Photos courtesy of The Fine Wine Reserve

Good News for Wine Lovers

By Edward Finstein

Wine lovers and collectors, rejoice! The Fine Wine Reserve is here. Short of using one of those "vintage keepers", the refrigerated units that simulate ideal storage conditions, as a condo dweller, your wine storage options have been somewhat limited. Now, the ultimate storage facility has arrived that should please both oenophiles and amateurs alike.

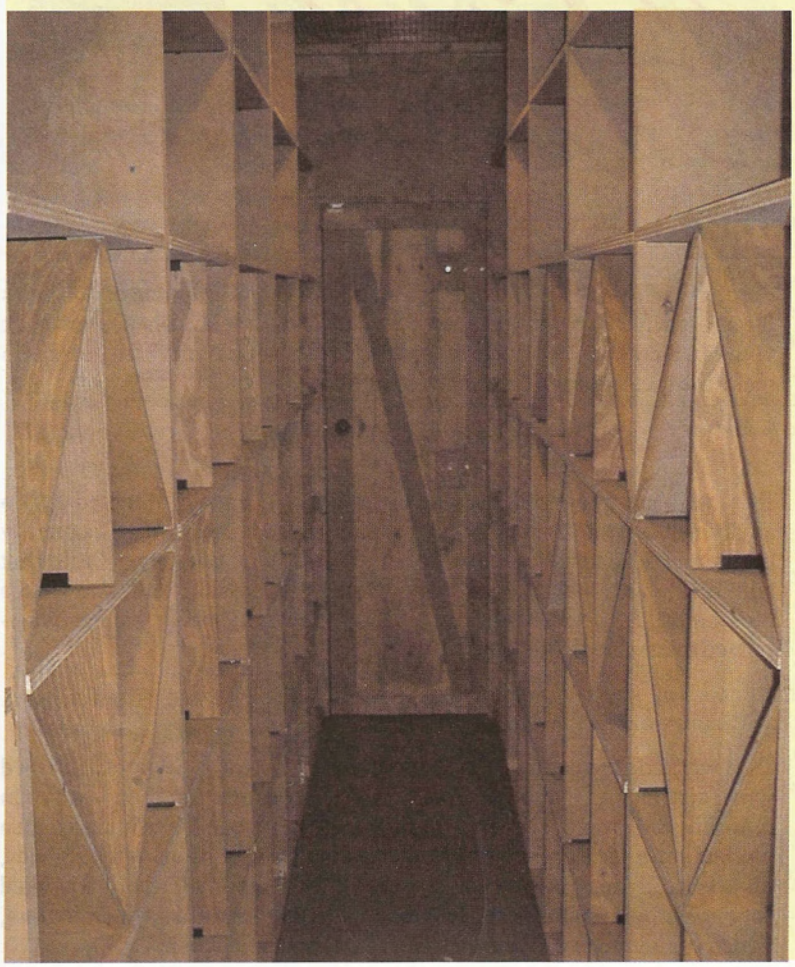
You won't find any sign outside The Fine Wine Reserve, as discretion is the key. Safe, secure and centrally located at King Street West, on the southwest corner at Spadina Avenue, in the lower level of a rock-solid building built in 1910, this facility is the ideal place for condo dwellers to store their wines. Three years in the making and almost a half-million dollars in construction and renovation costs have yielded a quality facility with perfect storage conditions. At six feet under street level, Mark Russell, president, has essentially built a building within a building to ensure that the environment is vibration-free and insulated, so that the state-of-the-art cooling system can maintain an ideal storage temperature. Computer controlled humidifiers, a complex ventilation system and low-wattage lighting further ensure stability. All systems have back-ups should anything fail.

Talk about security! It would be easier to get into Fort Knox. Some $40,000 was spent on cutting-edge security for the space. Six layers exist before reaching any wine. Entry into the building is controlled by the landlord by means of an access system. To access the lobby of the Reserve, clients must use a proximity card reader, as well as pass a biometric fingerprint reader. To get into the actual cellar, another proximity card reader and electric strike must be passed. As each individual storage unit has a separate alarm system, this security level also unarms your unit and nobody else's. At the rear of the complex is an alarmed door accessing a conveyer system for unloading/loading cases. Every layer of security is controlled by its own central alarm system. Clients must also purchase a deadbolt lock for $60 from the Reserve (which they get to keep) to put on their unit. Video surveillance cameras record all activity entering and leaving the facility and the landlord has a dedicated security company patrolling the building regularly. Fire protection is also in place via smoke detectors, heat sensors and a sprinkler system.

An added bonus to this facility is the "Friendship Room", a tasting room and lounge complete with a full kitchen. Here, members can interact with their fellow wine enthusiasts, have a glass of wine, a nibble of food and relax. Membership is optional. There is a one-time initiation fee of $500 and annual dues are $240 per year.

Access is 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A one-time set-up fee of $35 is required. Storage spaces are divided into lockers and cellars (walk-in style). Lockers range from One Bin size, holding approximately eight cases for $36 per month, to a Six Bin size, holding approximately 48 cases for $156 per month. Walk-in cellars range from a Four Unit size, holding approximately 200 cases for $625 per month, to a 12 Unit size, holding approximately 600 cases for $1,400 per month. If you lease for one year or more, discount rates apply and if you act before July 31st, you can take advantage of some great promotional rates and offers. There is even an insurance company available to insure your wines, should you desire.

For more information on The Fine Wine Reserve, visit their web site at finewinereserve.com or call 416-593-9463.



Also known as The Wine Doctor, Edward Finstein is the award-winning author of Ask the Wine Doctor. *An international wine judge and Professor of Wine, Mr. Finstein is also the co-host of* Vine & Dine, *which airs on Prime TV. Visit his web site at winedoctor.ca.*