



Liza Zimmerman

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Got excess wine? POSTED JUNE 19, 4:51 PM



The upstairs party room at the SF Wine Center.



I find my house is becoming a virtual wine cellar. Thankfully the temperatures here don't often go over 70 degrees. I have wine in the kitchen, the living room and last of all in the way too small temperature-controlled baby wine cellar I bought a decade ago.

I like to buy cases to collect, get discounts and use the wines at different events I do. I think I am far from alone in this philosophy. I know a lot of people who aren't in the business who feel the same. Well there's an interesting solution proliferating around San Francisco.

High-end storage facilities are popping up all over town. This used to be the domain of restaurants, where you had your private cellar at the [21 Club](#) in New York, with your name discreetly (or not so) inked below it. Now the concept is more all purpose, and it's being used by large families and restaurants, as well as individuals.

These wine warehouses are providing more than temperature-controlled space; they are offering educational programs, lounge and party facilities and pick-up and drop-off services. They are also functioning as the über-networking locale for meeting other collectors and those involved in the wine community. They also offer the lucky a chance to taste some amazing older vintages when members get into the "I can bring out something nicer than what you're drinking from my cellar" wars.

The most successful model I have seen out of our town is the [Presidio Wine Bunkers](#). It is a converted set of old actual bunkers set in the Presidio. It's naturally temperature controlled and was introduced to me by the late, and great, wine authority David Jones, who passed away quite recently. Members come and go and impromptu parties often ensue, where you can taste those stellar wines when everyone gets so competitive. It's a storage facility and a community.

This is a concept long overdue in our wine-centric town and another ambitious newcomer just opened shop. The [San Francisco Wine Center](#) debuted in May on a desolate block in the super-hot SOMA neighborhood (no worries the place is next to a police station). The Plain Jane office and lockers give way to a clubby upstairs conference room and delightful entertaining space (think marble bar and wood beams). Please give me a cigar.

Co-owner and president Paolo Mancini says his point of difference is that his staff will do practically anything for customers. And he lives a couple of blocks away, should you need to call him in the dark of night (don't tell his new wife that). What's even more interesting is that he is also an importer and distributor of close to 40 wine brands, primarily from Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. He is planning on adding some others from his homeland of Italy. This means customers also get discounts and exclusives on his range of imported wines.

It's a new concept and an interesting one. Storage paces range from those for 10 cases to one equipped to fit 500 cases. Don't feel insecure about the size of your collection as he also has restaurant and corporate clients.

His sexy upstairs entertaining space can also be rented by non members. It's a thought for your next gathering.

In Good Spirits - Liza the Wine Chick