



e'd all love to have our own grotto for storing wines under ideal conditions: a temperature of 55 to 58 de-

grees, a relative humidity of 65 to 70 percent and protection from vibration and strong light. Short of that fantasy, the connoisseurs among us can transform part of our homes into proper



AT HOME WITH FOOD & WINE

WINE STORAGE

For All-Sized Budgets and All-Sized Collections
By Donna Sapolin

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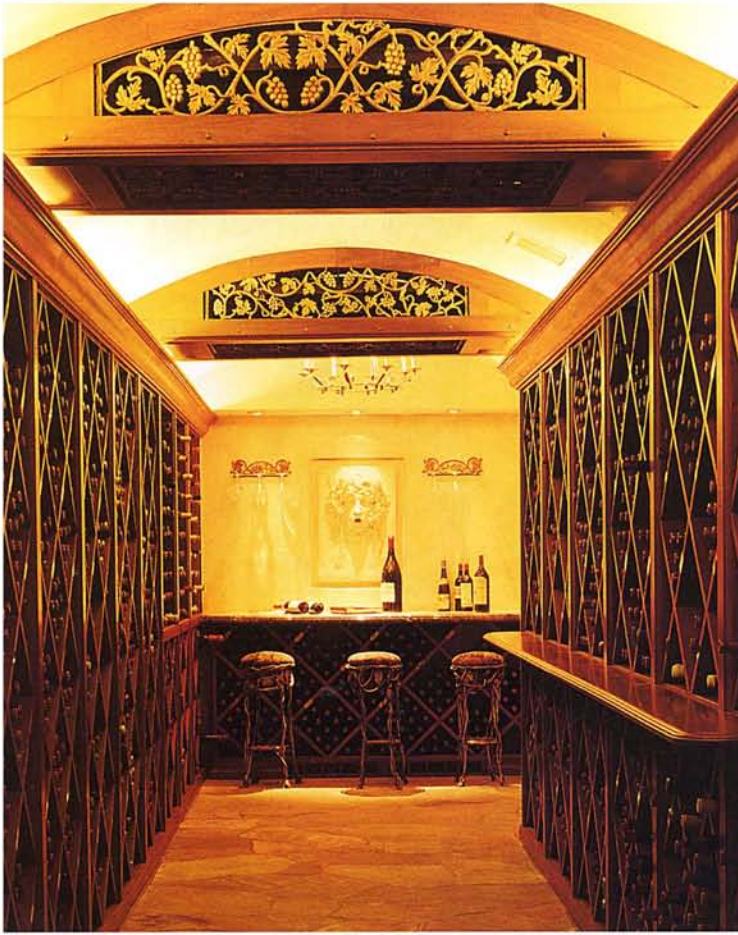


buy self-contained re-per several cases of us who just keep a case handsome racks for that stairs or a shelf under



the stereo. No matter what your needs, there are options for almost any space, style or budget.





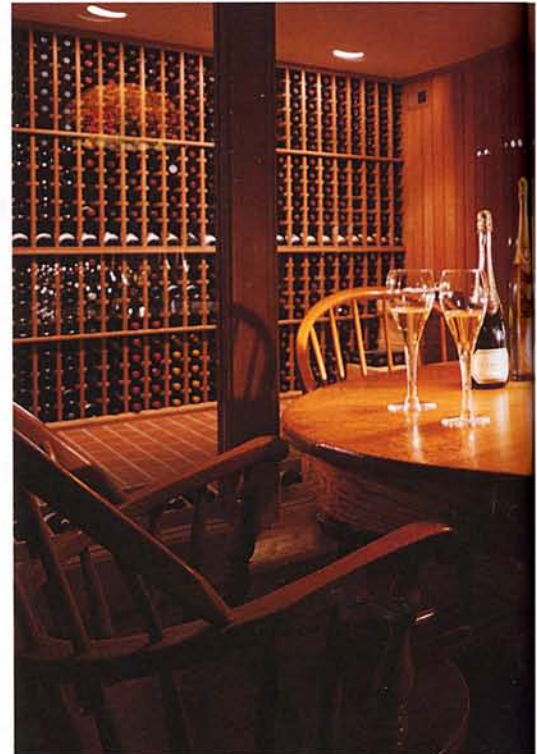
If you invest in first-class wines, it makes economic sense to safeguard their character with sound cellaring practices. "Nothing is more critical to the quality of wine than proper storage conditions," says John Frederick Walker, a contributing editor of *Food & Wine*. "People will pay a lot of money for fine wine and then be extraordinarily cheap when it comes to storing it. In fact, they have their priorities backward. Moderately priced wine correctly stored ends up tasting better than fine wine poorly stored."

Industrialist David Koch devised a cellar for his 5,000-bottle collection of early vintage Bordeaux and Burgundies in his Aspen home that merges state-of-the-art efficiency with ultimate fantasy. He began by selecting a New York City designer, Christine Hawley (212-721-0831), who balances function and aesthetics. She planned a \$300,000 cellar with notable attention to craftsmanship and practicality. Doors with hand-carved grape-vine patterns (inspired by designs in several châteaux in France) lead to a 32-foot-long vaulted corridor lined with mahogany bins, which contain open and sealed cases and have slots for individual bottles. A built-in marble table for decanting with Hawley-designed glass racks and stools featuring sinuous grape-vine motifs provides a spot for Koch to sample his wines. It is here that this frequent entertainer catalogs his bottles and makes notes of what needs replenishing.

In Koch's mahogany wine cellar, above, grape-motif steel grills coated in copper and gold camouflage the vents of the high-tech cooling and humidifying systems.

