

The Connoisseur's Dream

A Specifier's Guide to Wine Cabinets



VINTEC

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the meaning of luxury has evolved. Previously associated with excess, richness and extravagance, today modern luxury is taking on far more personal definitions. Rather than overt signals that loudly proclaim a sense of style at great expense, the emphasis is enhancing our lifestyle through depth and expertise, carefully nurtured and acquired over time.

This evolution of luxury is why many consumers are turning to wine collecting as a way of holding and experiencing something precious. Building a wine collection takes considerable time, money, and effort. Expertise in this area is acquired through years experimenting with various wine varietals and wanting to learn more about how to enjoy and store wine to keep it at optimal condition.

Wine cellaring is an essential aspect of wine collecting without which treasured collections can lose the qualities that make them precious in the first place. The problem is wine cellaring and storage is not often considered in the home design brief. Far too often, collectors are resorting to make-shift solutions – from storing wine on a shelf in a cupboard to cramming bottles into the kitchen fridge – all of which can compromise the quality and value of the wine.

Designers and specifiers can add value to a home by identifying purpose-built products that enable collectors to cellar and serve wine at its best temperature. Wine cabinets present as the ideal solution, with a range of designs, capacities and installation options available. When considered during the design phase of a new build or renovation, a high-quality wine cabinet not only serves its functional purpose of preserving wine in a climate-controlled environment, but it can also be a statement feature that reflects the homeowner's style and tastes.

In this whitepaper, we look at the growing demand for wine cellaring and storage solutions and bring the thought process of including a wine cabinet to the forefront of home design.





NEW HORIZONS IN AUSTRALIAN WINE

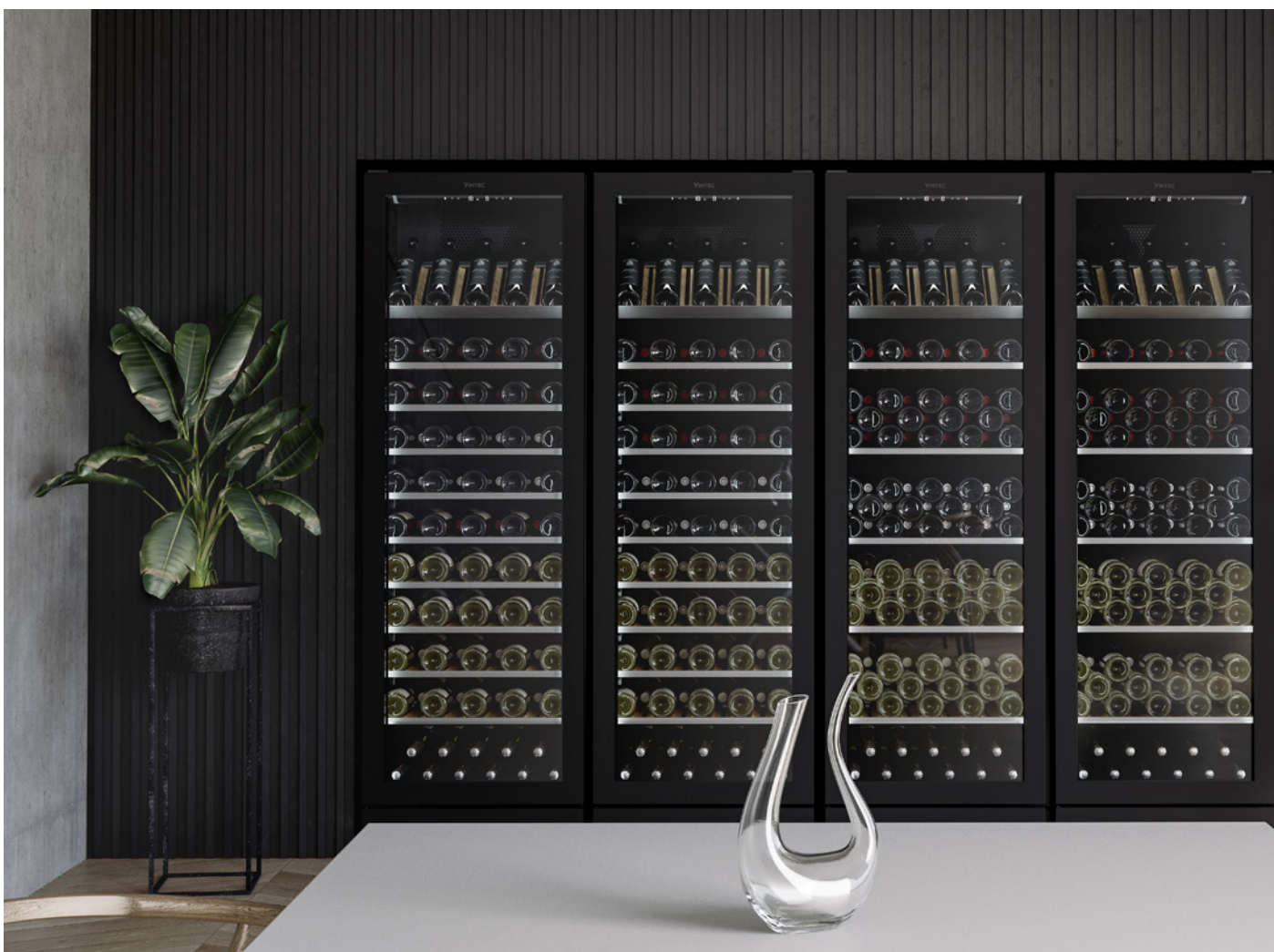
Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Australian wine industry remains strong, driven by strong local demand. The domestic market accounts for around 500 million litres of Australian wine per year or 40 percent of Australian wine production.¹ During 2021, wine consumption increased from 8,539,000 Australians (43.0%) to 9,263,000 (46.4%).² This reflects a turnaround in the long-term trend of declining alcohol consumption over the last 15 years.³

