

Turning the spare room into a wine cellar

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Contributing Writer

TRANSFORM an awkward or unfinished space in your home into a customized wine cellar where you can preserve your collection of favourite vintages.

“It’s easy to make a junk room or storage room into a beautiful rustic-looking wine cellar,” says Graham Schulz, owner of Sleeping Grape.

A carpenter in the home building industry for 18 years, Schulz started building custom wine cellars more than two years ago when he noticed a niche in the marketplace.

Today, wine cellars are a common feature in homes.

“Wine has become something it’s never been in the past. People are growing in their love of wine and diversity of wine,” says Schulz.

Wine lovers like to have a place to properly store their wine, sip on a vintage with a few friends and even smoke a cigar, he says.

Each wine cellar he creates is unique and is built with the wine lover in mind. All wine cellars are custom built and are designed to suit the customer’s needs.

“The key word is custom. It’s built per order,” Schulz says.

Schulz has built wine cellars for condos and large homes, including a multimillion-

dollar home in Whistler, which featured 300-year-old rod iron from a mosque in Egypt. He currently is building a wine library at the Burrowing Owl Estate Winery in the Okanagan.

“While wine cellars are built to suit the customer’s needs, they are also built to create the best environment to store vintages,” he says. “I believe it’s important to honour the wine maker and a valued wine collection should be stored accordingly.”

Correct temperature, humidity, insulation, lighting and a lack of vibration are important for the quintessential wine cellar of valued vintages, says Schulz.

Usually a homeowner comes to Schulz with a room already in mind for their cellar. Some clients wish to have an expensive showcase of their bottles and a place to enjoy a glass while others want it to be a simple vault.

Schulz and his team of three combine elements such as diamond bins, modular and box storage along with accents to create an elegant wine cellar.

Reaction to the final result is often elation, he says. “When the job is done the homeowner is almost giddy.”

Schulz says the cost to build a wine cellar varies as every job is different, but look at spending anywhere between \$500 to \$50,000.

Building a wine cellar is



photo submitted

GRAHAM Schulz’s company, Sleeping Grape, custom builds wine cellars for those who want to house their favourite vintage in style.

more challenging than building or renovating a home, Schulz says.

“We can hide nothing. We don’t paint so everything is exposed. Customers are demanding, as oftentimes the cellars are expensive. Clients expect perfection and they get

it.”

Currently, the company has a five-month waiting list to have a wine cellar built. The reason being that the wine cellars are not mass-produced.

“If you speed things up you lose the quality,” he says. “It’s like a Lamborghini, which takes

three weeks to build and you have to wait a year for it. Ford takes one day to build. It’s fast production versus hand-crafted slow production.”

Wine cellars, including custom millwork, wine racking, moldings, library ladders and cellar entry doors, are built

at Sleeping Grape’s facilities and the finishing touches are completed inside the home. For more information visit www.sleepinggrape.com.