



TWELVE DEGREES WINE

CONSULTANCY | EDUCATION | EVENTS

STARTING A COLLECTION

Introduction

If you're thinking about starting your own wine cellar—whether at home or in-bond—I can help you get started with practical, experience-based guidance and point you towards trusted companies and organisations. Drawing on my own experience of building and managing both types of collections, I can advise on everything from choosing suitable storage and selecting wines with ageing potential to understanding in-bond logistics and long-term planning. I also use the latest market research data from multiple sources to understand current buying and selling trends, helping you make more informed decisions about what to collect for both the short and long term. Whether your focus is enjoyment, future value or a mix of both, I can help you make confident, well-informed choices and create a cellar that truly reflects your tastes. While I don't offer financial or investment advice, I'm happy to share what I've learned to help you get the most satisfaction from your collection.

This service will start with an online questionnaire and can be carried out online.

Things to consider before starting a collection

Don't Fall Into These Common Wine Collecting Traps

Many people assume that “proper” wine collecting means chasing the biggest names, the rarest vintages or the highest price tags. But there are countless ways to build a cellar—and just as many places to go wrong.

Some mistakes are practical: storing wine poorly, ageing bottles that weren't meant to last, or skipping essential provenance checks. Others are more mindset-based: collecting for the wrong reasons, ignoring regions that truly match your taste, or being swayed by flashy labels.

Stashing Wines Meant to Be Enjoyed Young

Ageing wine is about giving certain bottles the time they need to reach their peak. As Jessica Sculley of Commonwealth Wine School explains, ‘time can transform a good wine into something truly memorable. But that doesn't apply to every bottle.’

Maximilian Riedel notes that most wines are actually made to be opened early—and a study from Sonoma State University backs that up: 90% of people drink a bottle within two weeks of buying it. Only wines with the right structure—acidity, tannin and alcohol—are built to age.

Understanding which wines improve with time and which don't is a crucial part of collecting. Everything has a peak, and knowing when that is matters just as much as patience.

Only Cellaring the Expensive Stuff

Top bottles from Burgundy, Bordeaux and Barolo have earned their prestige, but price doesn't automatically equal longevity. Many collectors get hung up on high-end labels and miss out on age-worthy wines under \$100.

Starting a collection shouldn't feel intimidating—there are plenty of great, accessible bottles that mature beautifully.

Collecting for Someone Else

Before buying, every collector should ask: Am I collecting for myself or for resale? The answer determines your whole approach.

A “drinker's cellar” is built around your own taste and emotional connection—wines that mean something to you or remind you of a moment. This approach is more personal and satisfying, even if tastes evolve.

Others split their strategy: some bottles for enjoyment, some for investment.

Treating Wine Solely as an Investment

Some approach wine like stocks—buying only blue-chip bottles and famous vintages. But experts warn this misses the point entirely.

Wine is cultural, expressive and meant to be shared. A cellar full of bottles you don't enjoy drinking defeats its own purpose.

Chasing Trends Too Hard

Wine trends shift constantly. What's hot now may not be desirable when you decide to sell. Today's cult Napa Cabernet may not excite tomorrow's buyers; micro-production Champagne might.

Predicting the "next big thing" is notoriously difficult. Even established labels sometimes fail to hold resale value. A balanced approach—and awareness of long-term producers—is key.

Relying on Only Traditional Voices

Critics once dictated collectability, but social media has changed the landscape. Influencers, sommeliers and celebrities can now move markets overnight. A single post can trigger sell-outs.

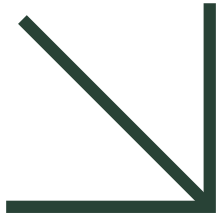
Skippping the Research

Finally, the most avoidable mistake: not doing your homework.

Read, taste, visit regions and follow critics whose styles align with yours. Auction results offer huge insight into what's gaining or losing value. Collectors' groups can help you discover rising producers and untapped regions.

In the end, the joy of collecting comes from curiosity, learning and exploration—not just the pursuit of prestige or profit.

Get in touch with us



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WWW.TWELVEDEGREESWINE.COM



HELLO@TWELVEDEGREESWINE.COM



07508 460 852



[@TWELVEDEGREESWINE](https://www.instagram.com/TWELVEDEGREESWINE)