Industry statistics suggest that consumer tastes are evolving. More people are drinking higher priced wine, with sales above \$10 per bottle increasing in recent years.⁴ The market for imported wines has grown in volume over the last five years, particular during 2020 and 2021.⁵ Australia has also become one of the strongest markets for champagne in the world, with nearly 10 million bottles of champagne making their way to local shores in 2021.⁶

Given Australia's love for wine, it is not uncommon for consumers to have an extensive collection of wine at

home. The problem of how to cellar and display wine is one faced by a growing number of wine aficionados who want their own wine on hand to drink whenever they choose. A wine cabinet is no longer just a representation of luxury, but a functional design feature, like a sink or kitchen appliance.

Homeowners today are exploring a range of solutions to display their collection in a stylish and tasteful way – from small freestanding cabinets that hold up to 200 bottles to fully-customised underground wine cellars. Since modern technologies now allow proper storage almost anywhere in the house, design and aesthetics come into focus. Current design trends prefer minimalist looks with a tasteful use of materials, including metal, glass and wood, better lighting and more technology. For increased convenience, consumers have turned to virtual cellar management apps such as OENO by Vintec to help manage their precious wine collections.



THE GOLDEN RULES OF WINE CELLARING

Proper cellaring can help wine develop unique taste characteristics that elevate the drinking experience. Conversely, wine can rapidly deteriorate if kept in poor storage conditions. Before we dive into the design considerations when choosing a wine cellaring solution, we need to understand the rules for keeping wine at its best.

Stable temperature

Maintaining a constant cool temperature is critical. Wine can be compromised in conditions that are subject to regular temperature fluctuations. In Australia's often unpredictable climate, this can happen way too often in the typical home, which means storing wine on a kitchen shelf or other uncontrolled environment is not advisable. The kitchen fridge is not a good option due to temperatures that are too cold and fluctuate when the fridge door is opened.

Humidity above 50%

To reduce the risk of spoiling wine, bottles should be kept in an environment where humidity levels are kept between 50% to 60% relative humidity. Anything below this level, there is a risk that the cork dries out, causing it to shrink and the wine oxidising when exposed to air. Excess humidity (over 70%) increases the risk of that mould or mildew will grow within the cellaring area.

Keep it in the dark

Wine should be kept in a dark space, and protected from ultraviolet (UV) light. Light can affect wine's chemical compounds through a process called "light strike", which degrades the wine and causes it to age too quickly. It is not just UV light that can cause wine faults, as too much light exposure in general can cause imbalance in the wine. Excess light also provides heat, which can compromise the consistently cool temperatures required for wine cellaring.

No vibrations

A 2008 study in the Journal of Food Composition and Analysis titled "Effect of vibration and storage on some physico-chemical properties of a commercial red wine" examined the effects of vibration on commercial wine.⁷ It was found that vibration can disturb sediment present in the bottle and cause undesirable chemical reactions such as a decrease in tartaric and succinic acids, which dulls flavour.

Constant air flow

Wine should be cellared in conditions that provide appropriate ventilation and an even distribution of air. A constant airflow is needed to renew the air, limit odours from penetrating the wine and to prevent mould and fungus growth.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A WINE CABINET

A wine cabinet is an ideal cellaring option to meet the needs of the modern wine collector with the leading products including design features that ensure wine is kept in the right conditions for it to age gracefully. Such features include insulated panels and glazing that provide temperature control, self-regulating humidity and air circulation systems, UV-treated tint glass doors, dimmed LED lighting and a dark interior. Look for solutions with vibration-absorbing components and wooden shelving, which are used to create vibration-proof environments.

