

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Gardening Guide

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Award-Winning 'Wine Cave' Goes Beyond a Refrigerator

By Chris Lavin

Wine is important to many Lamorinda families – some even have dedicated specialized refrigerators to store the good stuff. But if you have a winery, why not dig a cave? Yes, a real cave.

“We wanted someplace with temperature and humidity control,” said David Rey, who with his wife Dianne and two more generations owns the Reliez Valley Vineyards in Lafayette. They have grapes, they have machinery. They needed space.

To get a cave, one must dig. To find out how and where, Rey called the Orinda architect who designed his home and outbuildings back in the early 1990s, Rick Kattenburg.

“I originally designed the home on the 2-and-a-half acre property in 1991,” Kattenburg said. He added a pool cabana, an outdoor kitchen, and a garage with a game room on top almost 10 years later. Then they started on “the cave.”

The Reys' grape vines were already in the ground, and doing well. But the resulting wine needed space to age.

Spelunkers have known the secret for years – crawl down into an existing cave some 20 or 30 or more feet, and you get into the special thermal realm of 50 to 55 degrees, a perfect temperature for storing wine. It can be 100 degrees outside, or even below freezing, and still 55 down in the caves. So Rey called Kattenburg, and Kattenburg called in the bulldozers. The equipment started



It might look like a barn, but this seasonal storage shed is equipped with a winch on steroids to lift heavy equipment back and forth.

Photo provided

humming in 2012.

Architect Kattenburg has been in business for 35 years in Orinda, and specializes in residential projects. Rey's home was a big project, complicated, he said, but it helped that the homeowner was so involved.

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