



TWELVE DEGREES WINE

CONSULTANCY | EDUCATION | EVENTS

STARTING A CELLAR

GUIDANCE ON STARTING A
CELLAR AT HOME OR IN-BOND

Introduction

Storing wine at home can be both practical and rewarding, but it requires an understanding of the conditions that influence how wine ages and develops. In a typical UK home, factors such as temperature, light, humidity and movement can vary significantly from room to room and season to season. This guide explains how each of these elements affects wine, what conditions are considered ideal, and how different areas of the home compare.

Drawing on over 20 years of personal experience storing wine at home and using professional in-bond storage, I also offer practical, impartial advice on how to adapt these principles to your own space, lifestyle and collection. Whether you are keeping everyday bottles, building a cellar for longer-term ageing, or deciding when in-bond storage makes sense, the aim is to help you make confident, informed choices that protect your wines and ensure they are enjoyed at their best.

Home Wine Cellaring: Temperature, Light, Humidity and Movement in the UK Home

Proper wine storage depends on **temperature, light, humidity, and movement**. Each factor affects how your wines develop over time, and understanding them will help you make the most of your collection.

Ideal Conditions for Storing Wine

- **Temperature:** 12–16°C is ideal for long-term storage; up to 18°C is fine for shorter-term bottles
- **Light/UV exposure:** Keep wine away from direct sunlight or strong artificial light to protect labels and slow ageing
- **Humidity:** Around 60–70% helps keep corks healthy, but minor fluctuations are less critical than stable temperature and minimal UV exposure
- **Vibration/Movement:** Wine should be stored in a stable environment; excessive vibrations can disturb sediment and impact ageing

Why these factors matter

- **Temperature:** Too warm speeds ageing and may degrade flavours; too cold can slow maturation and risk cork contraction
- **Light/UV:** Exposure can create off-flavours and fade or damage labels
- **Humidity:** Very low (<50%) can dry out corks; very high (>80%) can affect labels, though most home environments are manageable
- **Vibration/Movement:** Frequent handling, door opening, or appliances nearby can disturb sediment and affect development in aged wines

Average Conditions by Room in a UK Home

Temperature, light, humidity, and movement vary depending on room use and season.

Living room / lounge

Temperature: 18–22°C

Light: Sunlit windows may risk UV exposure

Humidity: 40–60%

Movement: Moderate – foot traffic and vibrations from TVs or speakers can affect delicate bottles

Bedroom

Temperature: 16–20°C

Light: Avoid sunny windowsills

Humidity: 45–65%

Movement: Low, generally stable environment

Kitchen

Temperature: 18–24°C

Light: Sunlight or strong artificial light

Humidity: 50–70%

Movement: High – opening cabinets, appliances, and cooking activity

Bathroom

Temperature: 20–24°C

Light: Usually shaded

Humidity: 60–80%

Movement: Low, but moisture fluctuations

Hallway / landing

Temperature: 16–20°C

Light: Usually minimal exposure

Humidity: 45–60%

Movement: Moderate – foot traffic can create small vibrations

Utility room

Temperature: 16–22°C

Light: Keep away from windows or bright artificial light

Humidity: 50–70%

Movement: Moderate to high – laundry appliances may cause vibrations

Cellar / basement (if present)

Temperature: 10–15°C

Light: Naturally shaded

Humidity: 60–80%

Movement: Low – generally the most stable environment for long-term storage

Seasonal Considerations

- **Winter:** Heating can raise temperatures and dry the air; UV indoors is minimal
- **Summer:** Rooms may warm above ideal storage temperatures; sunny spots increase UV risk
- **Movement:** Occasional household activities may vary, but careful placement can minimise impact

Is My Home Suitable for Wine Storage?

Your home may work for everyday or drink-soon bottles if:

- Temperatures remain fairly stable year-round
- Bottles are kept out of direct sunlight and strong artificial light
- You can avoid excessive vibrations from appliances or foot traffic
- You can find a shaded, cooler spot for higher-value wines

Common Home Cellaring Mistakes

- Storing wine near **heat sources** such as radiators, ovens, or sunny windows
- **Exposing wine to UV light** from sunlight or artificial sources
- Ignoring **vibrations and movement**, especially near appliances or high-traffic areas
- Assuming **any cupboard is cool enough year-round**
- Mixing **fine wines with everyday bottles** without considering different storage needs

Combining Home Storage and a Wine Cabinet

A practical approach for many collectors:

- **Home storage** for everyday or drink-soon wines in cool, shaded, and stable areas
- **Quality wine cabinet** (e.g., EuroCave) for higher-value or long-term wines, providing controlled temperature, stable humidity, UV protection, and minimal vibration

This allows easy access to everyday bottles while keeping premium wines in ideal conditions.

When In-Bond Storage Makes Sense

For fine wines, larger collections, or long-term ageing, **in-bond storage** can be the best option:

- Controlled temperature and light-free environment
- Duty and VAT deferred until withdrawal
- Extra security for valuable bottles

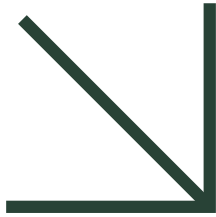
Many collectors combine **in-bond storage, a home cabinet, and everyday home storage**, moving wines as drinking windows approach.

Key Takeaway

The best storage solution depends on **how much wine you keep, its value, and when you plan to drink it**. Focusing on **stable temperature, UV protection, reasonable humidity, and minimal vibration** — and combining home storage with a quality cabinet or in-bond storage — offers flexibility and confidence that your wines will be enjoyed at their best.

Professional guidance can help you make practical choices for your home, your collection, and your lifestyle.

Get in touch with us



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