

INSPIRED LIVING

BOTTLED UP

Uncorking the ultimate in exclusive wine collections with Dragon Cellars' AL FUENTES



Formerly relegated to basements, wine collections are now taking center stage in luxurious wine rooms that are designed to both showcase bottles and serve as eye-catching components of a connoisseur's home. Al Fuentes founded **Dragon Cellars** in 2007, and the company now operates offices in Delray Beach, Madrid, and Caracas. Here, Fuentes uncorks his expertise in the high-end wine room design arena. (dragoncellars.com)

PBI: How does a wine room differ from a traditional wine cellar?

Fuentes: A wine room and a wine cellar are basically the same thing. However, a wine cellar is more traditional, not just because of the typical wood racking used, but because it is generally located in a basement and often has natural cooling year-round without [the need for] cooling equipment. Because Florida has very few basements, these elements are called wine rooms when placed above surface.



CUSTOM WINE ROOMS AROUND THROUGHOUT SOUTH FLORIDA'S LUXURY RESIDENCES, WITH MANY NOTABLE EXAMPLES CONCEPTUALIZED AND CREATED BY DRAGON CELLARS.

Are wine rooms limited to those who have expansive wine collections?

Not at all. Many of my clients want the aesthetic and work-of-art focus of a wine room. It is the "wow" focal point of the home that they are looking for without really being serious collectors. In fact, I even have clients who do not drink wine or alcohol, but want it since their guests will surely ask for a glass.

How do you customize your creations?

It's important to provide a first-phase consulting job to understand how [clients] really want to use the room and their focus. It could be for display, to create a work of art, to highlight their showcase bottles, to create an ambience to enjoy wine either inside or outside the wine room, etc. Our clients are always searching for a solution that has a plus [on] the aesthetic side.

How small or big can a wine room be?

As far as bottle capacity in Florida, it tends to go from 100 to 1,500 bottles. There are bigger wine rooms, but many times these homes are second homes, and they tend to have their main collections in their home states up north. For anything less than 100, it is more logical and cost-effective to buy a wine fridge that you only have to plug in.

Why is the lighting of a wine room such a critical component?

I have always said that a wine room that is not lit properly doesn't exist. You will walk by it and might realize it is there, but you won't pay much attention to it. Many other companies do not focus on the lighting effect at all except for some high hats in the ceiling. We only do "wow" projects, and that means I embed LED strips

ARTIFACTO

throughout all my racks and ensure that they are properly positioned to create that unique ambience.

What trends are you seeing right now?

Smaller wine walls (which means you do not walk into them) and many without refrigeration that are just for display and act as a cool-looking focus are trending. A big advantage of going this way is a big cost savings as far as space preparation, equipment, and permitting. You get the same spectacular view, but it is simply not cooled. People complement these with a wine fridge for their best wines and to keep their whites and Champagne at serving temperature.

Besides the wine racks, what other components can be added to these wine rooms to make them really distinctive?

Lighted tasting counters or tables with backlit white glass; cigar humidors lacquered in the same color as the racks themselves; bar areas where you can have acrylic glass holders; custom ladders; and shelving areas and cabinets

DRAGON CELLARS KEEPS NOTHING IN STOCK—EVERYTHING IS UNIQUE TO A SPECIFIC PROJECT, WITH LED LIGHTING INCORPORATED.

for storage for decanters and other bottles. Also, I am being asked to have wine rooms/walls with an area to place spirits.

What makes your company unique?

Most companies provide the wood/carpentry cabinets custom, but the metal and acrylic racks are modular and made in bulk. I sketch out each rack in my design and do AutoCAD engineering drawings in our shop in Madrid, Spain, for everything we manufacture.



PINEAPPLES, PALMS, ETC.

Pineapples, Palms, Etc. opened in Jupiter 20 years ago. Sisters Shelly Bascetta and Lisa Peterson keep the 4,000-square-foot space fresh and new by attending every major furniture market and searching for one-of-a-kind pieces to mix with their many recognizable national brands, such as Lee Industries and Visual Comfort Lighting, along with providing their customers complete interior design services. Together with Cindy Larschan, Bascetta and Peterson launched their online shopping website in 2015 to reach a national audience.

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current

Promotion and Events



Kathryn Vecellio and
Monika Preston

RAYMOND F. KRAVIS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS GALA

The Kravis Center Gala will feature showbiz icons Steve Martin and Martin Short with prime reserved seating in Dreyfoos Hall on March 4, 2022. The black-tie evening, chaired by Kathryn Vecellio and Monika Preston, will continue with a dinner dance in the Gimelstob Ballroom. Honorary Chairs are Christine and Bob Stiller.

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561-651-4320 | kravis.org