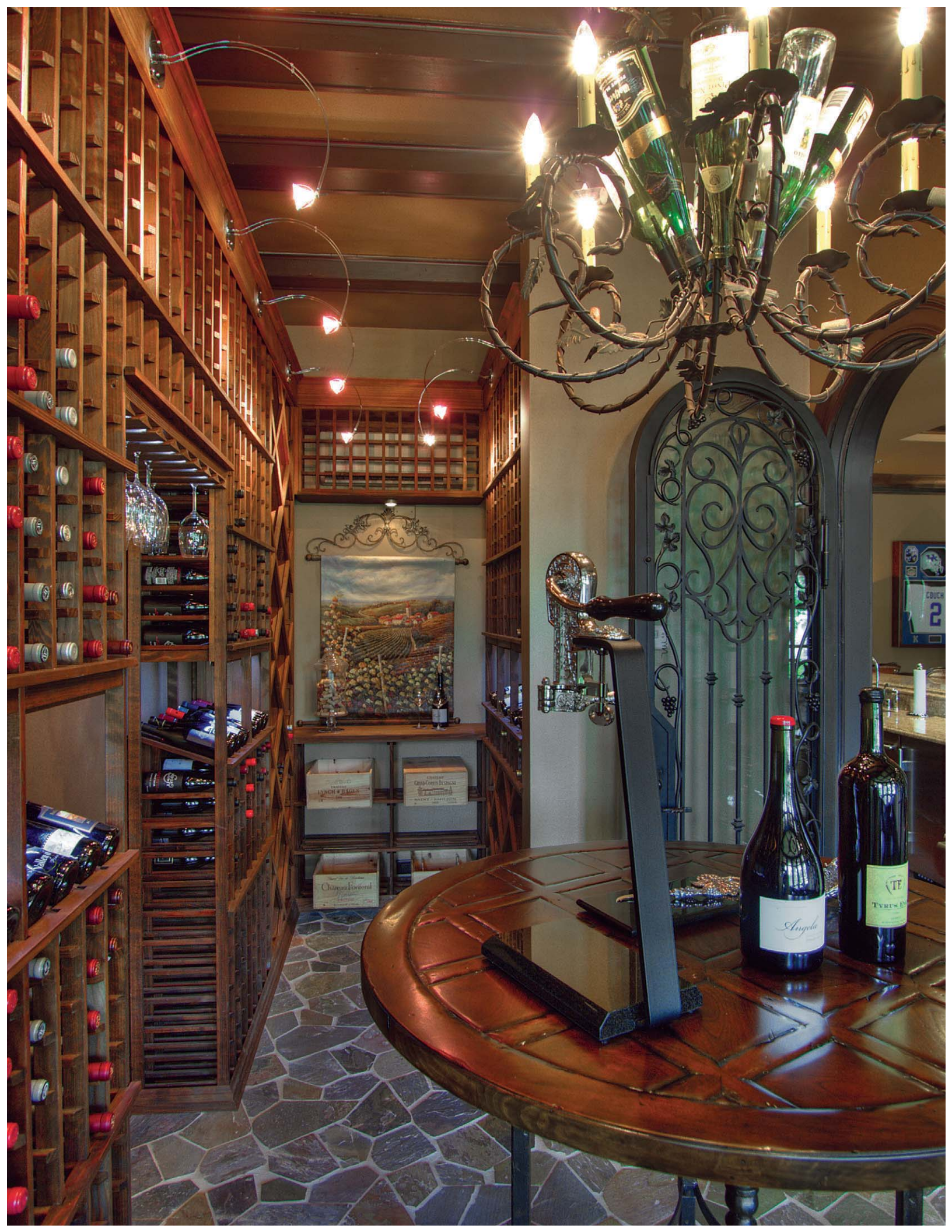
According to Brett Norris, a wine cellar consultant for Wine Cellar Innovations, it is essential to determine where the cellar will be located, how large it will be, and what cooling features are desired before deciding on aesthetics. "Location is very important because not every home has a basement that is conducive to installing a wine cellar," he said. "Certain specifications and refrigeration options can change depending on the location of the cellar in your home." Location also helps determine the square footage that is available, so choose an area that is large enough to accommodate the size and quantity of bottles currently in your collection, but also provides enough room to grow.

