

design BY THE GLASS

By Pamela Brill



HOME WINE CELLARS AS SHOWCASE AND GATHERING SPACE

FOR LORI DUNIGAN of Mount Sinai, having a dedicated space for storing wine was a labor of love — one that has become a testament to her late husband, Matt. “My husband had been a collector for many years, and we waited for the right time to add a wine cellar,” she says. Working with a friend, Carl Moller, they came up with a plan to design and construct a bar and cellar in the home’s walk-out basement.

Creating a vision for the look and feel of the DIY cellar was paramount to the design — one that was inspired by Tuscan influences. “We didn’t want anything contemporary-looking,” Dunigan says. “That’s how the [choice of] brickwork came into play.” The 10-by-10-foot space can hold 850 bottles and opens into







a decorative arch, with racking encased in bricks around the perimeter. A cherrywood bar that seats nine complements the space, as does a large barrel from an East End winery that has been fashioned into a table, using corks from bottles the couple enjoyed and with sides marked with dates of special occasions. “It’s a friendly, warm space for sipping and enjoying a glass of wine,” Dunigan says.

KEEPING COOL

For wine connoisseurs seeking a place in which to indulge their passion, a bottom-floor cellar is ideal for optimal storage conditions, but not a necessity. Dan Scotti of Dan Scotti Design in East Hampton, who specializes in custom home design, says that regardless of location, the space must be outfitted with a vapor barrier, weather seals and a cooling unit with a continuous fan.

“I prefer a ducted system [over a wall unit] because it gives you the opportunity to locate the unit in a mechanical room, thereby keeping the wine room looking clean and beautiful,” he says. “In addition to being unsightly, through-the-wall units can only be vented into an adjacent room, whereas a fully ducted system can be vented to the exterior of the home.” The cost of installing a ducted wine room ranges from \$25,000-\$75,000, depending on the size of the space and choice of materials, Scotti says. A through-the-wall unit saves about \$8,000.

For a cellar designed for Suzanne Weiss of East Hampton, Scotti created a space that can hold 500 bottles and seamlessly integrates into the overall décor. An anodized aluminum and glass storefront frame the view and maintain the cellar’s opening to the home’s downstairs landing. To evoke an industrial feel, Scotti designed custom cubbies from reclaimed oak and had the edges hand-scraped.

Top: Dunigan’s wine cellar has Tuscan influences.
Photo credit: Newsday / Eileen Kotak

Left: Corks from bottles Dunigan enjoyed with her late husband, Matt, adorn a barrel turned into a table.

Photo credit: Newsday / Eileen Kotak





Suzanne Weiss' wine cellar in her East Hampton home has large cubbies and a Belgian limestone floor.
Photo credit: Scotti Design

"I find that larger cubbies — where the wine bottles are stacked in rows — is much more aesthetically pleasing than traditional wine racking," he says. Flooring in the wine room is constructed from Belgian limestone, featuring a hand-distressed edge, while adjustable lighting enhances the ambiance.

Weiss, who had been transferring bottles back and forth between her East Hampton and Greenwich, Connecticut residences, marvels at the way the cellar has been incorporated into the rest of her home. "It's the first thing you see coming down the stairs, something you can go right into and experience," she says. Weiss, whose late husband, Stephen, started collecting wine on trips to vineyards in Italy and France, opted for slate flooring in the hall that continues into the cellar, and is carried over into the greyish blue background behind the bottles. "The subtle color of the stone makes it very calming," she says. "We get lots of great comments about this room."

A PERSONAL POUR

While the Dunigans' cellar design was entirely spearheaded by Matt, who worked for an engineering firm, his widow is carrying on his passion project, nearly two years after his death from cancer. "He loved teaching people about wine and having our older nieces and nephews over for tastings," Dunigan says. Recalling one February when Matt threw her a birthday party in their cellar, she says, "He poured wine into decanters, had a tasting and food, and brought everyone together."

By continuing to host family and friends in their wine cellar, Dunigan pays tribute to her husband in a familiar setting. "The only unfinished part is that he didn't get to complete a mural on one of the walls," she muses. "Maybe it can be something that I can work on." *LIL*

Pamela Brill, a journalist who lives in Northport, enjoys a glass of chilled rosé on a hot summer night.