

Photo by Hal Brown

One of Jay Rosen's wine-cellar creations in Short Hills. The mahogany archway with magnum display racks opens to more storage. This cellar can hold about 3,000 bottles.

CENTERPIECE: CLIMATE CONTROL

99 bottles (or lots more) of wine on the wall

Martinsville man makes cellars of all shapes and sizes

By **JEFF WEBER**
Staff Writer

The best things in life are not free. In fact, they usually are quite expensive. And luxury often is paired with necessity — at least that's the way oenophile and construction maven Jay Rosen of Martinsville sees it.

Rosen developed a liking for wine in his 20s, but didn't start collecting it or forge a passion for it until his 30s. His travels to Europe and California netted all sorts of fresh knowledge, vintages and nuances of wine.

So his collection quickly turned from just a few bottles to hundreds. A place to store his prize wines — a cellar — became important. Enter his penchant for creative building.

"As my collection grew, so did the realization that a wine cellar was not a luxury, it indeed was a

WINE STORAGE

WHAT: Washington Valley Cellars

ADDRESS: 2032 Washington Valley Road, Martinsville

INFORMATION:
 908-469-5558 or
www.washingtonvalleycellars.com

necessity," Rosen says. "So I set out to build my own cellar and have been building them ever since."

That's how Washington Valley Cellars was born in 1992. In the past 16 years, Rosen has constructed as many as 35 to 40 per year, and more than 200 total.

"When we build our cellars, we build them from scratch so we can build anything at all," says Rosen, whose smallest cellar has been no larger than 3 feet by 5 feet, housing 400 to 500 bot-

ties and costing \$8,000 to \$10,000. His biggest? One that can hold up to 10,000 bottles and cost more than \$100,000.

Myriad processes go into constructing a wine cellar, yet most people are concerned only with the look of it — whether to choose stone, brick, plaster and wood, for instance. But according to Rosen, maintaining the right temperature, humidity, lighting and even sound is far more pertinent to keeping wine in optimum condition.

"After that, it's just aesthetic," he says. "It often just depends on the look they (his customers) are trying to achieve, whether they want it rustic or contemporary or whatever."

Rosen — using his company's parent firm, Washington Valley

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Photo by Hal Brown

Above, one of Jay Rosen's wine-cellar creations in Bernardsville. Below, a wine cellar "loft" in Martinsville. Bottom, a Rosen cellar in Warren.

Wine

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Construction Company, Inc. — has designed and built wine cellars for people as far away as Utah and South Carolina. There's one of his in the Manhattan restaurant Veritas. And most recently, he's put together creations for K. Hovnanian model homes in Warren.

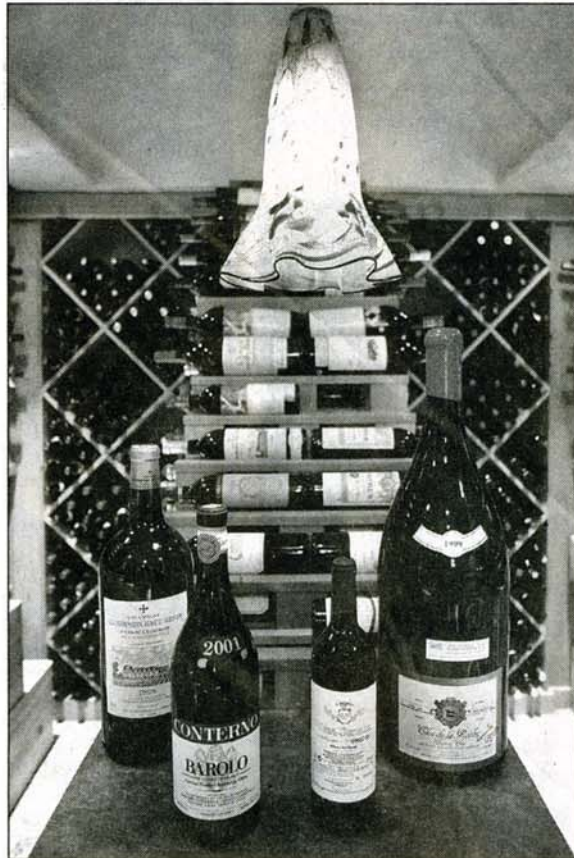
It sounds like a lot of work, but Rosen's formula for success is simple: Let the buyer make all the decisions.

"People who collect wine have a better idea what they want," he says. "Others do it because it's need-to-have."

Rosen's own collection recently outgrew his home's storing capacity. So he needed to have something bigger and better. No problem. Rosen simply gutted the space above his garage and turned it into a 4,000-bottle wine cellar. It's conveniently located just off his dining room, too, so guests can help themselves . . . if Rosen allows it.

