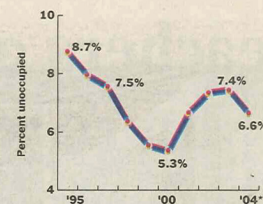


Retail space vacancy rates for the Valley:



*As of third quarter
Source: CB Richard Ellis



Luxury without bounds

Sky's the limit with custom features for home buyers

BY MIKE PADGETT
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Money and imagination are the only limits to the luxury options added to today's custom homes. "Whatever the owner wants and can afford, is what he gets," said architect Jim Hann of James Hann Designs in Scottsdale.

If a luxury home were a gold ring, the sophisticated options become the jewels. And there are many jewels from which to choose.

For years, the hot items have been high-tech audio/video systems, top-of-the-line appliances, and automated systems allowing homeowners to dial up the home's electronics to adjust thermostats.

Today, while those features remain popular, there are some new high-end options emerging on the home scene.

One is wine storage, and that option ranges from climate-controlled systems that fit into a converted closet, to wine cellars with redwood racks for thousands of bottles, said Sandy Horwitz, president of Innovative Wine Cellar Designs in Scottsdale.

"We have people who have extremely large wine collections, and they're moving here from different parts of the country with collections of 3,000 or 4,000 bottles," Horwitz said.

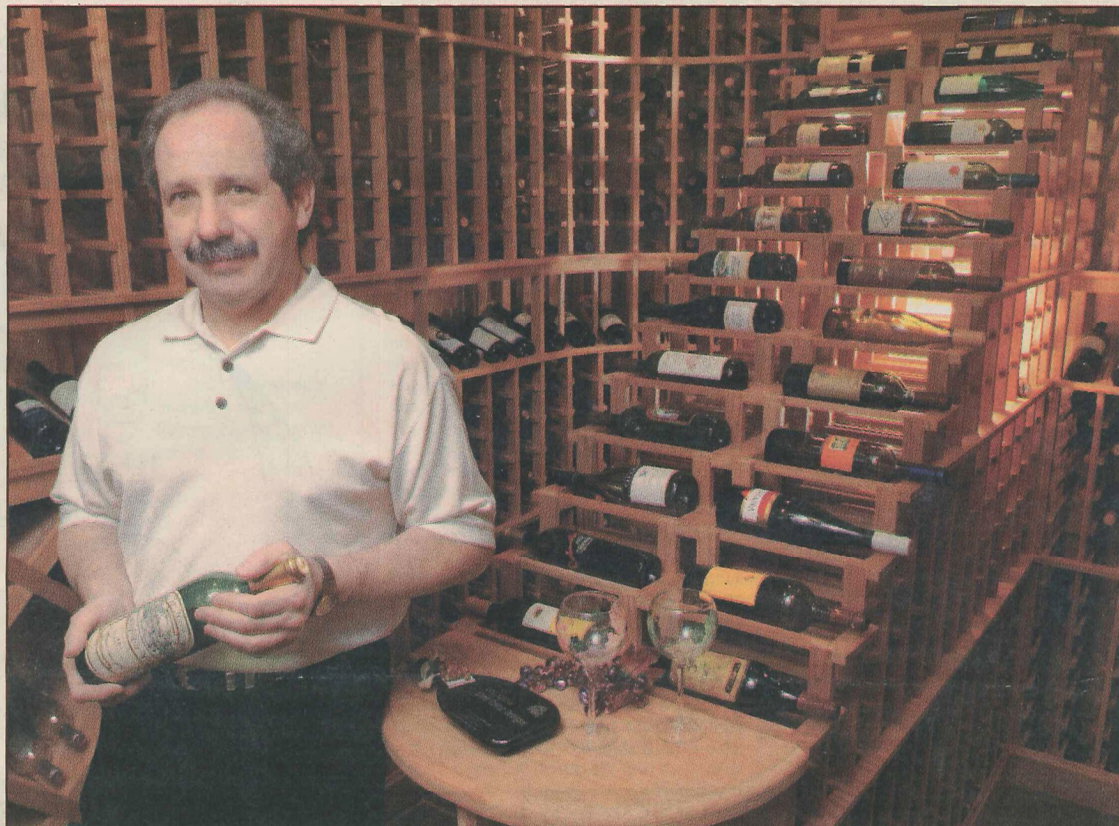
Hann said he is designing a basement wine cellar that will look like a contemporary New York nightclub. The door will be designed like a large wine cask.

