

BuildingTM **EDGE** MAGAZINE

The Local Voice in Building

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LUXURY AT 55 ° FAHRENHEIT

Written by Marie Hulbert

When those of us here at Building Edge consider amenities for luxury homes, we first think of his and her bathrooms, upgraded kitchens with dual ovens and walk in refrigerators; maybe a gaming room, a sauna, or possibly even a warming drawer for pool towels. The bar has been lifted far beyond our ideas, however, for most of the luxury home builders here in the Valley. Wine has become increasingly popular as the drink of choice and builder's clients are now requesting their homes include a custom designed wine cellar. The cellar can take shape as a niche, closet or a whole room dedicated to housing a substantial wine collection which has been passionately collected over years and lovingly stored to age gracefully to its prime.

Innovative Wine Cellar Designs (IWCD) is on the cutting EDGE of design, building and installation of some of the Valley's largest and most beautiful wine cellars. Sandy Horwitz, President of the company, was kind enough to sit down with Building Edge in his beautiful showroom and guide us through the process that creates heaven for a wine connoisseur.

"There are two types of wine collectors: those who do it for the love of the whole experience that comes with savoring beautifully produced wine and those who know that, with age, their collection will fetch far beyond what they have invested," instructed Sandy. "With that in mind," he went on to say, "our customers can be those who need a controlled environment for a collection of 300 bottles, to those who require a vault to contain collections in excess of 2,000 bottles. Some of our clients seek to reproduce the aromatic and atmospheric caves and caverns that can be found when visiting the wine country of Europe where vintners have practiced their craft for many centuries."

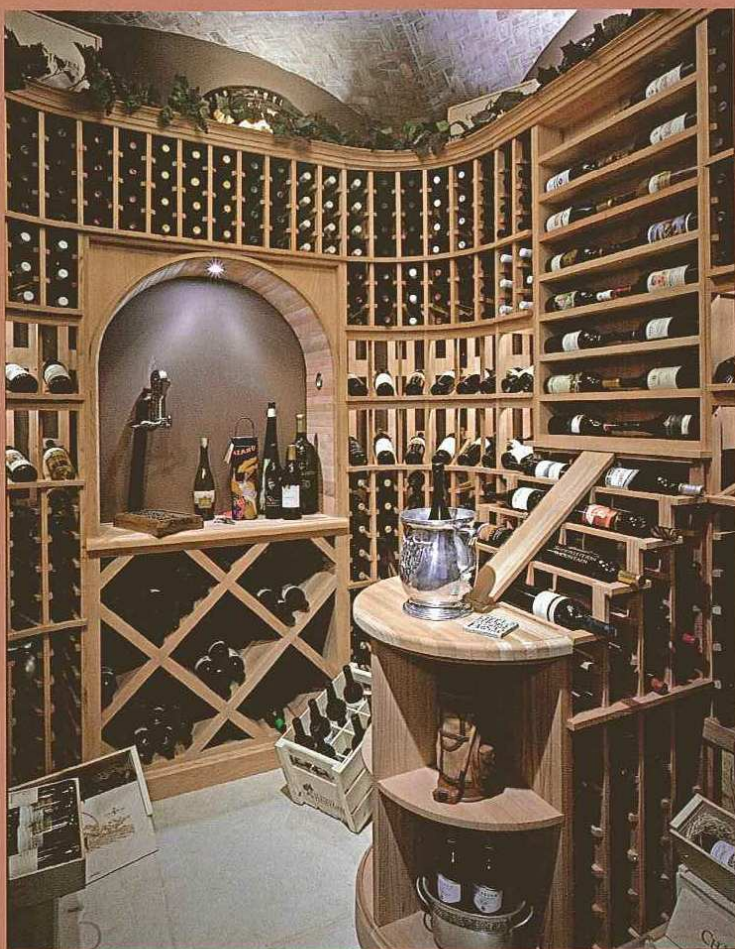


"We work with both types of customers to make use of the space they, or their builder and architect, have allotted to serve their needs. We first speak with a client about their current collection and then advise them to consider space that would house their collection if it were doubled. The philosophy employed here is "If we build it, they will fill it" because we have seen it happen over and over again. We have customers who think, "Oh surely, we don't need that much space." But what they do not count on, is the fact that the wine cellar becomes a place to entertain, and it is a conversation piece. More often than not, guests are taken into a gorgeously crafted cellar and they do not want to leave. They linger, appreciating the history that is often included in a wine cellar of distinction. A wine cellar is not only functional, but it is a piece of art. For aesthetic value, cellars are usually located near the formal entertaining area, entryway or kitchen.

IWCD even caters to those who are not yet ready to commit to their newly found passion for collecting and sipping. They have designed a self-standing bar and rack system for those in need of a place to house a casual collection of a dozen bottles. IWCD employs trades that do all of their millwork to design the beautiful rack and cabinetry systems you see photographed and those trades build them to IWCD's exacting specifications.

"Wine used to be stored in caves underground. Over time, wine producers discovered that their product, a living, breathing organism, aged best when stored in a dark, humid environment which was ideally 55°F and between 45-65% humidity," Sandy stated. "We are in the business of recreating an underground environment inside a home where there isn't one." He further went on to tell us the reason cork is used to stopper a bottle is because cork lets air in and out as the wine breathes. IWCD designs their display rows either above or below a column of wine that is represented by the display bottle. With the bottle sitting on a 15 ° angle, the cork remains wet while displaying the label easily.

What builders really need to know in order to make everyone's job easier is that if their client is thinking about a wine cellar for their home, there are some options that should be considered up front. First, wine cannot be exposed to direct sunlight. The wine will be affected and both its taste and value will be lessened so a place without windows must be considered. Second, wine should be stored as we





mentioned before, at 55° Fahrenheit and 45-65% humidity. Since this is the case, a refrigeration unit is required to keep these levels constant. Refrigeration units have limitations with regard to plumbing and placement. Completely self contained units can not efficiently be exhausted to the exterior here in Arizona. They cool the cellar 30° cooler than the exterior space. In other words, if it is 100° F outside, the cellar is 70° F inside and this is simply not an advantageous position for your client's wine collection.

IWCD offers other refrigeration options in order to accommodate almost any setting. Split Systems come in a couple different dependable varieties. IWCD offers a Ductless Split System which includes an evaporator inside the cellar and a condenser on a pad outside. The Ductless Split is ideal for a home that is already completed. The installation requires that a line set is run across the ceiling and to an outside wall where the condenser can be located. The condenser for this unit can also be mounted on a flat roof if there is not a convenient place on the ground.

Another system is the Split Air Handler. This unit is ducted from a mechanical space, either in the attic or near the cellar to the air handler unit which also requires a condenser. On both units there are indoor and outdoor condensers available. If the client has a well ventilated and insulated attic, it could reduce the length of line set required.

IWCD recommends that the plans for a cellar be brought in at the initial visit by the builder and his or her client to help determine the size, placement, lighting and flooring materials to be utilized. They further caution that it is prudent at that time, also, to determine the size and type of refrigeration unit to be employed in the cellar.

Innovative Wine Cellar Designs also carries a line of art that compliments the beautiful cellars that they create. Whether your client is interested in painted murals, painted tiles, or stained glass to compliment a bar area in the cellar, IWCD gathers different mediums from various sources to help you and your client add distinction to their home.

Innovative Wine Cellar Designs is in the business of helping wine age gracefully. **E**

INNOVATIVE Wine Cellar Designs

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Scottsdale Showroom
480.538.1288
www.winecelldesign.biz