When it comes to racking, Norris suggests taking the time to become familiar with the many custom design options that are available. Materials range from metal to a variety of wood finishes – including reclaimed wine barrels and various hardwoods – while racking styles range from waterfall



**Above:** This sharp Lexington-area wine cellar, created by Rhonda's World Interior Designs, has a real creative flair. Hints of both modern and rustic elements in its design accent one another quite nicely, while the lighter, unstained racks provide nice contrast against the black walls and ceiling. The artwork is by Danville-based artist Paul Sirimongkhon, while Modern Home Furniture supplied the mirror and Kentucky Lighting and Supply provided the chandelier. **Opposite:** Situated adjacent to the bar area, this Lexington-area wine cellar is both fun and fashionable, which perfectly reflects the homeowners and is a testament to the many special items and personal touches they have poured into this space. The standing wine opener on the table was found on a family trip to Pennsylvania, while the mahogany stained redwood racking was designed to allow for a great view of the wine bottles and was provided by Wine Cellar Innovations. The slate floor, by Rogers Décor & More, is laid in an attractive random pattern to provide an old-world feel. Designed by Courtney Koetter Manos of Design by Courtney, the space also features a stunning wrought iron and glass arched door and a funky 'vineyard' chandelier. Warner Builders built the home.





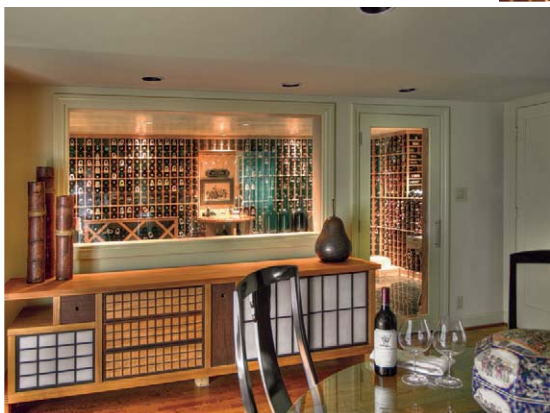




This magnificent Louisville-area wine cellar is constructed from all-heart redwood in a rich, Classic Mahogany stain, and features diamond cubes, smooth, True Radius curved corners and a True Radius archway with halogen lighting. A large window allows for easy viewing from the adjacent room. The print is from a trip to Napa Valley and features labels from all of the wineries in the region. Designed by Wine Cellar Innovations.



This stunning, airy Louisville-area wine cellar, designed by Wine Cellar Innovations, is located adjacent to the dining room for easy access, and the large window allows all who enter to admire its contents from afar. It holds more than 2,000 bottles and the racking is constructed from all-heart redwood, featuring a combination of diamond bin storage and individual racks with a display row. Also, an island in the center and areas to store larger wine bottles were important to the homeowner. Wine Cellar Innovations created the original design, and Hartz Woodworking built the wine cellar.





racks and diamond bins to single-column designs, tabletops and archways. Since the size and shape of the room can dictate which design elements are used, it is also best to select racking after the space has been decided upon.

**Style Savvy**

Many wine cellars no longer function only as cool, dark places constructed solely to store wine, so it comes as little surprise that many homeowners are having fun with the décor, turning what was previously just a functional storage space into a luxury adult playroom! According to Mike Smith, CKD and owner of Artistic Kitchens, creating a focal point in the room and designing racking that artfully displays the homeowner's favorite vintages are often key elements in high-end wine cellars today. "No two luxury wine cellars are ever the same, but the ultimate goal is to provide a space where the collector can both protect and enjoy the fruits of his or her passion," he stated. Trophy bottles make an excellent focal point, so consider saving empties after drinking prized vintages.

When deciding on the look and feel of a wine cellar, it is also important to consider the style of the home. From old world to sleek and modern, wine cellars today can be built to complement the design of virtually any dwelling, so consider working with an experienced designer who can bring the vision to life. Natural stone, redwood paneling, elegant glasswork and murals all remain popular ways to bring individual character, texture and visual interest to a wine cellar, providing a seemingly limitless array of options for creative homeowners and interior designers to choose from.

For more serious oenophiles, managing and organizing a variety of vintages can be a growing challenge as time passes and more bottles are amassed. To combat this, it is often helpful to set up an inventory system or to work with a cellar manager. Electronically organizing wine has become quite popular of late, with some computerized systems and others that use bar-code technology to keep track of what is bought and sold. Even in smaller collections, however, illuminating the wine cellar with high quality, LED lighting can make it easier to locate



