

## NOTES ON CELLARING

clients. The costs can add up over the long term and access is a major factor. Whilst it is a good idea to have limited access to your collection as it is being established, check the limits of access to the off-site storage options before you sign up. One of the biggest bonuses is that wine can be ordered and sent directly to most of these operators, and simply added to your growing collection for you.

Those in apartments or with limited space are well catered for these days by the burgeoning wine-cabinet industry. Ostensibly finely tuned refrigerators, they are set up specifically to provide a precisely controlled cellaring environment and come in a vast array of shapes and sizes, to address a broad spread of price points. You can spend as little as \$500 or in excess of \$5000, depending on your tastes and needs.

The biggest variable to consider in choosing a wine cabinet is capacity, and whether to go for the single-zone or dual-zone option. In a single-zone cabinet you store all your wines in the same environment and chill the whites down from cellar temperature. A dual-zone cabinet allows whites and sparkling wines to be held cooler than reds so you can simply remove them and get straight into it.

Wine cabinets are easily built into kitchens or other cabinetry, and there are a range of features that preserve and present your wine collection at its best. Look for a cabinet with a dark interior to avoid reflected light, and most have a tinted or treated glass door. Shelving sizes are one feature to watch out for as many champagnes and top-shelf wines come in uniquely shaped, often slightly larger, bottles that some cabinets may struggle to accommodate.

If you've got a substantial collection, you might look to combine some off-site storage or an external cellar with a cabinet setup. That way you can keep a selection of choice bottles close at hand and ready to drink, replenishing them from your collection as you go.

## Sparkling wines

Australian sparkling wine covers a big range of stylistic options. The quality-oriented makers gravitate to the coolest corners of the country to make the finest styles. Non-vintage (NV) wines provide the greatest consistency from year to year and mark out house or producer styles. Vintage wines capture each season's unique conditions and are usually made only in the years in which fruit quality is considered to be first-rate. The bigger companies have thrown impressive weight behind sparkling wine and the results are spectacular; terrific quality and some incredible value. In terms of food, think about effervescence and acidity. These will dictate either a delicate dish that reflects the mouth-watering freshness of the wine or a subtly rich dish that is counterbalanced by the bubbles. Oysters in season and soft raw-milk cheese are two simple options.

### *NV* Ad Hoc The Riddler

Score 90

PEMBERTON  
Price \$20.00  
Quality \*\*\*\*  
Alc./Vol. 12%  
Drink Now  
Closure Cork

Gently pink-tinged in the glass, this comes with plenty of fizz and has tropical fruits and gentle red fruit aromas, really primary and fresh. The palate is smooth and easy, nice and dry; a refreshing style with gentle apple and red fruit flavours here.

### 1998 Arras EJ Carr Late Disgorged

Score 98

TASMANIA  
Price \$190.00  
Quality \*\*\*\*\*  
Alc./Vol. 12.5%  
Drink Now  
Closure Cork

This is a landmark for Australian sparkling in terms of price and quality. Named after the talented chief of sparkling winemaking at Hardys, this is a late disgorged wine showing terrific character and complexity. Dark toasted nuts and superb aged characters really dominate; some roasted coffee, then lighter, more delicate citrus comes from the other direction. The palate has a core of dried lemon peel and a fine, lingering presence. The texture has been finessed with time and the resounding impression is downright champagne-like!