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How To Start Your Own Wine Cellar



**Discover the Joys and
Ease of Your Own Cellar**

How to Start Your Own Cellar

Imagine coming home to the comfort of your own house and within reach a bottle of good wine taken from your own cellar.... If that does not describe a wine dreamer's paradise, then I don't know what does.

Think of wine collection as an adventure. Well, yes, there are a few considerations to think of, but when you come right down to it, it is more about the thrill of the hunt than what bottle goes well with what recipe.

Starting your own cellar can be as simple as buying more wine than you can drink at one time. But always remember that your wine collection reflects *your* personality, not some magazine's or some pompous wine connoisseur's taste and preference.

So as long as you get your priorities straight, then you should be well on your way to creating an excellent wine collection.

Where to Start

It cannot be more stressed that wine collection is all about what kind of person *you* are. The bottles you choose, when and where you pop the cork, and who you share them with are the things being considered when you start your own cellar. The rest of the stuff, such as storage, temperature, and years, are technicalities that you can put aside for later.

Having your own wine cellar gives you the extraordinary ability to share precious moments with friends, family, and loved one. Whether those moments in your life are good, bad, boring, exciting, glamorous, sad – wine gives you the chance to relate all that with the people who are most important to you.

As such, having your own wine cellar is all about ***sharing wine***, and certainly not about hoarding it. But remember that when you share wine, you are sharing more than just wine but a moment of your life, an hour of your time, a section of yourself. How can you share yourself with the ones you love through wine if your collection merely echoes the wine opinion of some expert from a magazine?

Thus when you want to have your own cellar you start with ***who you are***.

The “You” in Wine

Choose those bottles that cater to your personal style. There can be no better way to start a wine collection that is truly you than this.

Are you a young free spirit? A recondite intellectual? A chef? An itinerant traveler?

For a wine cellar that totally screams YOU, make sure that your collection reflects the kind of personality you have.

For instance, if you are a free spirit or a New Age beatnik, you will find a big, over-the-top Shiraz from Australia as a great cellar item to have. However, if you are a recondite intellectual then a delicate bottle of Oregon Pinot Noir will be more suitable for your esoteric taste.

Of course, you are not always the same person all the time. Sometimes, different facets of your personality arise, depending on the situation or the kind of day you are having so getting ten bottles of Shiraz is probably not a very bright idea if you find yourself one day wanting to get the wheels of your mind turning. Sometimes, you may want a flute of sparkling champagne to bubble away the day’s worries, or a glass of the nutty, oaky flavor of Chardonnay to whet your appetite for dinner.

Either way, getting a bottle that represents each facet of your personality is a good idea for starting your own wine cellar.

Sharing with Friends

As mentioned, starting a wine collection is not about hoarding as many wines as you can, but about sharing it with the people who matter to you. You could be playing host for the night, having unexpected guests for dinner, or eating Chinese food alone at midnight. For each occasion, you need the right bottle from your wine cellar to help the evening go down smoothly.

In addition, you may have a diverse group of friends, as do lots of other people. The best way to show to them that they are important is to get items in your cellar that speak to *their* styles. Not only that, but choose wines that reflect the different dynamics that are created when you and your friends are in a room together.

Choosing the items that would go to your cellar is not just about you but about what interests you, including the ones with whom you will eventually share a bottle with. So getting a few bottles of relatively inexpensive wine that you truly enjoy deserves a “why not” while having a few big names in your homage à vin might just be what you need for a truly knockout party.

And once you have all this figured out, it's time for you put down that crystal glass, whip out a pen and paper, and starting making a list of the best wines that would suit your kind of cellar.

Where to Put it

If you have been drinking wine for regular intervals, then you probably have enough idea to know where to store those few bottles you like to keep in reserve. However, if this is entirely your first time venturing into the vine world, then consider a cool corner in your house.

You might wonder why we are not recommending those good ol' wine racks in your kitchen. That's because most kitchen designers place these racks in the least cool area – above the stove, which would spell disaster for your mini cellar.

Wine is best if stored in **temperatures from 58 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit** with not more than 2 degrees fluctuation in a day. 65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit with no more than 4 degrees fluctuation in a day is also considered acceptable temperature. However, if the temperature fluctuates at more than 10 degrees in a day, then the result could be disastrous.

The best choice you have for storage is often the **basement**. However, if you don't have one, consider buying one of those small wine units with controls for temperature and humidity.

These babies can hold about 50 bottles each so unless you are planning to stack a warehouse full of wines, these wine units should suffice.

50 bottles is a decent number to start a collection. If you are starting with fewer bottles than that, there are also wine refrigerators with a 24 bottle storage capacity.

Next to temperature, another concern you may have in determining where to build your wine cellar is **insulation**.

The storage environment must be one that provides the basics of stable temperature, no light, and no vibration so that means an area that is well shaded,

well insulated and with only the barest minimum when it comes to air movement both in and out.

Humidity is another issue that you will most likely deal with when it comes to choosing the right storage environment for your wine collection. Remember that dry atmosphere is an enemy of the natural cork seal.

