

Cellar Chic

Storage units to keep your finest vintages at their very best

| Text : Rebecca Lo | Photo : Miele and Enomatic |

Most of us escape the unbearably hot and sticky Hong Kong summer with holidays or cool dips in the pool. Wines are not so fortunate. If the bottles could only speak, many would be crying out for relief from the abuses inflicted upon them. Sudden changes in temperature, humidity, jolts and vibrations deteriorate them before they are even opened, let alone tasted. Regardless of whether your wine is for consumption or investment, you should store your bottles properly to keep them at their very best.

For collectors or investors who own dozens of cases, off-site storage is the way to go. Not only do storage facilities have virtually unlimited space to keep your bottles, their job is to make sure that your investment is protected. "To avoid risk, you should choose the best place possible," says Gregory De'eb, Crown Wine Cellars' founder. "Wine resells at 50 to 60 percent of its value if

not professionally maintained."

Crown Wine Cellars began in the historic 1937 Shouson Hill military bunker in 2003. The original company has 350 members whose wine is kept nearly 20 metres below ground with sophisticated climate control that regulates heaters, coolers, humidifiers and dehumidifiers for consistent ambience. Along with being able to arrange for wine delivery online, members receive fringe benefits such as tastings and social events, along with the security of knowing that their wine is fully insured.

If your home can accommodate your collection and would prefer to have it nearby for impromptu drinking pleasure, then a cellar is a smart investment. Essentially, it is a sophisticated refrigerator, with temperature and other controls tailored to slow down the natural ageing process. German luxury-appliance manufacturer Miele's KWT 4974 SG Wine Conditioning Unit is a freestanding unit that can store up to 143 750 ml bottles within three different temperature zones. Despite its minimal vibration, constant supply of



Single Boardroom Enoline

fresh air and automatic defrosting, its low energy consumption at 178kWh per annum makes it a green choice.

For serving wine at its peak, Italian manufacturer Enomatic offers wine dispensers that will keep an open bottle tasting great for up to three weeks. "A layer of argon gas is introduced into the bottle to prevent air from touching the wine," explains

Erica Allen, Enomatic Asia Pacific's business development manager. "The wine does not oxidise. This way, you can open a few bottles and enjoy them over time without spoilage." Enomatic machines can be either freestanding or set into the wall, and some models can accommodate both red and white wine temperatures.

Cheers to that! 🍷

A GUIDE TO STORING WINES

Shopping for your first cellar can be daunting. Hervé Leroux of Sino Vantage Asia, a Hong Kong-based distributor of vintages from France and Italy, offers these tips for novices:

- **SIZE:** make sure you have the space to accommodate the cellar you want to buy and that it can fit through your door or window
- **BRAND:** reliable names with warranties, support and servicing are important considerations; Leroux suggests Miele, Eurocave and Vintec
- **LIFESTYLE:** get the cellar that matches what you enjoy drinking; for example, if you only drink red wine, you don't need multi-temperature cellars
- **LIGHTING:** light harms vintages, so lights should only be on if the door is open
- **NOISE and VIBRATION:** choose a unit with minimal vibration and noise, both of which could damage wine
- **POWER:** a back-up generator will take care of unexpected breaks in your regular power supply

FIND IT

Crown Wine Cellars
+852 2580 6287
www.crownwinecellars.com

Miele boutique
+852 2890 1018
www.miele.hk

Enomatic
+64 (0) 3470 0539
www.enomatic.com

Sino Vantage Asia
+852 2581 9129



Miele's KWT 4974 SG Wine Conditioning Unit



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