

ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER

OC HOME

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VINTAGE
DISPLAYS
*cellars take
center stage*

WINE ACCESSORIES | DROUGHT-RESISTANT FRUITS | ICON REMODEL



The Port Locksleigh Place home in Newport Beach is open and accessible, including the glass-fronted wine enclosure that faces the main dining area.



COVER STORY

Rising to new heights

WINE CELLARS ARE MOVING OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

BY PAUL HODGINS
STAFF WRITER

The wine cellar used to epitomize old-school wealth.

Dark, discreet and well-concealed, it was never seen by guests and seldom talked about. Only servants and the lord of the manor entered the home's hidden sanctum sanctorum to root through dusty bottles and ruminate over the perfect pairing.

But times have changed, and so has the wine cellar.

For one thing, it's often not a cellar anymore but a glass-walled enclosure proudly displaying its contents in the most public part of the household.

"I definitely see that as a trend," said Orange County architect Christopher Brandon, whose plans for a home on Newport's Port Locksleigh Place included a transparent wine enclosure facing the dining room. "I like wine areas that put the wine on display. It adds texture and depth to a space, and it suits the way people entertain now."

Brandon's observations are borne out by prominent industry observers such as Curtis Dahl, owner of Joseph & Curtis Custom Wine Cellars, a nationally known company.

"The wine cellar/tasting room have become *the* destination spot in the modern day home," Dahl said in a 2014 article in Jacksonville Magazine. "Of course it all depends on the size of the cellar. People are obviously very passionate about the food they make, the sight, the smell etc., so it only makes sense that they want to 'hang out' in

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PHOTOS BY JERI KOEGEL PHOTOGRAPHY



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the kitchen. The same thing goes for the wine cellar. People want to be around the wines they love."

Brandon's clients, while interested in wine, usually aren't the kind of serious collectors who require vast subterranean storage space, he said.

"Not that many people I know have 1,000 bottles of wine that need to be cataloged. The way they live and entertain is more casual. They like to get up from the dining room table, find a bottle of wine, open it and bring it back in."

In the Port Locksleigh home, the wine room was a collaborative project that changed shape several times before taking its final form, Brandon said.

"A wine display area was in the original plans, but not in the form it finally took." The home contains many curved and circular shapes. "That's why the idea of a radial corner came into play," Brandon said. "It also helped with access from the hallway into the dining room."

Brandon's compact, attractive wine areas fit in with his overall design aesthetic. "I prefer smaller, more efficient homes that feel big and airy. I'm not a fan of putting in a basement to have a theater and a wine cellar that nobody will see or use."

The seamless and elegant integration of indoor and outdoor living in the Port Locksleigh home is a Brandon trademark.

"I'm a big innovator with fenestration – doors and windows and walls that just go away. I do everything I can to blur the lines"

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Architect Christopher Brandon's fondness for light-filled spaces and inventive window design are evident everywhere. Mirrors, wall sconces and random tile design, as in the bathroom at left, give brightness, texture and interest to every corner of the house.



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between inside and outside.

Brandon's predilection for light colors, generous windows and airy entrances squares with recent developments in residential architecture. Even in Orange County, which Brandon says adopts trends later than some other places, the architect sees widespread acceptance of the new look. Tuscan, Craftsman and Spanish Colonial styles are losing ground to the clean lines and open spaces of modernism, Brandon said.

"Everything is becoming more contemporary. People want lighter and brighter interiors instead of dark cabinetry and granite."

Product manufacturers in the homebuilding industry are catching on, Brandon has noticed.

"With rollup walls and pocket doors and things like that, we've got a lot more options to choose from now to make rooms bright

and connected to the outdoors."

Despite his preference for "smaller" designs (it's a relative term – the Port Locksleigh home is 5,200 square feet), Brandon finds places to make a dramatic statement.

"I try to create opportunities for drama, whether in the entryway or at the back of the house. And I never resist the opportunity to make the most of a great view."

Even if that view is the contents of the wine cellar from a seat at the dining room table.

