

THE FINE ART OF AGING



A Brief Introduction To Wine Storage

# Whatever your interest level

in wine may be, owning a wine cellar is a worthwhile investment. Aging wine is an art form that wine lovers and connoisseurs have enjoyed for centuries. There is no better feeling than turning a young, vibrant wine into a mature classic for you to enjoy.

Keeping your wine healthy while it is young will ultimately determine the quality of the end product. Wine is perishable, so storage will determine how it reacts to its environment and, ultimately, how it ages. Trying to store wine at average household temperatures is not recommended. Few people have subterranean cellars and most wine consumers have inadequate storage facilities. The right conditions are essential for keeping your wine stored properly, and it is especially important when storing fine wine. Fortunately, Viking wine cellars offer more effective climate control solutions. Just as enjoying wine is a multi-sensory experience (involving taste, smell, color and feel), there are multiple aspects involved in storing wine. There are four essential factors necessary for optimal storage that, when properly managed, will allow your wine to evolve to its full potential.

# Temperature

Of all the storage factors that will adversely affect your wine, fluctuating temperature is the most damaging. Therefore, avoiding this condition should be your number one priority. Keep in mind that summer heat may raise your household temperature into the eighties, thus a climate-controlled cellar is essential. In the absence of the proper storage facility, some people attempt to store wine in an air-conditioned room. This is not recommended. A fluctuating thermostat will result in frequent blasts of cold air, leading to dramatic temperature swings that can damage the wine.

Storing wine in an uninsulated garage or basement is also not recommended as the uncontrollable temperature changes and high or low humidity levels will damage the wine. Even average household temperatures ranging from the middle to high sixties can be harmful to wine. Wine exposed to these conditions will expand and contract at different rates and temperatures, which can shorten the life of your wine.



Viking wine cellars offer precise temperature control for optimum storage.





When temperatures increase, the wine will expand, pushing the wine and the cork past the opening of the bottle. The wine that escapes usually evaporates, thus leaving behind dried wine on the bottle capsule and damaging the label. Once the bottle cools again, the wine will contract causing a vacuum in the bottle that sucks air past the cork and implodes the cork slightly. Any air that enters the bottle will react chemically with the wine and, in turn, age the

wine prematurely, giving the wine a brownish tinge and unintended, unpleasant off-flavors. This phenomenon is referred to as oxidation.

Wine that experiences an accelerated maturing process, or that is exposed to excessive heat, will frequently produce off-flavors and will seldom reach its potential quality. In order to age wine properly, a fine wine must mature slowly over an appropriate period of time. This brings about flavors and nuances that can only evolve with proper maturation. Scientists say this happens when wine is stored at about 55 degrees Fahrenheit, with slightly lower temperatures for sparkling and white wines.

In addition to high or fluctuating temperatures, low temperatures will also prove problematic when storing wine. Wines stored at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit cannot progress into a mature state, and temperatures below freezing should always be avoided.



Exclusive TriTemp™ storage system in Viking wine cellars preserves different types of wine at optimal serving temperatures.



# Humidity

The second factor in achieving optimum storage involves the humidity level at which wine is stored. Having an appropriate amount of humidity is critical to preventing the corks from drying out.

Dry corks cause oxidation by allowing wine to leak through and around the cork, and enabling air to enter the bottle. However, too much humidity will induce the development of mold and will damage the labels, negatively affecting the market value of fine wine. Maintaining humidity levels in the 60% to 75% range should keep the corks from drying out while preventing the formation of unwanted mold.



15 shelves accommodate up to 150 full-size wine bottles horizontally, keeping corks moist.



# Vibration & Light

The third factor to be considered for optimum wine storage is vibration. Excessive movement or vibrations caused by noisy compressors or other sources can impede the stable development of wine. It is therefore important to have a premium, quiet compressor in your wine storage facility, while also minimizing all other external sources of possible vibration.

The fourth factor is light. Placing your wine in direct sunlight or ultraviolet light will deteriorate the quality of the wine. Many wineries use bottles with colored glass to help protect the wine from these harmful elements. A Viking wine cellar with low-intensity light and ultraviolet-resistant glass will help preserve the quality of your wines.

UV-resistant glass protects wine from the harmful effects of light, and the lower zone has taller maple fronts for additional UV protection.



Coated racks reduce vibration and hold bottle snugly in place.



## Should I have a Viking wine cellar?

There are many reasons for owning a wine cellar. A wine cellar will control the four main factors for storing and aging wine successfully. Convenience is an added incentive, as a well-stocked cellar assures you of always having the right wine at the right time. Since most retailers offer discounts by the case, it also makes economic sense to buy more than one bottle at a time, particularly from exceptional vintages.

A wine cellar allows you to store your wine away from foods that could potentially start to ferment, such as fruits, vegetables, and cheeses. Additionally, owning a wine cellar is a fun way to observe and taste a promising young wine and follow its evolution into a high quality, mature wine that will please your palate and highlight any occasion. There is simply no other way to experience the full potential of great wine.

Another advantage provided by a good storage system is that the temperature at which the wine is maintained will be much closer to its optimum serving temperature. This is particularly desirable when you want a nice wine on the spur of the moment for a dinner party, or when arriving home with a need for relaxation.

While storage temperatures for reds tend to be cooler than recommended serving temperatures, it is much better to serve the wine a bit too cool and let it warm in the glass or decanter to the desirable temperature. Most people serve red wines too warm (room temperature), which detracts significantly from their potential pleasure. Conversely, white wines are frequently served too cold, inhibiting the wine from displaying its texture and flavors.

