



Her indoors

Rachel Meddowes lays down advice on wine storage



How do I go about getting a cellar installed in my house? Smith & Taylor (020 7627 5070; www.smithandtaylor.com) will design bespoke cellars, with separate sections for single bottles, diamond-

cell storage racks, and cases of wine. If space is limited, the best solution is a Spiral Cellar (01372 279166; www.spiralcellars.free-online.co.uk). These cylindrical concrete cellars, accessed via a spiral staircase, are lockable, have a thick waterproof lining, and fit into a space just 2.2 metres in diameter.

How do I store wine if I don't have a cellar?

There are various options, depending on the amount of wine and space you have. EuroCave (020 7935 4679; www.eurocave.co.uk) makes an excellent range of wine cabinets that control temperature, humidity and ventilation, as well as protecting your wine from the light. They are ideal for up to 400 bottles. If your collection is bigger, you can turn any room into a cellar with a Cellar Conditioner from EuroCave, which enables you to regulate temperature and humidity.

I want to build up my cellar - where can I get advice? Vincent Gasnier (02380 610476) gives advice and buys wine for private clients, as well as stocking the cellars of restaurants and clubs such as Soho House and the Electric. A former sommelier at the

legendary Hôtel du Vin in Winchester, Gasnier knows the importance of respecting his clients' tastes and budgets. He deals with 70 different suppliers to keep the selection on offer as varied as possible. The best wine merchants also give excellent advice: try Berry Brothers & Rudd (01256 340123; www.bbr.com); Corney & Barrow (020 7539 3200; www.corneyandbarrow.com); John Armit Wines (020 7908 0620; www.armit.co.uk); or La Réserve (020 7978 5601; www.la-reserve.co.uk). For those wanting to learn more, there are regular wine courses and sales at both Christie's (020 7747 6800) and Sotheby's (ring Chloe Craven on 020 7293 5727).

Is there anyone who will store wine for me?

There are private cellars, such as Octavian (01225 810735) and Smith & Taylor; good wine merchants, such as those listed above, also offer off-site duty-free storage facilities. For an annual fee, your wine will be looked after and insured, and can be accessed on request. However, some merchants will only store wine sold by them.

I am moving house and need help with my wine collection. Who should I contact?

Smith & Taylor will come and pack the wine, store it if necessary, and bin it in the order of your choice - by region or by age, for example - at the other end. The details of your collection can also be recorded in a book or onto cellar software if required. □

Source book

Fireplaces to warm to

■ Chesney's warehouse (020 7627 1410; www.chesneys.co.uk) has a vast selection of original and reproduction fireplaces in marble, wood and limestone, from virtually every era. It also has an excellent bespoke design and matching service.

■ Specialising in stone, and based in the West Country, where many stonemasons are trained, Templestone (01963 350242; www.templestone.co.uk) will design any style of fireplace you can think of, from Bauhaus to 15th-century Florentine. Each one is bespoke, and handcrafted with a hammer and chisel.

■ Conservationist David Black set up Thistle & Rose (0131 315 4254) in order to reproduce exact replicas of neo-classical Adam-style fireplaces which have become impossible to find. Sold worldwide, they are made using traditional methods and are virtually indistinguishable from the originals.

■ CVO Firevault (020 7580 5333; www.cvo.co.uk) has cornered the contemporary-fireplace market by cleverly appealing to those with minimalist taste, but who still require comfort and cosiness, as shown below.



Eureka! Give Charbonnel et Walker (020 7491 0939) a piece of your favourite fabric, and they will cover a chocolate box with it for you, in a choice of sizes, from £17.50. We chose an eau-de-nil satin from Henry Bertrand (020 7424 7000).