"You open it and you walk through it, kind of a hidden door, like in a James Bond movie," Hann said.

Next to the nightclub-wine cellar is another room where the client, a Valley baseball player, wants a basement batting cage. Construction of the home is expected to start in early 2005.

OPTIONS ENDLESS

If a wine cellar doesn't suit your taste, there are sound-proofed basement shooting



JIM POULIN/THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

One option popular for luxury homeowners is a walk-in wine cellar. Sandy Horwitz, president of Innovative Wine Cellar Designs in Scottsdale, recently added this wine cellar to a new Paradise Valley home completed by Cathedral Development. The wine racks will hold 2,030 bottles.

ranges; brickwork on ceilings; antique or custom-made wood doors; salvaged lumber for floors; and custom-made furniture, lamps and other accessories.

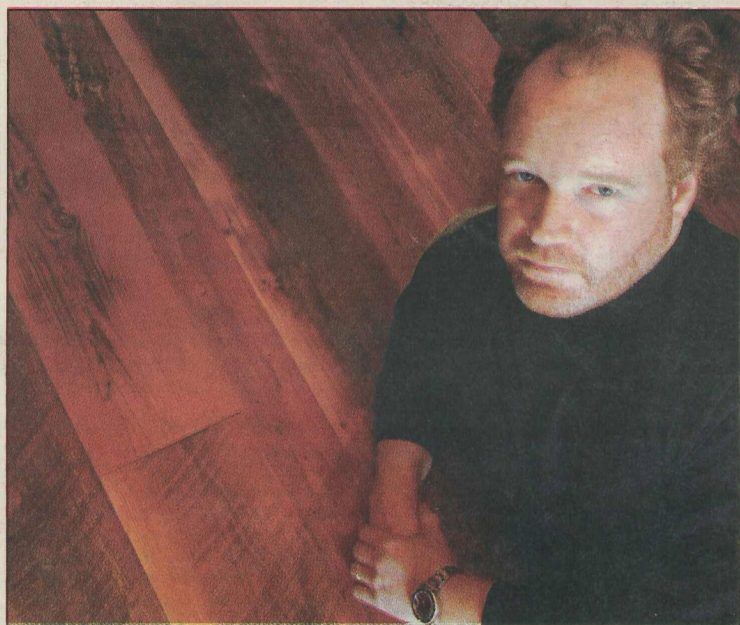
But the challenge is deciding how many bells and whistles to add to the custom home, said Scott Jarson of Jarson & Jarson Real Estate.

"The other thing we're seeing a renaissance in is lighting," Jarson said. "Using computer controls, you can push one button and the whole house's lighting drops down to create a particular mood or setting."

Another unique option is 100-year-old salvaged hardwood lumber for floors. Vintage Hardwoods, a company started three years ago by Peter Moosbrugger and Matthew Stanton, offers salvaged wood that dates to the mid-1800s. Most of their clients are in Arizona, Colorado, California, New Mexico and Massachusetts.

"We specialize in what we call 'exposed wood,' meaning it had to either be on the side of buildings or barns, or the floor of a cotton warehouse," Stanton said. "The exposed wood has character, like saw marks, knots and nail holes."

Nails hidden in the lumber were breaking teeth on saws in the company's Phoenix mill, so Moosbrugger and Stanton bought two old airport X-ray machines on eBay. Today, every board is checked for nails be-



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Sawmarks, knots and nail holes — and even an occasional bullet — give character to the old-growth lumber that Vintage Hardwoods partners Matthew Stanton (shown) and Peter Moosbrugger salvage from 1800s-era commercial buildings in the South. Much of the reclaimed wood goes into floors of luxury homes in Arizona and other states.

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