

Affordable Alternatives for Luxury Must-Haves

Luxury home components are just dreamy diversions for many. But there are ways to bring these great-living concepts home. Here are three affordable luxuries: outdoor ovens, garages and wine storage.

...Continued - Page 3 of 3 ([1](#) [2](#) [3](#))

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Wine Storage

Wine-related amenities are of growing importance in the luxury home market as wealthy homeowners look to enhance their lifestyle and entertainment options and to have proper wine storage. Custom wine storage can run into the tens of thousands of dollars. Add individual cellars for red and white wines and tasting rooms and prices soar higher.

[Vinotemp](#) has been designing premium wine cabinets for more than 20 years. At the luxury end, its customizable walk-in vault for a 5,000-bottle collection might cost \$100,000 depending on such options as etched and carved doors, beveled and leaded glass, furniture trim, and rack and cabinet modifications. Its Vinotemp Walk-In Wine Vault offers technology originally engineered for the military that monitors temperature and humidity and calls the owner's cell phone if the temperature is out of range. A touchscreen system allows customers to upload their inventory through their computer. Once information is uploaded, the owner can use the touchscreen to see what has been taken out or added, where a bottle is located as well as a bottle's vintage, country, year and winery.

Vinotemp's 46-Bottle Unit has a dual zone system to store red and whites at the same time. The front exhaust system allows for the unit to be built-in or freestanding. Photo © [Vinotemp International](#)

Don't just try to copycat luxury lifestyles. Determine what you enjoy most, how it best works with your home before and investigate the options. Here are some ideas:

- Outdoor kitchens are great in any part of the country but don't let weather be a problem. Consider designing a roof or shelter over part of the entertainment area so the party can go on rain or shine.
- Wood-fired ovens with some variations in design have been around for thousands of years. They can be used for cooking breads, pizzas, pies, meats and pastas.
- Some luxury car collectors install elevator car lifts to expand garage capacity. An affordable alternative to consider is expanding your home garage space by using one of the lift platform products. It allows you to free space for your vehicle by lifting other typical garage items, usually to about 250 pounds, up and out of the way.
- For wine, it is not only temperature but humidity that is important, according to Vinotemp's Vladislav Ozerov. Wine is best kept at 55 to 65 percent humidity. If it's too dry, the cork can dry out and allow oxygen into the wine, ruining it. Temperatures are typically 55 degrees for red wines, and 47 degrees for white.
- When looking for wine storage, decide if you want wine aging or wine chilling. According to Vinotemp's Ozerov, wood wine cabinets are best for aging, metal cabinets for chilling.

But Vinotemp also caters to wine lovers with more modest budgets. Vice President of Marketing Vladislav Ozerov says you can still have a walk-in vault for \$3,000—with modifications. Homeowners can map out their wine room designs as Vinotemp now offers an [online tool](#) with "drag and drop" options and the ability to select dimensions.

For wine lovers on a tighter budget, there are other options. One product that is particularly popular in kitchen remodeling, according to Ozerov, is a stainless-steel unit to fit the space that was once occupied by trash compactors. The company designed a 15-inch-wide, stainless-steel unit to fit that space. With sliding wood shelves and a glass door, it holds 26 bottles and starts at \$730.

Appreciate the Concepts

“Amenities for luxury homes are almost always driven by one thing: lifestyle,” says Waco Moore, president of the Institute for [Luxury Home Marketing](#) in Dallas.

“At the top of the market, homes aren’t judged simply by the number of rooms they offer and the types of fixtures and finishes, they’re judged on their ability to facilitate a particular way of living and lifestyle,” he explains. “Thus, desired amenities vary greatly depending on the location of the residence and the interests of the homeowner, but they generally fall into four categories: security, convenience, entertaining and leisure. At the very top of the market, trends are less distinct as often key amenities are unique or exclusive and driven by individual whimsy or interest.”

Not among the very wealthy? You can still look to their amenities for ideas. Take the concepts that appeal to your lifestyle and, with help from today’s marketplace, incorporate your own affordable luxuries.

- Buy your first wine storage unit with an eye to bigger capacities. Vinotemp’s Ozerov says the company often sees customers underestimate their needs. “Someone first buys a 12-bottle unit. Then they call six months later and say they need a bigger unit. About a year later, they find they need something larger.”

Luxury does not have the same definition for everyone, says Pam Danziger, author and president of Unity Marketing, which publishes the Luxury Consumption Index. “Americans really define luxury in square footage,” she says. “In Europe, it is not about size but amenities.” She believes American views of luxury will continue to evolve over time to appreciate smaller as better, less as more and with include more sensitivity to green concerns.