

WineRacks.com- Wine Cellar Preparation Guide

The purpose of this Wine Cellar Preparation Guide is to outline the proper wine storage conditions and provide you the information necessary to create and maintain those conditions in your personal wine cellar. Achieving and maintaining those conditions will allow for proper development of your favorite wines and champagnes. By paying attention to the details now, the enjoyment of your wine will be maximized and your investment will be protected.

Ideal Wine Cellar Conditions

Most experts recommend an **average temperature** of **55 degrees F** for all wine storage. Cooler temperatures won't damage your wine but will slow its development. A temperature of 65 degrees or more will have a negative effect on wine the longer it's stored. The **ideal humidity** in your wine cellar should be **60-70%** but anything over 50% is acceptable. High humidity, 80% or more, may cause mold to form on the corks and bottles. In addition, the ideal long term wine storage should **avoid heat, direct light and vibration**.

Choosing a Wine Cellar Location

The best location for a wine cellar is **below ground level** in a basement. The reason for that is this is where generally cooler and more humid conditions already exist. A corner of a basement, with two exterior walls and free of windows, is ideal. Wine cellars built **above grade**, where basements do not exist, simply require special attention and materials to properly insulate and seal the room thoroughly. One of the **most important factors** in choosing a wine cellar location is deciding on the **type and location of a cooling system**. Most cooling units are installed through a wall and exhaust into an adjacent interior room that is at least **equal in size** to the wine cellar.

The ambient temperature of the intended venting area should **not be higher than 85 degrees F** in order for proper operation of the cooling unit. Other **cooling unit options** such as split systems and special units are available and may require installation by certified HVAC contractors. Please feel free to contact WineRacks.com to discuss your environmental control options prior to building out your room.

Wine Cellar Construction

Unless local codes dictate otherwise, standard 2 x 4 framing is sufficient. Electrical work should be completed to code prior to insulation and drywall. A **Vapor Barrier** is critical in controlling the humidity of your wine cellar. The ideal humidity of your wine cellar will be much greater than that of the rest of your home. A vapor barrier separates the two conditions and keeps the higher humidity from flowing out of the room. It also prevents warm and moist air (in high temperature and humidity areas) from entering the room, eliminating excess condensation build-up from the cooling unit. A **6 mil poly/plastic** (sold in rolls or sheets) should be **stapled over the studs before the insulation is applied**.

The **interior walls** of your wine cellar should be **insulated** with a minimum of R-13 and preferably R-19 insulation. If you live in areas of very high summer temperatures or very low winter temperatures, we recommend that you insulate with R-19 (minimum) and R-30 where your framing allows. **Ceilings** should be insulated to a minimum of R-19. **Concrete walls and floors** should be sealed with a "paint on" sealant (such as "Dry-Lock") to seal all cracks.

Generally, **½" plywood sheathing** will be secured to all walls (after electrical rough in and insulation) to anchor your wine racking but it is not required if using nailers between studs. Although a standard 1/2"- 3/4" sheet rock may be used, **it is highly recommend** that you use **moisture resistant "green board"**. Your wallboard may be finished with a quality **oil base** or **latex enamel** paint. We do not recommend installing a baseboard as the racking will be flush to the entire wall and include a toe-kick molding.

In selecting a **door** for your wine cellar, please choose a **solid core, exterior grade door**. All doors should be **weather stripped and completely sealed** to prevent loss of cooling and/or infiltration of warm air that will cause condensation. If you select a decorative glass door, be certain that the glass is **thermo-pane and tinted**.

Other factors to be considered in the construction of your wine cellar include locations of electrical switches (in order to not be covered by racking) and locations of plumbing and lighting. Proper **lighting** should be low heat (if lighting will be left on) and properly **insulated and installed**. If your wine racking is single depth, your lighting should be a minimum of 16" from walls and 28" from walls when double deep racking will be used.

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Measuring your Wine Cellar Walls and Ceiling Heights

WineRacks.com will be designing and manufacturing your custom wine cellar racking per your measurements and specifications. We will only manufacture your racking after you have approved the final drawings. The custom racking is **non-returnable** so please be certain to verify all of your measurements. In order for you to provide us an accurate faxed sketch along with your completed Wine Cellar Questionnaire, we ask you to follow these simple instructions. Please do not hesitate to call WineRacks.com with any questions or concerns.

On your drawing/sketch, please draw an overhead view of your room and **label your walls**, A, B, C, D, etc., indicating your **door opening and the direction** that the door opens.

Draw a separate sketch of each wall, being sure to indicate which wall it is.

For each wall, **measure the width in three places**, at the bottom, the center and the top and **provide the smallest measurement**.

Measure the **ceiling heights** in all corners and the center of all walls. Provide us the **minimum and maximum measurements**.

All walls that **jut out or form in** should be measured from corner bead to corner bead (outside the pocket) and wall to wall (inside pocket) in the same fashion as the wall width measuring instructions, providing us the **smallest measurement**.

Indicate exact **locations of obstructions** such as light switches, plumbing, overhead beams, poles, soffits, access panels, air vents etc.

As a general rule, racking should end 3" +/- from door casings, existing light switches that are to be used, thermostats and cooling units.

Reminder: In order for us to have all the information required to provide you an accurate AutoCAD Wine Cellar Layout, we will need you to fax these room measurements and details, along with a completed Wine Cellar Questionnaire to WineRacks.com. If you require any assistance, you may contact us via phone or email. We will gladly assist you in making this project as seamless as possible.

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