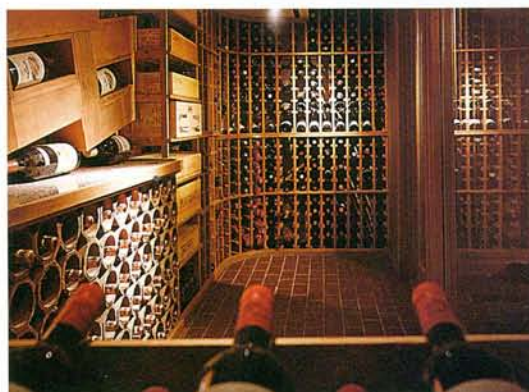
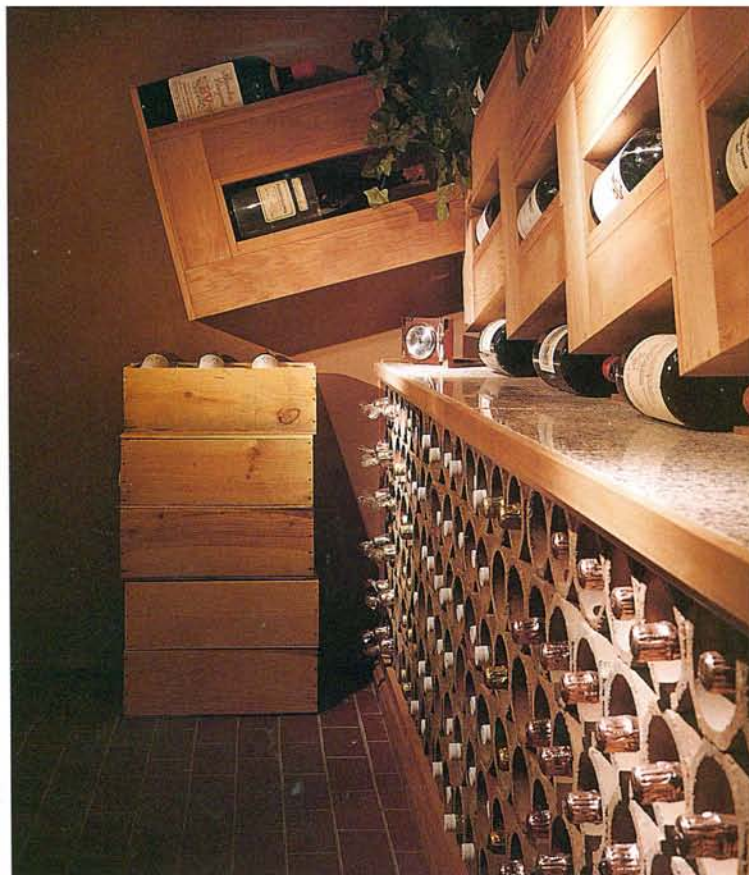


Over Koch's marble decanting table, above, Bacchus surveys the scene. Plaster walls are given a timeworn appearance with a wash of Champagne colors. The light tones of the wall and table make it easy to see wine bottle sediment. Wall-mounted racks custom designed by Hawley store glasses.

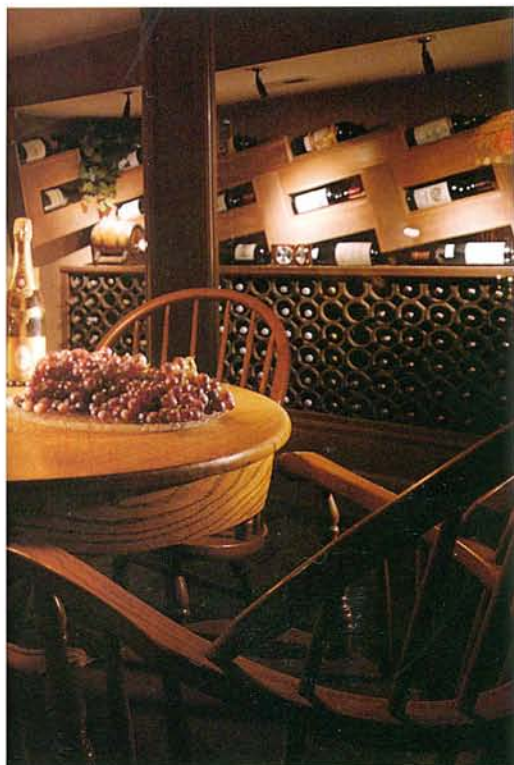


In the Washington, D.C., home of Edward Lancaster, designer David Spon of Wine Cellar Concepts in northern Virginia (703-356-3742) created a storage environment for a 2,200-bottle collection by balancing diverse textures and materials, including slate, clay, wood and glass. "By taking advantage of the inexpensive clay drainage pipes that the owner had used for Champagne storage," says Spon, "I was able to save money and add decorative interest." A russet-speckled granite counter tops the clay pipe storage area and provides a textural complement to the warm hues of the redwood display unit overhead, which was handcrafted by Spon to hold large bottles: imperials, jeroboams, Methuselahs and double magnums. In addition, the designer worked with a Cincinnati-based company, Wine Racks Unlimited, to customize redwood racks for standard bottles. A row of rare wines running at midlevel through these racks, combined with two curved sections, adds visual variety to the walls of otherwise regimented bottles.

In an adjoining dining and wine-tasting area, separated from the temperature-controlled cellar by four floor-to-ceiling insulated glass panels, Lancaster entertains up to eight guests at a time. From here, you can clearly see that Spon's design incorporates three methods for storing wine: racks created from scratch, custom assemblages of modular systems and the imaginative use of clay drainage pipes, a low-cost, ready-made product.



Along one wall, above and at left, a redwood display unit stores oversize bottles at precisely a 13-degree angle to keep corks moist. Clay drainage pipes located underneath house Champagne.



From the antique oak table in the dining and wine-tasting area, left, guests can view the wine cellar through a wall of glass panels framed in redwood.