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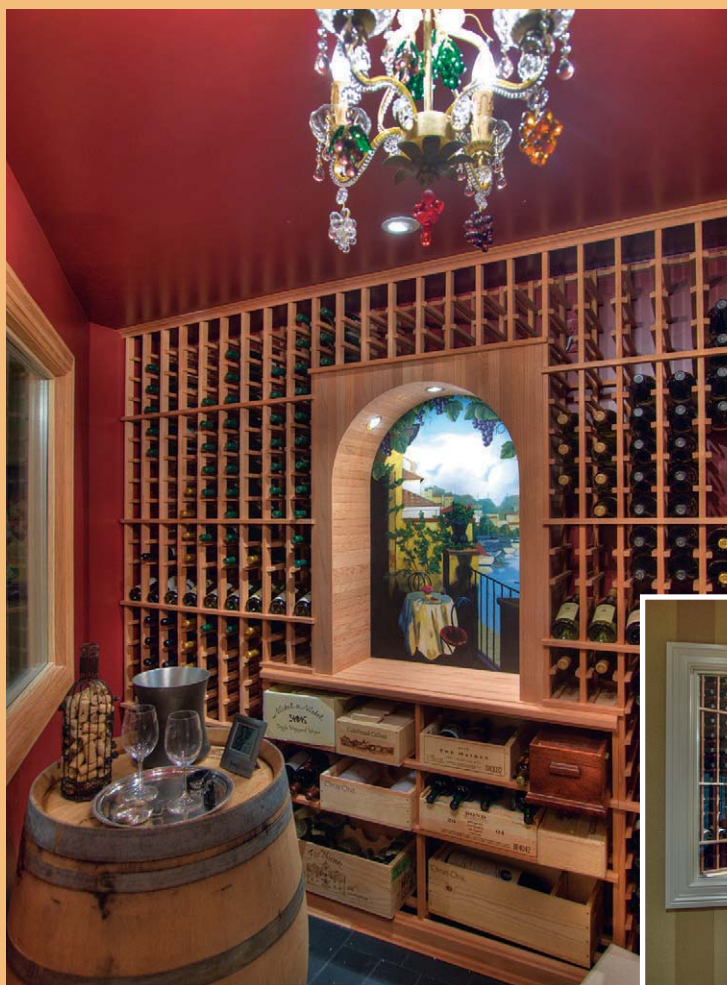


This Lexington-area homeowner was born and raised in Spain, so the design of this wine cellar was greatly influenced by that of an old winery located in the western Spanish community of Extremadura, which is renowned for its olive oil, acorn trees and indigenous grapes. The homeowners have a true love for design, which is evidenced in the reclaimed brick used in the wine cellar, which was salvaged by Clay Ingels from a building in downtown Lexington. The highlight of the cellar is the tall center table, which was found in Arizona and purchased from Gibson at the Greenbrier in West Virginia. It is a petrified wood slab that dates back more than 225 million years to the Triassic Period. The antique French chandelier is from Belle Maison Antiques in Lexington and the slate tiles came from The Tile Shop. Designed built by Thomas von Unrug.





