

The Top Ten Questions to Ask When Building a Custom Wine Cellar

1. What is the purpose of the wine room?

Are you interested in maximum wine storage, entertaining, or a mix of both? Many people just want to store and cool the maximum number of bottles in a room, but others would like a showpiece room where they can pour and entertain people.

2. Which wood species?

Redwood, pine, mahogany, stained mahogany? Redwood has been the standard wood species over the years due to its ability to resist mold and mildew. Redwood looks beautiful without any stain, but Mahogany is a beautiful hardwood that accepts stain very well. Pine is a softer wood that is more economical but does not accept stain very well.

3. What are you planning to store?

750 ml bottles, magnums, splits (half bottles), bottle cases? How do you purchase your wine - by the case, or individually? The bottle sizes will affect what type of racking you will need, and you may want to think about how you will purchase in the future as well. Also, what type of wine; reds, whites, champagnes? Whites and champagnes can be store in a cellar but should be moved to a cooler temperature before serving.

4. How do you want to store your wine?

In the winemaker's case (case shelf)? Individually in its own bottle cubicle, or on top of one another (diamond wine bin)? The wine bins will allow for more quantity to be stored in the cellar while the individual bottle cubicles allow for better airflow. Would you like a display row to showcase your favorite labels? Low and high reveals are available for a showcase.

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5. Would you like a counter space for pouring?

It's a must-have for those wishing to hang out in the wine cellar and entertain. Tops can be made of wood, granite or concrete and are great to store snacks, cheeses, chocolates and other accoutrements of wine.

6. Would you like a wine arch?

Great for showcasing artwork or large bottles. Also a great area for pouring, the arch is a focal point of a wine cellar and is usually placed in plain view of the door (which usually has glass) and can be seen from outside the cellar.

7. Do you need a wine cellar cooling unit?

Consistent temperature is the key to preserving and aging your wine. Average temperature should be between 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit and between 50-70% humidity.

8. Would you like a wine cellar door?

Exterior grade doors are a must to keep the cool air and humidity inside the cellar. The wine cellar door also sets the stage for the wine cellar before visitors enter. Security should also be an issue for those with expensive collections and/or children in the home.

9. How about accessories?

Lighting, flooring, wall artwork and even wine dispensing units are optional additions to make a wine cellar truly personal.

10. What is your budget?

By using different wood species and wine racking techniques, a wine cellar can be created from quite modest to very generous budgets.

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