

THE RETAIL observer

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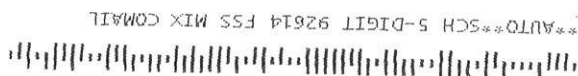
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THE NEW WINE MATRIX

It all started off very innocently enough, first a bottle or two for myself and then as dinner gifts for the hostess and then weekend in the wine country when things began to take on a life of their own. There seemed to be room in the fridge for a while and then on top of the fridge and then in the cabinet on top of the fridge...then finding the right wine and keeping it at the right temperature for serving was almost impossible. So after a little research I decided to purchase my first wine cooler, a 46 bottle single-zone that would solve all my problems. This lasted only for a month or so before I found myself eyeing the room of my eldest son who recently left for college, thinking how it would be the perfect space for my passion, obsession—addiction—of wine collecting.

Where did this all begin? Was it me? Was there something in my DNA? Were others affected in the need to seek out the right vintage, the perfect bouquet—the wine of the month? Man has been making and bottling wine, ever since our ancestors first climbed down out of the trees and vines and felt the first grapes squish between their toes. Today, we find that wine is still the cornerstone of modern life.

For decades, collecting wine has been the privilege of the upper class, fine restaurants and luxury hotels. Over the past few years we have seen a dramatic shift from the private and corporate collector to that of the everyday consumer. It is interesting to note, that 62% of all wine purchased in 2015 was by millennials with the average bottle price of \$20 to \$50 per bottle. We have seen a change in the buying habits, as consumers have gone from purchasing one or two bottles for self consumption and entertaining to that of a serious collector or investor.

Wine storage is one of the fastest growing segments in residential design, be it an under-counter wine cooler, built-in wine locker or custom wine cellar, how we care and present our collection has now become as important as the wine itself.

With space at a premium, imagine a wine room or cellar without boundaries or barriers, an environment free from conventional thought and restrictions, a wine room created to successfully

achieve the delicate balance between form and function, while reflecting the needs and lifestyle of the modern homeowner.

The new “wine-matrix” allows for maximum usage of space with the focus on utilization and optimization, thus allowing the homeowner, apartment dweller or loft inhabitant to maximize the usage of the space at hand.

The new approach to vinotecture is to challenge the way we look at space, so we may better understand the problem. Modern wine design must move away from a one-dimensional approach to design and to think of the wine-room as a multi-dimensional canvas. The static, cluttered, restricted and unchanging wine-room of the past must now evolve into a living stage, a place where it is possible to create an environment that alters old beliefs about space and structure and infuse new concepts that reflect the needs of today's modern collector.

Today's wine-room has grown far from its primary function of storage to that of “the social center”, where friends and family gather to share, rejuvenate and commune together. The walls have come down and this once hidden and isolated domain has now become a part of a larger social arena. It can serve as a hide-away for quite reflection, or a place to gather for family fun and social entertaining.

Due to modern cooling and humidity control, today's wine room can be open to the rest of the home. As such, the wine room must now function on several levels, from storing and aging to social interaction, to entertainment center. More furniture, than racking, the modern wine-room must blend seamlessly into the living areas of the home.

As Francis Ravel, founder of Vinotemp once said, “How you store and present your wine says a lot about you and your collection.”

And to think this all starts with an extra bottle or two.

RO

| Kevin M. Henry, Vinotemp





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