

Home wine cellars now booming

Once perceived as the exclusive domain of the rich and famous, buying and collecting wine is moving mainstream.

Increasing numbers of savvy homebuilders have responded by offering built-in wine refrigerators in even compact, urban condominiums. Now, a few are taking it one step farther providing temperature and climate controlled wine cellars for correctly storing prized vintages. It's a trend many say will continue to gain momentum.

"Enjoying wine is becoming engrained as a lifestyle choice," says Robert Quigg, CEO of Vancouver-based The Quigg Group.

In The Quigg Group's exclusive West Vancouver development, The Argyle, every suite includes an in-suite wine storage room. Their development named simply The Properties in West Vancouver's famous British Properties, also offered an optional walk-in, temper-

ature controlled wine storage in their upper suites – most buyers said yes.

Preparing to commence sales early this summer, The Parc, a 96-suite condominium located behind the Coquitlam Town Centre, plans to provide each buyer with a private wine storage locker in its temperature controlled wine cellar. It's expected this feature, a first for the condominium market in this area, will be a significant enticement for a broad range of wine-savvy buyers.

In Colwood on Vancouver Island, The Outlook's 30 townhomes all offer an optional in-house wine cellar.

"People interested in this type of property also tend to be interested in wine beyond just knowing some of the popular grape varieties," says Cam Hayward of Windcrest Developments, the company behind The Outlook.

Farther north, The Quigg Group's development at Bear Mountain will feature a three-storey wine vault

beneath the community's restaurant where owners can store bottles beyond those they have in their in-suite wine fridge.

Not surprisingly, the Okanagan is embracing this new trend. In Penticton, one of Lakeshore Three's most talked about amenities is the 15-storey building's wine cellar where each owner has a private, 100-bottle locker. There's even an adjacent lounge for decanting wines and comparing notes with other oenophiles.

"The Okanagan is emerging as a world-class wine region," says Mark Shuparski of Pacific Capital Real Estate Corporation, one of the development partners. "We expect this amenity will be well used and enjoyed by all the owners here."

He adds there are already strong indications the owners will form a Lakeshore Three wine club to tap into the expertise of local winemakers and experts.

Why such interesting wine cel-

lars? "People are coming to realize that when they buy a case of wine they like, it needs to be aged under proper conditions so it can reach its full potential," says Dennis Skrepnyk of Wine Cellars by Design, the Kelowna-based company that is installing Lakeshore Three's cellar.

Skrepnyk also notes that while the number of wine cellars in private homes and condominiums is clearly increasing, average cellar size is not.

"People are looking to store hundreds, not thousands of bottles," he says, adding statistics also indicate that during the first year a person has access to proper wine storage, they buy four times as much wine as they did in the previous year.

- Susan M. Boyce, 24 hours

Wine cellars in the home used to be a luxury of the rich and famous, but now are becoming commonplace in new condos being built in the Lower Mainland.

- photo illustration

