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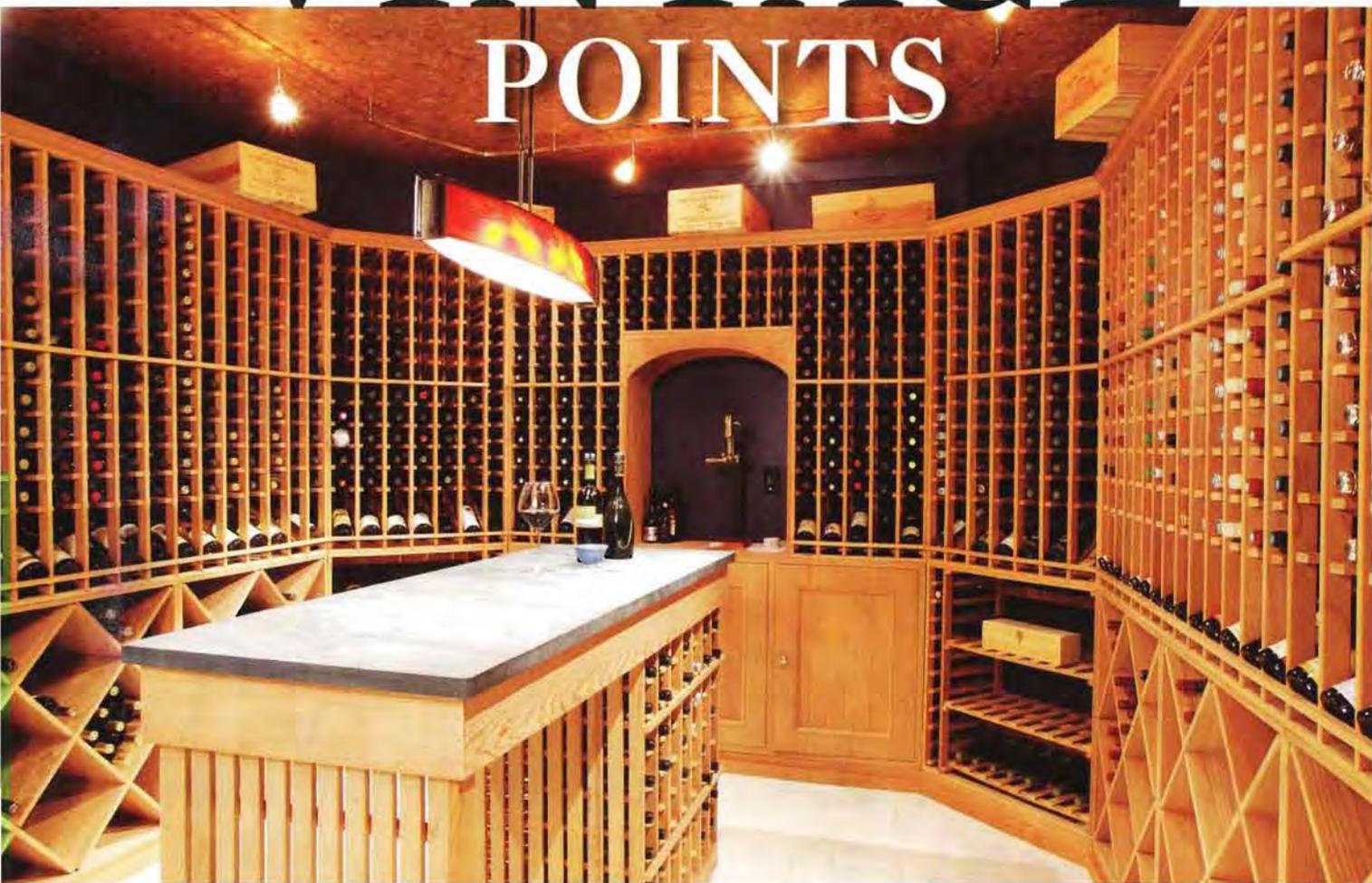
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VINTAGE POINTS



Three New Jersey homeowners—wine lovers all—create cool cellar spaces to store and enjoy their bottled bounty.

BY JEN A. MILLER

FOR SOME, WINE IS NOT JUST A BEVERAGE to bring to parties or consume at the occasional dinner. It's a way of life that requires extensive knowledge of tannins and varietals, and it calls for a precise climate-controlled environment in which to store one's carefully built collection.

Here's how three New Jersey couples created personalized, functional wine-storage spaces in their homes, whether they hired a pro to plan the project or found inspiration in something as unlikely as a picture window.

GREEN-MINDED

"I'm really not a wine snob by any means," insists Michael Feldstein, owner of Surface Technology Inc., a high-tech chemical company based in Robbinsville. "We like to have nice wines and a variety of wines that suit our meals. We like to entertain, so you can't have one bottle of this and one of that. We wanted not just a variety, but also a significant quantity of each."

Feldstein and his wife, Lori, owner of Cogent Medical Marketing in Robbinsville, hired Princeton-based architect Joshua Zinder to design a space in the basement of their Princeton home for 2,500 bottles, with cubbies for magnums and dessert wines as well as the standard 750 ml bottles. Feldstein also wanted the wine cellar to be as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible.

The basement was basic to begin with—"raw concrete blocks with exposed ceiling," says Zinder—and was to be renovated. The layout would match the unconventional floor plan of the upstairs space, with distinct areas that would become a home theater, a gym, and the wine cellar. The rest of the basement would be made into a playroom for the couple's children.

The wine cellar is located under the breakfast nook, on the southern side of the home. It has five angled walls with a tasting table in the middle. Since the multiple exterior walls are in direct contact with the earth outside, the room is naturally chilled and requires minimal energy to maintain its 50- to 55-degree year-round temperature.

The wine room, like the rest of the basement, draws its power from solar panels on the roof. Zinder also specified energy-efficient cooling and humidifying systems and non-toxic paint. The wine racks are made of redwood certified by the Natural Resources Defense Council as sustainably harvested. The slate top for the tasting counter came from within 500 miles of the home, reducing the amount of fuel needed for transport. For the ceiling, Zinder used cork, a sound-absorbing, rapidly renewable resource.

"I wanted to give it rich character,"



SUSTAINABLE AND STYLISH: Michael and Lori Feldstein's eco-friendly wine cellar features a cork ceiling, slate-topped tasting table, and storage for 2,500 bottles of wine.

says Zinder about the cork ceiling, which is doubly functional. "Moisture is always a concern in wine rooms, and since cork naturally can take moisture, it seemed like the ideal material."

Zinder wanted lighting that would keep the cellar from looking like a "dungeon." He chose an elongated light fixture with amber lens for the middle of the room and track lighting along the perimeter. The result, says Zinder, conveys "a warm rich feeling, instead of a cold, dark,

cellar-like feeling."

Feldstein's favorite feature (aside from the basement dishwasher) is the center tasting table, which he says he copied from a wine bar in Zurich. He got the idea for the slate top from another wine bar in Greenwich Village. The Feldsteins host frequent wine tastings, so they mark the types of wine with chalk on the slate.

"The kids love it, too," he says. "They come to keep me company and draw on the table."