Wine cabinets are not to be confused with wine coolers or fridges. Wine fridges generate intense cold and remove ambient humidity, which are not ideal conditions for wine ageing. In comparison, wine cabinets deliver a climate-controlled environment that is specifically designed to replicate the conditions you can find in the best natural underground cellars.

While an underground wine cellar may provide perfect cellaring conditions, it is not a practical option for

most homes. Cellars can be excessively expensive to excavate, insulate and build, and have a significant spatial footprint. For larger collections, walk-in cellars, such as the Espace Walk-In Cellar from Vintec, are a modern alternative to an underground cellar, with capacity to hold 600 to 4000 bottles. In addition to providing the luxury of a self-contained wine room, some walk-in cellars can be built into a home or kitchen or are freestanding thus avoiding excavation costs, and can be moved into a new home with relative ease.

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INCORPORATING A WINE CABINET IN YOUR HOME DESIGN

Wine cabinets are one of the fastest growing trends in wine collecting. There is a large range of wine cabinets on the market, some of them being sleek and attractive pieces of furniture, with many styles and capacities available. What are the design considerations for choosing a wine cabinet and how can you incorporate it seamlessly into your home?

Capacity and size considerations

You will need to consider how many wines you want to store, providing enough space to grow the collection. Wine collectors may also want to accommodate different size bottles such as champagne. Wine cabinets can range in capacity from a dozen bottles to complete walk-in cellars that fit thousands of bottles. Opt for a slightly larger cabinet to accommodate a growing collection if budget and space permits.

Shelving and display

Assess the shelving design closely and ensure it maximises capacity and can house other bottles like champagne. Sliding and adjustable shelves can provide convenience and flexibility, while some products allow collectors to sit bottles down neck to neck as well as upright to show off their collection. Most wine cabinets include fitted wooden shelves that help minimise vibration.

Location in the home

Most homeowners will choose to install a wine cabinet in the kitchen area for display or in a separate bar area, but under a kitchen bench or in the garage or basement are also popular options. If the wine cabinet is placed in a

prominent location, an attractive design that is in harmony with the surrounding space is recommended, whereas cabinets installed in a hidden-away location may opt for a simpler design.

Freestanding or built-in

Wine cabinets are available in freestanding or built-in models. Built-in wine cabinets require proper ventilation to avoid overheating, which is an important consideration if you wish to install the cabinet under a benchtop. Ensure the cabinet is built to the same depth as the adjacent kitchen benchtop and other fixtures so that it sits flush with the cabinetry. Freestanding models need to be positioned such that there is adequate space around its sides and back, but are generally cheaper than integrated models and easy to move around the home.

Style and customisation

The style of wine cabinet will depend on whether you want it to blend seamlessly into the surrounding environment, or become a highlight feature of the space. Many wine cabinets are customisable, allowing designers to specify different finishes, colours, racking, door designs and lighting to match the room.

SMART SOLUTIONS FOR THE OPTIMAL PRESERVATION AND ENJOYMENT OF WINE

Vintec

Vintec is an experienced leader and pioneer in premium climate-controlled wine storage in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United States. Recognised and trusted by consumers, professionals and the wine industry, Vintec is a brand that is designed for Wine Lovers by Wine Lovers.

The Vintec range of wine cabinets and wine cellars comprise a selection of sustainable solutions that allow wine lovers to perfectly store their wines for short or long term, preserving the true flavors and aromas of wine, as intended by the winemaker.

Vintec climate-controlled wine cabinets strictly follow the 5 Pillars of Wine Storage: precise and stable temperature; high humidity to retain moisture in wine corks; UV-light protection; vibration-proof environment; and optimised airflow to keep the air clean and fresh. Ranging from underbench wine cabinets to beautiful walk-in cellars, each Vintec product is engineered to protect wines, optimise storage space and accessibility while maximising capacity, and provide stunning solutions to showcase a wine.

The new premium range features Vintec's proprietary shelving system that fits all bottle types without scratching labels. This innovative design allows collectors to showcase their entire collection with fully extendable, wide-slat, premium white oak shelving.

Rounding out their comprehensive offering, Vintec's virtual cellar management app OENO, powered by Vivino, allows wine collectors to manage their collection even while away from home. The OENO app keeps track of price points, vintages and varietals and has a sort function which enables a holistic view of the user's wine collection.

To view the entire range of Vintec climate-controlled wine cabinets and cellars visit to the Vintec website at www.vintec.com/en-au

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