

Architectural Millwork 2007

Lisa Whitcomb

lwhitcomb@vancepublishing.com



A Sophisticated Palate

This wine cellar is a connoisseur's dream with sequential numbering under each bottle position, unique curved corner shelving and authentic crating for drawer fronts.

An ordinary wine cellar — au contraire! This year's Design Portfolio Awards' overall winner is anything but, with its aesthetically pleasing furniture-quality cabinetry and wine racking systems made from teak veneer and solids. Also the winning entry in the architectural millwork category, this delectable space is perfect for cultivating friendships as guests swirl and admire a crimson Bordeaux or delight in the vanilla sparkle of your best Champagne.

"Wine collecting has long been considered an art, and now displaying wine is, too," says Gabriel McKeagney, owner of Tempo Carpentry & Design of San Juan Capistrano, CA. McKeagney designed the racking system so that it would encompass all usable wall space. Wine can be stacked in triangular spaces, stored in individual cubes or in varying-sized cylindrical openings.

One highlight of the project is the curved corner shelving, grooved for each wine bottle. This design element "solves the problem of dead corner space found in conventionally tight wine cellars," explains McKeagney.

He adds that by utilizing the dead space in the room, "The owner has access to his wine collection not only from top to bottom, but also deep into the far reaches of the room. No space was wasted in the entire room."

Another exceptional feature found in this wine cellar is a numbering system under each opening. McKeagney devised the system so the wine collector can display and enjoy the labels in his collection rather than stocking the bottles away. "I think we've made wine cellars fun," McKeagney says.

With the sequential numbering system in place, McKeagney says the homeowner can have fun selecting the right wine, "When the connoisseur enters his wine cellar and reviews his cataloging software, it becomes a game instead of a chore."

Each bottle can be specifically inventoried, retrieved and replaced. The owner can scan wine bottle bar codes as he unpacks his crates and give each bottle its position using a touchscreen computer, McKeagney notes.

Numbering the face of the curved shelves was a challenge for Tempo Carpentry & Design, "because we couldn't lay the shelves flat on the CNC machine. Therefore, we milled the numbers into thin stock and laminated that onto the face of the shelf," he adds.

In addition to the racking, McKeagney also designed and fabricated a base cabinet that attaches to the center-most racking system. This cabinet has a generous top ideal for uncorking bottles of wine, setting out crystal glasses and a tray of ambrosial hors d'oeuvres.

"The wine cellar is no longer a separate storage entity. It's a place where hosts invite guests to sit and enjoy the relaxing ambiance of the room," McKeagney says, adding that such a room "adds resale value to a home."

The cabinet base has hollows for wine bottles and functional drawer fronts in different widths fabricated from authentic wine crating, stamped with vineyard owners' maker's marks.

McKeagney says the wine cellar's secret is that "it's heavily engineered and lightly assembled." The design for the unit was first rendered in CAD, incorporating lighting, ventilation and electrical systems. Components for the wine racking and cabinetry were then fabricated using a ShopBot CNC. Afterwards, the unit was assembled using antiqued nails.

Each section of the wine cellar is designed to stand alone as an architecturally stimulating piece of furniture. Attractive grills seamlessly integrate the unsightly ventilation system, he adds.

"Exclusive wine collections deserve to be displayed as thoughtfully as they were chosen," McKeagney says. "This wine cabinetry and racking blends traditional woodworking artistry with the latest technology and produces woodwork that profoundly impacts the senses. Winning this award confirms that our design innovation is top-rate."

Tempo Carpentry & Design Inc.
San Juan Capistrano, CA
www.tempocarpentry.com

Project: Wine Cellar
Cabinetry and Racking

Year Established: 1998

of Employees: 6

Shop Size: 2,300 sq ft

Specialty: Designer and manufacturer of
architectural millwork and furniture.

Project Notes: Teak veneer was used on
this project. Since it lends itself well to v-
carving and has a good marine quality, it
is the perfect choice for the humid
environments of a wine cellar.