



MEGHAN THIBAUT

Meghan Thibault, Innovative Ideas editor. To submit an idea or story for this section, please email [meghan@studiodelmar.net](mailto:meghan@studiodelmar.net)

# A Custom-Built Wine Room and Exclusive Wine Club Are a Hit

**A tip of the glass is boosting sales and spirits at Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club, a BoardRoom Distinguished Club.**

The private club in Bedminster, New Jersey boasts an incredible wine list, with more than 550 carefully curated vintages from around the world. Since 2016, a lucky and limited number of club members having been taking part in an exclusive Wine Club that goes a step beyond the wine programs offered elsewhere. The Wine Club, fully subscribed in its first week, currently has 12 club members waiting anxiously for space to open.

Wine Club members at Fiddler’s Elbow have exclusive access to wine storage in dedicated, individual lockers within a showpiece, temperature-controlled wine room, which serves as an elegant backdrop for the lounge in the club’s upscale dining venue, the Elbow Room. Installed in May 2016, the wine room and new program had been adding tremendous value for Wine Club members, who are able to store and track special bottles to enjoy in the club’s dining venues.

“The wine room was custom-built by a local expert who came highly recommended by several club members who have built-in wine cellars at home. We made new use of a lightly trafficked area of the lounge to build out the new wine room,” Michael Nyerges, the clubhouse manager explained.

The Wine Club, made up of passionate members that appreciate wine, enjoy unique and intimate wine events with vintners and sommeliers, and recognize the value of always having access to their collection. Wine Club members can share in a monthly wine dinner, held mid-month on Friday evenings. Hosted by winemakers and sommeliers, the dinners are limited to approximately 40 to 60 guests.

Wine Club member benefits also include access to exclusive wine events and experiences throughout the year. They can also purchase rare vintages and unique wines at excellent prices. A recent offering featured a wine dinner hosted by Don Hartford, winemaker and winery owner at Hartford Family Wines. The renowned single-vineyard Pinot Noir producer graciously led an informative tasting of his limited production Russian River Valley Chardonnays, Pinot Noirs and rare, Old Vine Zinfandels.

Celebrated glassmaker George Riedel hosted another event and guided wine aficionados through a comprehensive understanding of wine glasses and their many shapes. On another evening, they sipped Barolos and Barbarescos under the expert guidance of Giovanni Gaja, from the Piemonte, Italy wine-producing Gaja family. Many members added special vintages to their personal collection from this exceptional wine tasting experience.

Wine Club members often enjoy exclusive tasting sessions with local wine distributors, also giving them additional opportunities to taste wines not available in retail stores. Often, they choose to purchase full cases at the club’s wine events. Case storage is offered in Fiddler’s Elbow’s subterranean wine cellar, which seats 24 for dinner and is often home to intimate wine club events. The Wine Club program has significantly boosted wine sales at club events, Nyerges said.

Members’ wines are documented carefully and recorded. Limited by temperature-controlled locker and wine cellar storage space, demand for the Wine Club is high. With just 64 wine lockers that hold 15 bottles each, the club is considering expanding the program along with the club’s wine cellaring capacity. **BR**