If there is not enough humidity in the cellar, the cork of your wine bottles could dry and shrink, allowing the wine to move out of the bottle (called *ullage*) and air to naturally move in. This could ruin the taste of your wine.

And finally, pay attention to the amount of **light** that streams inside your cellar. As too little humidity could ruin the taste of your wine, so does too much light. Light can prematurely age a bottle of wine and ultraviolet light leave even dark colored bottles with unfavorable and irreversible changes.

This is because the ultraviolet rays can damage the organic compounds such as tannins found in wine that contribute to its aroma, flavor, and structure. If these organic compounds are damaged, your wine will never taste as it should.

Good Wines for Cellaring

Now that you know where to start and where to store your wine collection, it is now time for you to get on to the best part of the adventure – selecting good wines for cellaring. Genuine oenophiles will find this portion of the wine hunt exciting, but beginners like you will probably find it perplexing. Not to worry though because becoming an oenophile is pretty easy.

The first thing that you are going to do is to **read up**, before you drink up.

Indulge yourself in wine reading. Read anything about wine that you can get your hands on – wine tasting reviews, ratings, articles on the different types of grapes, wine regions, etc.

You will notice that wine writers use a different kind of lingo which might take some getting used to. But that is the beauty of reading up before drinking up. Or better yet, reading up *while* drinking up. That way, you can taste the wine yourself and have a better experience reading as now you know exactly what the author means by saying that the wine is “oaky,” “fruity”, “heavy”, “thick”, or “smooth.”

Try nursing a glass while reading a copy of a popular wine magazine and describing the taste with your own words.

The next to-do-thing is to decide on a ***budget*** and stick with it. Wine is supposed to be a form of indulgence on your part but it can still be an exciting whole adventure even with such limitations as a budget.

Try setting a financial plan where you do not exceed \$15 per bottle. From that budget, you can work on selecting the best wines to put in your cellar.

And finally, you need to ***make a list***, based on wine preferences you may already have or on the information you got from reading up on wines.

Below is a sample list of good wines that are considered must-haves for any beginner to his/her wine collection:

Champagne

When it comes to prestigious wines, champagne (or “sparkling wine” when outside France) certainly tops the list. No good host should go without a bottle or two stored in the cellar. Not only does it provide the perfect first sip of a great evening, its acidity whets your appetite for what is in store for you.

When you choose a bottle of champagne for your wine cellar, there are four factors you need to focus on: **marque (brand), vintage, size of bottle, and dryness**. The good news is that there is only a short list of famous champagne marques around – that is, if you do not count the sparkling wines from regions outside of France, including New Zealand, California, and Australia.

Below are some of the more familiar names:

- Bollinger
- Charles Heidsieck
- Krug
- Moet et Chandon
- G.H. Mumm
- Joseph Perrier
- Ruinart
- Taittinger
- Veuve

- Cliquot-Ponsardin

There is not much variety in terms of vantage when it comes to Champagne so that part you shouldn't worry much about. As for size of the bottle, just remember that once a bottle is opened, you can't save it for another day. So be sure to get only as much champagne as you are planning to drink. If it is a large party you are planning, then buy accordingly.

Dryness in champagne, on the other hand, is something that requires a bit more discrimination. If you are not entirely sure what the word means, it is simply the opposite of sweet. Doux champagne are used only as a dessert wine while Brut is more of an all-around type.

Sauvignon Blanc

Popular among many oenophiles, sauvignon blanc is a wine you might want to consider for your wine cellar. Like chardonnay, its purest expression is found in France, particularly in the Loire Valley and Bordeaux although great quantities of it are also produced in New Zealand, California, Australia, South Africa, and Chile.

The distinctive, penetrating aroma and fruity flavor that can range from oaky (Bordeaux) to crisp (Loire) of sauvignon blanc makes it the perfect versatile, food friendly wine to have around, especially going well with seafood and herbal preparations.

Cabernet Sauvignon

It is not called the "king of the red wines" for nothing. You can never have a decent wine cellar without at least a bottle or two of cabernet sauvignon.

Ranging from medium bodied to full bodied and characterized by their high tannin content (which gives them their structure and intrigue plus a rich, ripe berry, tobacco and sometimes green pepper flavor), cabernet sauvignons are ideal wines to have around when having red meats, flavorful and heartier pastas, lamb, strong flavored cheese, and chocolates.

Try to the following marques for producing the best type of Cabs:

- Shafer Vineyards
- Beaulieu Vineyard
- Grgich Hills
- Sterling Vineyards
- Screaming Eagle
- Stag's Leap Wine Cellars
- Chateau St. Jean
- McManis
- Hogue
- Jardin
- Montes
- Columbia Crest

After you have made your own list of sample wines to add to your cellar, then you are all set to having your very own cellar that reflects your personality, speak to your loved ones, and makes your dreams of oenophile bliss a reality.

Now, you can finally come home to a good old bottle of wine from your own cellar.

You are invited to pass this report along to as many people as you like, provided that you make no changes to it and that you give it away for FREE.

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