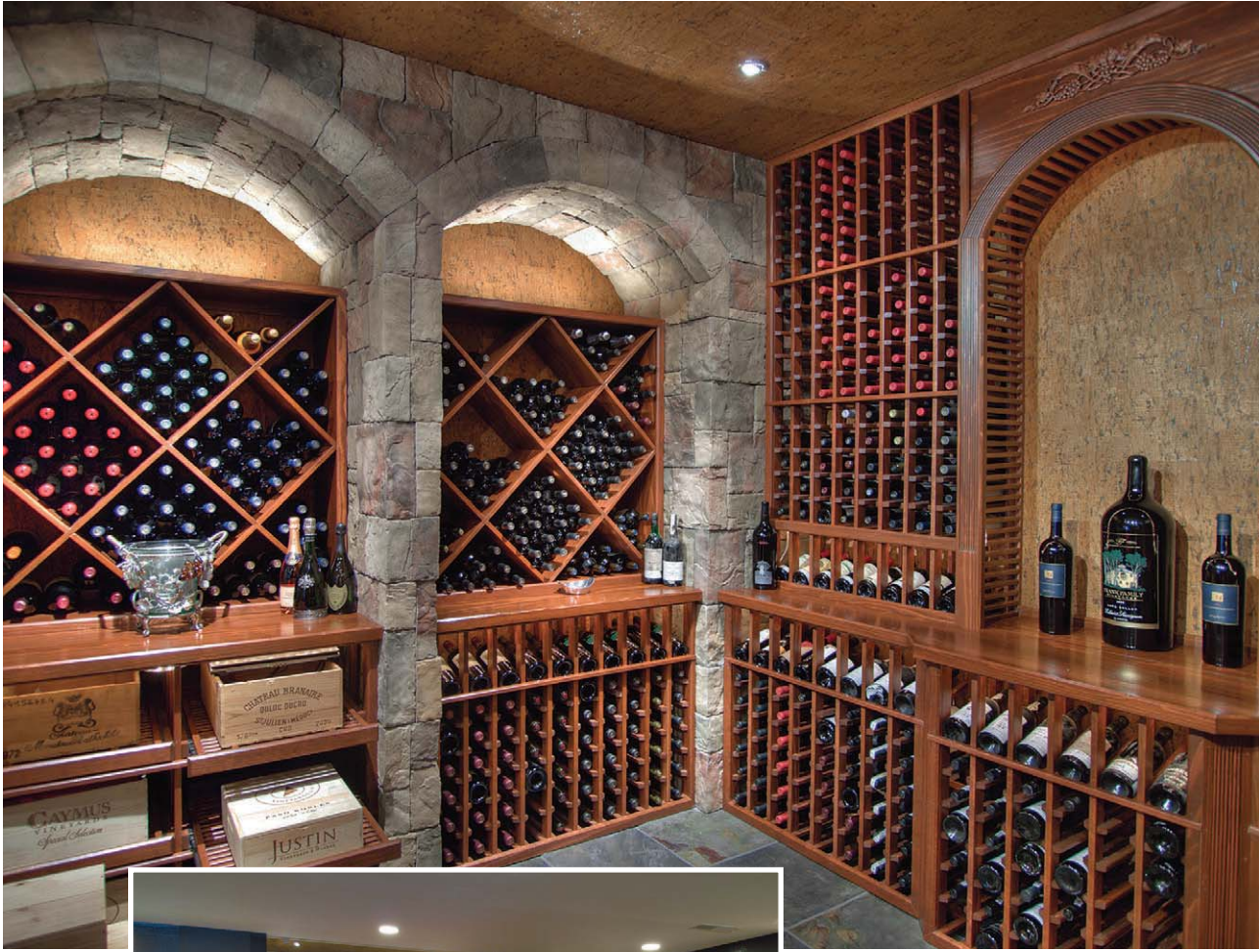
This impressive Lexington-area wine cellar was designed by Brett Norris of Wine Cellar Innovations to provide a large capacity with clean lines and no clutter. In part, this was accomplished by including a large opening and tabletop along the back wall, with bulk storage and individual redwood racking along the walls. The back wall also contains bulk and individual storage, along with drawers for hiding various wine accoutrements. A display row throughout the cellar highlights featured bottles and allows for easier identification. The wine cellar is located just behind the bar area, which was a collaboration, designed by architect Tom Wilmes, David Gregory of Custom Cabinetry and the homeowner, making it a marvelous place to entertain. Local artist Andrea Sims painted the family crest, lending a sense of depth and energy to the space, and Crawford Builders built the home.



This Louisville-area home came equipped with the perfect space for a wine cellar adjacent to the basement living room – a feature that was essential for the homeowner. The wood is all-heart redwood and features a True Radius archway a True Radius curved corner, which allows the racks to flow without sharp corners and maximizes available space. The window allows the wine cellar to remain part of the living space without compromising its temperature requirements. The barrel was a gift from a good friend's family vineyard in Napa. Brett Norris of Wine Cellar Innovations designed and built the space, while Lafe McGary at LA Construction handled the construction.







This ultra-chic wine cellar is located near a bar and entertainment room in the basement of a Louisville-area home. Its magnificent, see-through glass front wall stretches from floor to ceiling, allowing everyone in the adjacent room to enjoy the look and feel of the wine cellar from virtually any angle. It features redwood racking in a rosewood-hued water-based stain, which has no effect on the delicate wine. The floor is a magnificent slate rock, while the walls and ceiling boast wallpaper that is made with real cork, as well as cultured stone accents.

specific vintages, so be sure to carefully consider both the placement and style of the lighting as well.

#### Notable Trends

Many homeowners are opting to build a wine cellar adjacent to the kitchen or dining room instead of in the basement for the sake of convenience. Although space is often at more of a premium in a home's main living area, which tends to limit the number of bottles that can be stored in wine cellars on the main floor, this option can work very nicely for enthusiasts who enjoy fine wine as a

hobby and do not wish to amass a large collection.

Many of today's larger wine cellars were designed to encourage visitors to linger when making a selection on what to drink, but some homeowners find it uncomfortable to spend too much time in a room that is around 55°F. To solve this, many wine cellars are now built with "windows," glass walls and/or see-through doors. This allows the interior of the cellar to be viewed from without and encourages homeowners to plan living and enter-

taining spaces around the wine cellar in order to enjoy its contents in more ways than one.

When stored properly, fine wine will retain its quality, actually improving in aroma, flavor and complexity with age. Since most collectors tend to buy more wine over time, consider choosing a space that allows room to grow if necessary. A wine cellar is an incredible addition to any home, providing a proper place in which to store wine that can also double as a wonderful place to entertain and a functional work of art. **K**