

STYLE

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Best cellar

MADISON HOME
INTOXICATES

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It's a labor of love and a masterpiece; a work of art and a working storage area. It's damp, cool, and refreshingly intoxicating. It's a magnificent wine cellar built by Jay Rosen. Bedecked in soothing hues of burgundy, cream, and, well, wine, of course, and trimmed in rich blond woods, the 24 x 14 square foot wine cellar holds 3,000 gleaming bottles of wine, ranging in cost from \$50 to \$1,000 a pop, um, cork.

"Wine cellars are wildly popular," says Rosen, 51, owner of Washington Valley Cellars. "These days it's the 'in' thing to have. It reflects well on a home."

Rosen should know. He's custom-built more than a hundred in the last five years.

Flanked by French doors, the wine cellar, built inside the basement of a Madison home, even features a spacious sitting area, complete with couches and an intriguing coffee table in distressed white that doubles as a working clock with Roman numerals.

Wallpapered in ink renderings of claret and blush, the sitting area is an



Jay Rosen has custom built 100 wine cellars in the last five years.

ode to famous drink, its walls graced by names such as Hedges & Butler, Burgundies, Sherries, Ports, and Champagnes.

Handsome cases made of pine are black-stamped with more names: Quintessa, Chateau Certan, Robert Mondavi Winery, Penfolds, Dominus, Nickel & Nickel, Chateau Henye.

Elsewhere in the cellar are paintings of bunches of plump grapes, striking sculptures, elegant decanters, and a gleaming glass urn filled from top to bottom with corks.

"If you're going to buy a lot of wine, you need a way of storing it properly," says Rosen.

Ah, to heart health.

Ever since the American Medical Association recommended moderate alcohol consumption (one to two glasses a day) to lower risks of heart disease and stroke, this ancient beverage has enjoyed a mantle of healthy choice rather than under-the-influence lushness.

"Wine aids in longevity," says Rosen. "And it's a social beverage, more acceptable than hard liquor like vodka or scotch, able to be matched to certain foods as part of the enjoyment of a meal."

The wine cellar is kept at a constant



and chilly 56 degrees, not quite as cold as the inside of your refrigerator, but necessary for the proper care of wine.

“Warm temperatures affect wine’s aging,” says Rosen. “Cooler temperatures make it last longer.”

Wine should actually be sipped at room temperature, however.

“Wine is a living, breathing thing,” Rosen says. “It needs time to acclimate to its environment. The flavors may take an hour to come to full finish.”

In case you’re wondering, Rosen is a full-fledged connoisseur himself. The Martinsville contractor custom-built a wine cellar in his own home too, makes his own wine, and travels often to far-flung wine-making regions of the world to keep up with his favorite brew.

“It’s my hobby and vocation,” he says. “I’ve always liked wine. It’s fun.”

Studies show wine is something both men and women like equally (unlike, say, football and manicures, respectively).


The cost of one of these babies?

Start at \$15,000 and go from there.

Rosen custom-constructs each wine cellar from scratch. It can take two weeks to one year to complete an entire wine cellar.

“Even people who aren’t wine people are building wine cellars in their homes,” he says. “It’s the latest thing today.”

As to the persistent question of why all those rows of beautiful bottles need to lie on their sides, Rosen says, “It keeps the corks moist. Wine needs a tight seal or it will prematurely age.”

Bottoms up, everyone. 

Perfect pairings

Match-making food to wine is a passionate pleasure for most wine lovers. Here is a brief guide to get you started.

FOOD	WINE	FLAVORS
Chicken	Riesling	Flowers, peaches
Fish	Chardonnay	Apple, pear, vanilla
Turkey	Pinot Noir	Spicy cloves, black cherries
Beef	Zinfandel	Briar, black pepper
Duck	Cabernet Sauvignon	Herbs, chocolate
Lamb	Merlot	Pine, cherries
Vegetables	Sauvignon Blanc	Grassy, sweaty

— Food Network

