

personal  
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Wine Cellars



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**W**hat can be closet-sized or two-stories high and still make wine lovers swoon? The proverbial wine cellar, of course, even though it does not have to be below ground. Greenville is fortunate enough to have an abundance of wine lovers who treasure their bottles. Whether their cache is 24 or 2,400, these collectors have carefully tucked away their wine in one location in their homes – sometimes much to the relief of their spouses.

But how do you even begin to create a wine cellar? Local wine expert Danny Baker of Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC) says there are a lot of options and some “givens” that need to be considered. “A major consideration is the type of wine you collect,” he says. “Is it by the bottle or case and what size bottle do you prefer? Your cellar space does not have to be a room, but how are you going to use it? Is it to display wines or entertain? Temperature, vibration and lighting are all issues and the best way to figure them out is to look at a lot of options in magazines and on the web. Then find a local person who builds cellars to help you.”

Robert Bass, who owns Kessick Wine Cellars, is popular among Greenville wine lovers. Starting out as a general carpenter, Bass found his niche in wine construction and has refined it to the point of being a turn-key operation. With his low key personality, Bass is an astute judge of people and part of his expertise is asking the right questions that allow his customers to get exactly what they need. Along with “off the shelf” and custom racks, he has assembled a group of local artisans that constructs stone, iron works and wood works. ([www.kessick.com](http://www.kessick.com))

Kessick Wine Cellars recently completed constructed on an amazing wine cellar in the Five Forks area. The pride and joy of Ronnie and Joy Snow, this two-story cellar is used for en-





## *W*ine Connoisseurs are Generous by Nature

One of the endearing personality traits of wine lovers in Greenville is their generosity. This kindness translates annually to the American Red Cross of Upstate South Carolina Fine Wine Auction, which is now in its 16th year. Last year \$260,000 was raised in this one evening to benefit Red Cross programs and services that provide relief to disaster victims and aid in emergencies.

Almost every night on the local news you can hear how the Red Cross has helped individuals and on January 23, 2010, the Upstate community has the opportunity to give back. The black tie event with a Rio Carnival theme will be held at the Hyatt Regency at 6pm. There will be a wine tasting, silent auction, seated dinner, live auction, dancing and cocktails. Local businesses and individuals donate bottles, cases, wine tasting events, exciting getaways and gift certificates from local upscale retailers. For more information about the 2010 Fine Wine Auction, please visit the Red Cross of Upstate South Carolina website at [www.redcrosswineauction.com](http://www.redcrosswineauction.com) or call Betty Jackson at 864-271-8222.

tertaining and storage of over 1,600 bottles. The outside entrance sets the stage for the Tudor-style world that you are about to enter. Constructed entirely of stone, wood, plaster, brick, slate and iron, the first level takes you into a room that an English castle would be proud to call its own. Descending to the lower level via a plaster and stone curved staircase, you come to the main event: the actual cellar. No detail has been overlooked – from lighting and temperature control to furniture and accessories. Bass made Snow's vision happen and he could not be more pleased. "He allowed me to create my own country out here," says Snow. "Best of all we are still friends and both of us enjoy the fruits of our labor!" Joy Snow is not a wine drinker, but she still loves the new habitat. "We had wine in racks all over and now I have my house back," she says with a smile.

Another wine collector in Chanticleer with a sizable cellar calls his the "hobby room." About 18 other wine lovers can participate in his hobby at one time in this spacious cellar for wine tasting. Having owned two wine cellars before this one, he knew exactly what he wanted

and it was built on previous experiences, clippings from magazines that appealed to him and looking at other cellars. "It took about 10 months to build and a large part of my enjoyment is sharing it with other fellow wine lovers," he says. He proved this the night we talked, as about 14 people were coming for a tasting.

Not all cellars have to be large or even a cellar. Dr. Leon "Biff" Dickerson has a closet sized space that holds all he needs. He has built several cellars and this one fits what he wants at this time in his life. "It was unused space – that shows what you can do with small dimensions creatively constructed." An avid wine collector for several decades but a Greenville resident for only two, Dickerson loves the wine community here and says, "they are knowledgeable, giving and a lot of fun!" He notes that you do not have to purchase expensive wines to need a cellar. If you have wine that you like, buy 2-3 cases instead of one and store it.

So wine lovers, have a heart. No matter how small or large your collection, give it a home. ■

