Safely Socking Your Wine Away

Where to Store Your Bottles When Your Rack Gets Full

by George Yatchisin

Even with real estate prices leveling off, it's hard to pony up the bucks for extra square footage just for wine storage. That means anyone with more than enough wine to share with friends at a good party tends to have bottles stashed in kitchen racks, tucked away in closets, and hidden under beds. That might be fine if you're investing in nothing more than Two Buck Chuck, but the rest of us with more expensive taste — or, perhaps, simply taste — are at risk. "Think of wine as a perishable," says Bob Wesley, owner of The Winehound. "You wouldn't drive around on a hot afternoon with $100 worth of prime steaks sitting in the back seat of your car, so don't do that to wine!"

That means both locally and nationally, as wine collecting (or, as my wife calls it, "buying too much wine") grows as a concern for foodies, people are looking for places to store wine. Most recently, the Carey Group decided to get into the wine-designated storage business. Already owners of Patterson Self-Storage, they knew some people were using that space to store wine. That spurred them to create Santa Barbara Cellars, where they could control both temperature and humidity.

PHOTOS BY JIM BARTSCH

Marketing director Rea Warrecker works to make sure that wine stored at Santa Barbara Cellars is safe and secure.

"It's high tech, what we're going for," said marketing director Rea Warrecker. "The building is aimed at 55 degrees, plus or minus, since you can't quite control for people closing and opening the door. You have to be concerned about someone who can promise a steady exact temperature."

Santa Barbara Cellars can promise not only security — your electronic code to enter the building allows only the lock to your locker to work with your key, for instance — but a personal touch. Warrecker explained, "We're very customer-service oriented. We even have someone on duty during the day who can sign in your wine shipments sent here directly." That last service is particularly helpful for wine buyers who don't want to have to sign (as someone 21 years old or older must) for wines UPS'd to their place of work, where it might not seem seemly to have cases of wine keep showing up.

Of course, Santa Barbara Cellars is pleasant enough that someone might choose to stay there and have their wine go to work. Each area has a wine-themed name like Bordeaux or Chianti; everything is meticulously clean; the metalwork — all stainless steel to prevent mold — was manufactured by national leader Janus International; and the refrigeration and humidity system was built by San Luis Obispo's Wighton's Inc. No expense was spared to keep your wine happy and uncooked. "Cooked wine tends to taste fruitless, and reminds me of wine made from grapes that get sunburned," described Wesley. "There's a cooked flavor, say, like the difference between a fresh plum off the produce cart versus one that's been sautéed in a pan on the stove."

Wine storage in Santa Barbara isn't just for mega-collectors, either; companies know you might have anywhere from four to 500 cases, and can offer you space for any amount in that range. It's a great opportunity to remain calm, cool, and collected — both you and your best bottles.

The WINEHOUND
and
Present:
A Wine Tasting:

"Incredible Wines You *Never* Get The Chance to Taste."
Saturday, June 28th from 3-5 pm at
the hungry cat
1134 Chapala Street

The wines:

Sine Qua Non 2005 The Petition White Blend
(Wine Advocate rating: 95)

JL Chave 2005 Hermitage Rouge
(Wine Spectator rating: 98)

Sine Qua Non 1998 Syrah E-Raised
(direct from Sine Qua Non's wine library)
(Wine Advocate rating: 95-98)

Sine Qua Non 2005 Grenache Atlantis
(Wine Advocate rating: 96-98)

Sine Qua Non 2005 Syrah Atlantis
(Wine Advocate rating: 95-97)

Two Hands 2005 Shiraz Ares
(Wine Advocate rating: 95)

Kaesler 2005 Shiraz Old Bastard
(WIne Advocate rating: 98)

• *Also, we'll have New Releases from Jonata Winery!*

Chef Dylan Fultineer is planning a special selection of cheeses and appetizers just for this event

Tickets are $100.00 per person, must be purchased in advance
and are available at The Winehound
(Tasting limited to 30 people)
Please call to reserve at 845 5247 or just stop by
1221 Chapala Street

Just across from City Lot #5
The WINEHOUND
www.thewinehound.com
Join our email list - go to : www.thewinehound.com
or send an email to : info @thewinehound.com
1221 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 1-805-845-5247
Monday-Saturday 11am-7pm | Sunday 12pm-6pm

CHAMPAGNE DINNER
At SB's only BYOB Wine & Dine
Wed. June 25, 6:30pm
4-course gourmet organic meal
Entrée: Scallops in Coconut Curry
Speaker: Lucas & Lewellen Vineyards
$45 (incl. tax & tip; no corkage fee!)
Advance reservations required
SpiritLand Bistro (805) 966-7759