"Wine is very individual," he says. "The best one is the one you want to drink."

For Rosen, that usually means something from



Australia, Spain, Italy, Germany, the United States — even Lebanon. But when it comes to wine cellars, there is only one way to do it — especially if a customer gives him free reign.

"One of the things we do that's different is, knowing the ins and outs and the different-sized

bottles, we do it based on personal likes," Rosen says. "The cellars we build for you don't just hold your wine, they pamper it."

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Local cellar creator knows his wine

By **JEFF WEBER**
Staff Writer

Wine is something about which many Americans are passionate. It just seems to run through our blood — literally, at times.

That's been the case for Martinsville resident Jay Rosen since his 20s and 30s, and he's 53 now. So to say he's an expert oenophile is a bit of an understatement — especially when you consider he and his company, Washington Valley Cellars, have been making wine cellars since 1992.

But there wouldn't be any cellars without the wine, and having enough is never a problem for

Rosen, since his newly crafted cellar holds more than 4,000 vintages from all over the world.

"After college, I started a wine group and kept it going for 10 years," Rosen says. "Then I traveled. And traveled some more ... Europe, California, even around New Jersey. They're making wine everywhere — Greece, Lebanon, Croatia, Virginia — these days."

And that's just about how diverse his own collection is, too. From French bordeauxs, burgundies and champagnes to vintages from the Piedmont in Italy and Napa Valley in California, Rosen's got it all.

The only question is,

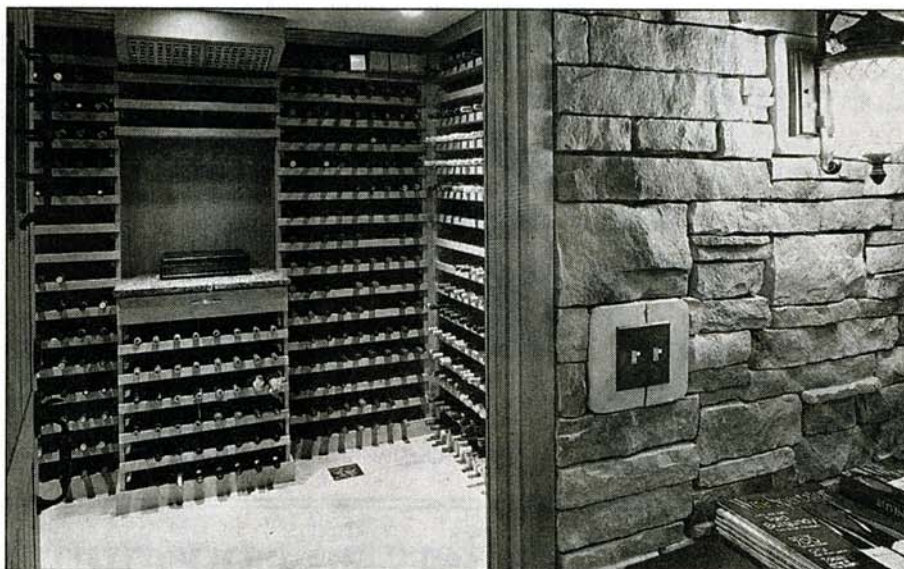
what to do with it all? When he's not sampling the collection himself, Rosen often will entertain guests. And he knows just how to select the perfect wine.

"I open 10 bottles and let them taste it," he says.

Rosen even crafts his own wine from time to time. So if you happen to be one of his clients, in town to get a mock up on a new cellar or alterations on your old one, you can pick up a bottle.

"I like all wines," Rosen says, "and I always think it's fun to try new and different wines."

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Four wines to consider for your cellar

By **FRANK SUTHERLAND**
Gannett News Service

Here are four wines to check out — and perhaps add to your wine cellar:

■ 2005 Charles Krug Peter Mondavi Family Winery Yountville-Napa Cabernet Sauvignon, \$27.

A pretty nose of black cherries, black currants, coffee and cocoa. The palate mirrored the bouquet, with a long, pretty finish.

■ 2006 Clos Pegase Mit-

suko's Vineyard Chardonnay, \$24.

Pretty stone-fruit aromas — peaches and pears — along with scents of apples, nectarines and oak. A rich-and-round texture in a full body.

■ 2005 Kenwood Vineyards Sonoma County Zinfandel, \$14.

Fresh fruit aromas of blueberries, raspberries and boysenberries plus cedar, oak and spice

notes. Bright and lively in the mouth, it tasted young but may improve after a while in the bottle.

■ 2006 Valley of the Moon Carneros Pinot Noir, \$20.

Red cherry, eucalyptus and spice aromas arose from the glass. Medium-bodied, this would be a nice choice for those who look for a red wine to go with strongly flavored fish.