



THE NEW ZEALAND WINE CENTRE CELLAR START UP

If you have your wine collection stored in a warm, well-lit kitchen on top of the refrigerator then this is for you.

This cellar start up pack is designed to give you a bit of information on cellaring wine. We will keep things light and easy to follow. The information presented here is by no means exhaustive (there are entire books written on the subject) and we are presenting guidelines to cellaring as opposed to the most technically advanced and correct way of cellaring wine. We can of course recommend a range of excellent books on the subject and refer you to professional cellar designers.

The Main Requirements for Cellaring Wine

Temperature

10 - 15 deg Celsius is ideal for wine storage. Above 15 degrees, your wine will age quicker than normal, which isn't the end of the world, just adjust your cellaring times and open the wine sooner. However, above 20 degrees, the wine will literally be getting cooked, not an ideal situation. Below 10 degrees, the wine's ageing will slow dramatically, almost to a stand still.

Temperature Fluctuation

One of the most important factors is temperature fluctuation. Your wine should not be stored where the day and night temperatures are more than 1 degree apart. This is pretty hard to achieve, but if you can keep the temperature fluctuation to within 3 degrees or so, you are doing well. Frequent changes in temperature can cause the cork and/or the wine to expand and contract, pushing wine out and sucking air in. This will ultimately lead to oxidation. The NZ Wine Centre sell digital thermometers which will measure the temperature of liquid (in this case, your wine) in your cellar with the diurnal ranges being recorded as well. You can also purchase a double bulb thermometer that will record the highest and lowest ambient air temperatures over any given period, until reset.

Light

This is an easy one. Keep your wine in the dark. Light, especially UV can destroy wine remarkably quickly.

Vibration

Another easy one to avoid is the constant vibration on or near a fridge for example. Storing wine for long periods of time in a fridge must also be avoided as it is too cold and dry for the wine.





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Humidity

Around 70% relative humidity is ideal for wines sealed with a cork. This will prevent the corks from drying out but not be so damp as to cause mould or mildew problems. Installing a humidifier is the obvious solution (and the most expensive), but if your cellar is contained in a cupboard, a jug of water will often do the trick. Storing your wine in the basement or south facing room (in the Southern Hemisphere) will normally achieve pretty good conditions for the average household wine collection.

How to store wine

Wine sealed with a cork needs to be kept lying down. This will keep the cork moist and expanded in the neck of the bottle. One exception is Champagne and methode traditionnelle, which can be stored upright as the pressure in the bottle will keep the corks tight in the neck of the bottle. Screw caps can be stored upright, but most racking systems are designed to store wine on its side.

Your wine will need to be stored to ensure it does not fall over or collapse. Many wine cases do a fine job, and are the most cost effective method. However, it is not recommended to stack wine boxes too high for the risk of collapse. The NZ Wine Centre stocks wooden cases (crates) which are incredibly strong and can be stacked safely. Also, we can supply Classico wine racks as free standing smaller units or large, purpose built racks to fit your desired space. Be warned, larger racks will need to be fixed to a wall.

What to cellar

Not all wine is made to be cellared. Cellaring times will vary according to variety, vintage, producer, type of closure and your cellaring conditions. So your best bet is to ask us at the NZ Wine Centre, or the winemaker/producer of the wine. It is also a good idea once you have found a wine you like that will cellar, to buy at least 6 bottles. This way you can see how the wine changes over time.





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Cellar Accessories - ready to go from the NZ Wine centre

- **Wooden cellar boxes with dividers** - \$29.50
- holds 12 bottles, very strong and stackable.
- **Classico Wine Racks** - purpose made to fit your space requirements, smaller racks available in store.
12 bottle kitset: \$28.00
36 bottle kitset: \$69.00
66 bottle kitset: \$125.00
Assembled racks are also available. These will incur an assembly fee and freight charge.
- **Vinote digital thermometer** - \$35.00
- records the temperature of your wine as well as the diurnal range.
- **Double bulb thermometer** - \$45.00
- will record the ambient air temperature of your cellar with the diurnal range.
- **Vinote Wine Cellar Catalogue System** - \$55.00
- a cellar log book and neck tags for labeling and identifying wines in your collection.
- **Books** - Cellar, Tyson Stelzer - \$25.00
- an excellent guide on cellaring wine and construction of cellars.
- **Accessories**
- a wide range of all those extra things that will add to your enjoyment of wine and cellaring.

