

Make Room for **Wine**

By Kevin Fritz

Showcase your wine collection in a wine habitat.

Is it your fantasy to have a wine cellar in your home? Think you don't have the room? Now you can make that fantasy a reality by using space you already have.

"You hear about very few true wine cellars in Florida," says **William Parks**, founder of Best Cellar Wine Designs in Orlando. Since opening his company in 2008, Parks has had only one request for a true wine cellar, which was initially created and used only for storing wine.

"I know some people have created them out of big septic tanks, but by and large, it's about repurposing space already in the house," he says. Parks adds that wine cabinets have also become popular allowing homeowners to bring a wine lifestyle into their living or dining rooms with refrigerated, furnished pieces that can hold upwards to 1,000 bottles or more. It's a popular option for tropical locales and/or when alternative reclaimable interior space is not an option.

Susan and Wayne Tosko of Orlando repurposed the area underneath the stairs in their downtown home into a wine cellar. It is air and humidity-controlled and holds about 450 bottles. Built with the house in 1996, the Toskos used plans they discovered in *Wine Enthusiast* magazine, and gave them to their contractor.

"The best part of a wine cellar, in addition to drinking a bottle of wine at the perfect temperature (57 degrees) at any time, is having room in your cellar to mature wines to a perfect age," says Susan. "I reserve one racked wall for maturing wines, and my other wall is for drinking."

Adding a wine cellar can add value to your home, says **Gary Balnoff**, broker-owner of ReMax Select in Oviedo.

"A full-blown cooled room capable of housing hundreds of bottles in a hermetically



Wine cellars can be made by repurposing space already in the house, such as a closet or under stairs.

sealed environment might be worth \$20,000," he says.

Parks says the key to designing a wine cellar is creating a virtual living, breathing organism that must be properly insulated. He says just small amounts of humidity can produce condensation, which causes mold.

"You are creating an air-tight chamber," he says. "The two enemies of wine are light and temperature."

The real challenge, according to Parks, is people don't have a frame of reference of how much a wine cellar costs. Depending on how elaborate it is he may need to call in master carpenters and HVAC, electrical and plumbing contractors. Sheet rock needs to be installed, as well as plastic barriers, not to mention wine racks and lighting. Some people also envision granite counters and tile floors. It could be pricey to do this, but for some it is well worth it. But if you think you must have very expensive wine to have a wine cellar, think again. Parks says a good starting point is \$30 a bottle for a 1,000-bottle wine cellar. This is very accomplishable for most people.

So stop whining about not having room for your wine and get planning to make room for a wine cellar in your home. **L**