Viking has addressed these issues by creating three separate chambers in its storage units, each with its own temperature control. Thus, reds can be stored at one temperature, while whites and champagne are stored at different temperatures. Another zone can be kept slightly cooler than the optimum serving temperature for wine you will be offering at a dinner party that night. This gives you the flexibility to manage your collection in a way that balances your storage and aging requirements, with the convenience of short-term accessibility.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q – What type of wine should be cellared?**

**A** – Every wine will benefit from proper storage conditions. The appropriate length of storage depends on the grape varietal and the quality of the wine.

## **Q – What are the proper temperature and humidity settings for storing wine?**

**A** – The general rule is that temperature should be approximately 55 degrees Fahrenheit (55-60 degrees Fahrenheit is adequate for red wines) and humidity between 60% and 75%. Sparkling wines and most white wines, which generally develop at a faster rate than reds, can be stored at lower temperatures (45-55 degrees Fahrenheit) to slow the maturation and provide a longer “drinking window.”

## **Q – Why are bottles stored horizontally?**

**A** – To keep corks moist and swollen which prevents air from entering the bottle, thus avoiding oxidation.

## **Q – Is it okay to store champagne in the refrigerator?**

**A** – Only for a period of up to 24 hours. The temperatures are too cold and dry, plus odors from food may impart off-flavors.

## **Q – Do storage levels affect the temperature?**

**A** – It is always better to have the cellar well stocked. More mass controls the temperature better, preventing the compressor from running too frequently due to having to cool an excess volume of space.





### Q – How long should wine be cellared?

**A** – The evolution of a wine is fascinating and complex. Generalizations regarding the time needed for a particular wine varietal to reach its peak of development are just that – a general guideline. Within a varietal, the vintage and the vintner’s individual style of making the wine, along with other factors, will have a substantial influence on the ability of a particular wine to age well. Some of the better wine critics will include in a wine’s review a “drinking window”, or range of years during which they predict the wine will be at its best. We recommend that you subscribe to one of these experts’ newsletters to help you in selecting wines to buy and in determining how long to age them.

Typically, dry white wines don’t benefit much, if any, from aging (very fine Burgundy, Riesling, and Champagne are prominent exceptions). Nevertheless, it is wise to store them in a cellar to protect them from heat and light damage. Red wines are a different story. A fine, well-balanced red wine from a good vintage

will usually improve with some age. Most very fine Cabernet Sauvignons, Bordeaux, Syrahs, Burgundys, Barolos, and Riojas are made with the expectation that they will be allowed to age in order to reach their full potential.

Set forth here is a table of very general guidelines for the aging of several red wines by varietal or region. Again, for an outstanding bottle of wine, it is worth doing a little research.

WINE	AGING GUIDELINES
Barolo	5-15 years
Bordeaux	5-15 years (some much longer)
Burgundy	2-10 years
Cabernet Sauvignon	3-10 years
Chianti	0-5 years
Merlot	0-5 years
Pinot Noir (other than Burgundy)	1-6 years
Port – Vintage	10-30 years
Rioja	3-10 years
Syrah	5-10 years
Zinfandel Red	1-5 years

**Q – What temperatures are best for serving wine?**

**A** – The temperature at which a wine is served has a significant effect on its taste. The appropriate temperature allows a good wine to express its depth and complexity of aromas. In general, red wines served at temperatures above 68 degrees will taste monolithic and have a warm, alcoholic aftertaste. They lose their balance and liveliness. White wines are often served too cold, suppressing the flavors and richness of the wines.

Included here is a table of recommended serving temperatures. Since it is seldom possible to monitor or control a wine's temperature during a meal, we suggest serving it at a temperature somewhat cooler than its recommended range, allowing it to warm up and develop in the glass.

WINE	SUGGESTED TEMPERATURE
Beaujolais	54-59° F
Bordeaux – Red	62-67° F
Bordeaux – White	50-54° F
Cabernet Sauvignon	62-67° F
Champagne	40-44° F
Chardonnay	45-50° F
Chenin Blanc	43-48° F
Chianti	58-63° F
Dessert Wines	45-50° F
Gewurztraminer	45-50° F
Merlot	58-63° F
Pinot Gris	45-50° F
Pinot Noir	58-63° F
Rioja	59-68° F
Port – Tawny	50-55° F
Port – Vintage	62-67° F
Rosé	40-44° F
Sauvignon Blanc	50-54° F
Sparkling Wines	45-50° F
Sparkling Wines – Inexpensive	40-44° F
Syrah	59-68° F
Zinfandel Red	62-67° F





We at Viking have a genuine desire to enhance your enjoyment of food and wine in a meaningful way. By enabling the proper care and service of wine, we hope we are achieving this for you, and that you will continue to join us in the Viking Experience.



This guide is intended simply as an introduction to the art of storing wine. For in-depth information, we recommend the following titles:

THE WINE BIBLE, Karen MacNeil  
Workman Publishing Company, 2001

JANCIS ROBINSON'S WINE COURSE  
Abbeville Press Publishers, rev. 2003

HUGH JOHNSON'S WINE COMPANION  
Octopus Publishing Group, rev. 2001

For more information on Viking Wine Cellars,  
please call 1.888.VIKING1 or visit [vikingrange.com](http://vikingrange.com).





Viking Range Corporation  
111 Front Street  
Greenwood, Mississippi 38930 USA  
(662) 455-1200

For product information,  
call 1-888-VIKING1 (845-4641),  
or visit the Viking Web site at  
[vikingrange.com](http://vikingrange.com)