

Storing Wine in Small Spaces ***by Kim Riley Tyndall***

While many Central Ohio homes have large wine cellars or built-in storage facilities, not all home owners have the luxury of such square footage when it comes to storing wines. In recent months, Columbus has seen a tremendous growth in condominium construction and Baby Boomers from all over are looking to downsize. If you are a wine lover, how do you adapt space restrictions to accommodate stocking up on your favorite bottles of wine?

According to Chris Meutsch, Design Consultant for Wine Cellar Innovations, proper storage of wine is critical regardless of whether you are working with 50 square feet or 5,000. Knowing the guidelines for proper storage is key. "Ideally, you want to store wine in a dark, cool place, and you want to maintain consistency in temperature and humidity," Meutsch says. "Even if that temperature is 70 degrees, the consistency is the important element. You don't want to see fluctuations from 50 to 70 degrees and back to 50 or wines that go in and out of sunlight."

Meutsch recommends those moving into new condominiums or any new living space take their wine storage needs into consideration as they build. "It's definitely easier to work with the space while it's under construction rather than making changes later." Since this isn't always possible, Meutsch says a storage rack is usually the most practical and more economical option for those living in smaller spaces. And, with the many choices in wine rack designs, it's almost certain you will find a design to fit your home décor and budget.

Today's wine racks fit the range from being subtle and "barely there" to being designed in such a way as to make a statement. Racks can be found made of woods like mahogany, pine or solid oak, or of metal or treated sawdust or plastic. Designed for smaller spaces, they are used primarily for display rather than long-term storage. Meutsch says, "We can design a rack specifically tailored to the customer's taste and décor. We can create a rack that holds a single bottle, six or up to 300."

When planning for wine storage needs, Meutsch says he helps the client determine the best place for storage and then measures to determine how much space they have to work with. For those limited on space, Meutsch says a closet is a good choice. "I often see wines stored where they shouldn't be: over the refrigerator or next to a furnace. Again, you want to avoid heat--and vibration, too."

Another popular option in wine storage for small spaces is refrigeration systems. Like wine racks, these can be designed to fit a customer's needs and space restrictions. Many of the systems work on a condenser unit. "The unit works on the same principle as an A/C unit," Meutsch says, "just on a smaller scale." Refrigeration systems can be designed to hold as few as 50 bottles or as many as 25,000.

Finally, some new-build condominium complexes are installing wine storage facilities in their basements. Tenants have the option of having a centrally located, out-of-the-way spot for storing wines and saving their living space for *living*. "We have seen this newest

development in Northern Kentucky, Dayton and Cincinnati," Meutsch says. "The basement is designed to house temperature-controlled units that look similar to lockers where tenants keep their wine." Those living in the units have the advantage of using all their square footage for living space while their wines are stored below them in a designated area of the building.

With the many options for storing wine in small spaces, the wine lover may be only limited by their imagination. "More than ever before, regardless of space, there are options for storing wines that look good, meet practical needs and fit into a wide range of budgets," Meutsch says. Cool it. Store it. Then, open and enjoy!