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LOCAL ARTISTS
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The homeowners are American Indian and spent several years living in the Western United States. Their art collection, which includes a collection of American Indian dolls, reflects their heritage. During the renovation, the cellar space was made much lighter and cozier. Light fixtures give the room a warm amber glow that can be adjusted at moment's desire.

bottles in a garage-like setting, which worked well for the climate in England, but when it came time to move back to the states their collection had grown by almost 300 bottles.

After moving to Atlanta and purchasing a home that they would have to renovate, the couple looked at their 800-bottle wine collection and decided to add a wine cellar to their renovation plans.

They worked closely with architects Gregory Palmer and Bulent Baydar of Harrison Design Associates, Inc., and builder Bob Hearn, to create a cellar that would be not only a beautiful showplace for the wine, but also for their extensive collection of American Indian art and artifacts. "When we started this project there were quite a few problems that we had to work around," says Baydar.

The design team decided to arch the ceiling in the room to hide the pre-existing blemishes and add height. The ceiling also ended up fitting seamlessly with the Italian-style architecture that the homeowners wanted to bring into the room.

The walls are stained stucco, all the wood is hand-rubbed mahogany with beeswax, and the floors are green- and bronze-colored slate that all beckon to the family's visits to Tuscany.

The room is multi-functional as it is used for storage, entertaining and even Randall's workspace from time to time. "I didn't want it to be a temperature controlled room," he says. To solve this problem, EuroCaves (wine preserving systems that recreate the natural cooling environment of a chateau wine cellar), were built into the racks.

International Assemblage

A globetrotting family builds a home for its worldly wine collection.

Story by Jamila Dorsey

RANDALL AND THERESA WILLIS

have lived all over the world, and they recently settled in Atlanta after a two-year stint in London by way of Rome. In the course of their travels, the couple has amassed a wine collection of more than 1,100 bottles.

"It is more of a gathering than a collection," says Randall Willis. "We didn't go

out and buy all these bottles as an investment the way a collection insinuates; we have them to drink wine for wine's sake." When the couple lived in Rome they began exploring the Italian wine country and caught the bug for collecting. By the time they were ready to move to London, they had amassed between 400 and 500 bottles of wine. In London they stored the

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LIFE Private Cellar

Half of the Willis' collection is stored away in those systems while the other half is out in the open for more immediate enjoyment. The cellar has been wired for broadband and sound, so not only is it the perfect place for wine and cheese before a dinner party but you can surf the net in there, too.

WINE NOTES

This couple has such a deep love for fine wine that their retirement plans include opening a winery in Walla Walla, Washington, for which they have already purchased the land. Here are a few favorites from their collection, including one from their retirement destination:

Capannelle

This is a vintage red wine aged in barrels from the Capannelle Vineyard in the hills above Gaiole in Chianti, the heart of Tuscany. "When we lived in Rome we explored the Tuscan countryside and found this vineyard up in the hills. Their red wine was really just our taste, a wonderful blend that we seek out as often as possible."

Chateau Beychevelle

This is a St. Julien Bordeaux-style wine. When the Willis' oldest daughter was born (she's 21 now), Randall's brother gave them four bottles of this wine, so it's always a favorite. "We only have one bottle left and we'll probably give the bottle to her when the time is right."

Walla Walla Valley Sangiovese from Leonetti Cellar Vineyards

It is a wine loaded with bright, dense red fruits that is one of the Willis' favorites from the region. "We plan on retiring and spending our days crushing grapes in Washington."

WHO TO CALL

Architect: Gregory Palmer, AIA, and Bulent Baydar, AIA, of Harrison Design Associates, Inc., (404) 365-7760

Builder: Bob Hearn, (770) 300-7861



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