

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

A house that boasts the perfect place to pursue a passion: a wine cellar

[Deirdre Kelly](#)

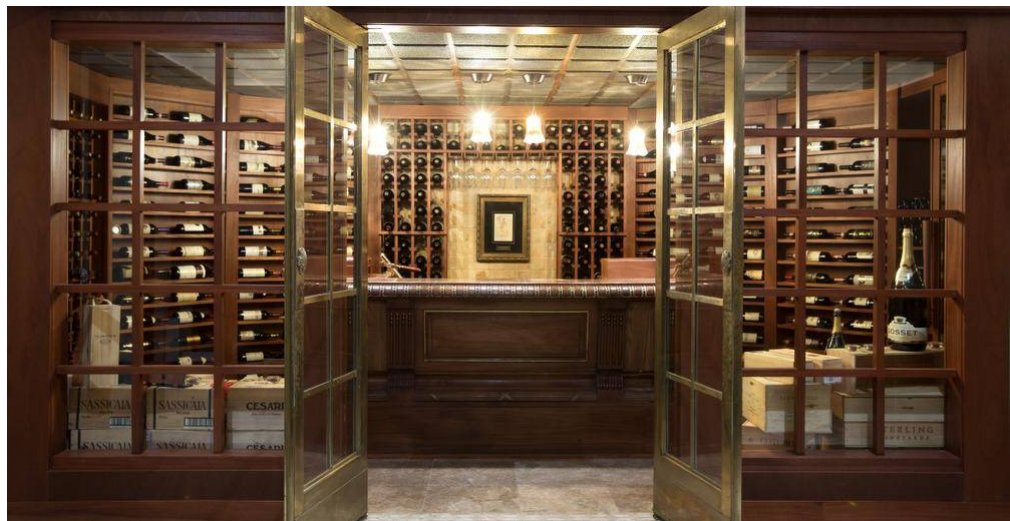
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Nick Di Donato is well-rooted in the hospitality industry. His business, Liberty Entertainment Group, includes 18 properties in Toronto and Miami. Next year, a new restaurant at the historic Casa Loma will be added to its growing roster. "I'm very lucky," says the Italy-born, Canada-raised restaurateur. "I get to eat and drink for a living." His wife and business partner Nadia Di Donato, the company's creative director, oversaw the design of the split-level the couple shares in the city's west end. The home has two basements, one of which is devoted to a custom-made wine cellar for 2,500 bottles.

"My passion is wine: collecting it, becoming knowledgeable about it and drinking it," Di Donato says. "The cellar is the perfect place for pursuing that passion and sharing my collection with my friends."



Peter Power for The Globe and Mail

The shelves

"These are hand-carved solid mahogany. We had them custommade here in

Toronto. They are designed in such a way that the labels are visible. It's always terrible to move wine while it is resting, so these shelves allow people to look at the wine without needing to pull the bottles out."

The ceiling

"This is a drop ceiling made of bronze that hides the mechanics of the room. Most wine cellars have the refrigeration in full view. But this one doesn't, which is why it is unique. The ceiling allows for access to the cooling equipment when needed."

The lighting

"They are hand-blown Murano glass pendants made for the wine cellar in Murano, Italy. They are beautiful pieces that really reflect a contemporary style while being classic at the same time."

The wines

"My most precious bottle is a 1902 Chianti. It's from Italy and it has been in my possession for many years. It's obviously not something you can now drink. I know it is spoiled. But just knowing that I have a bottle with wine made in 1902 and preserved until today is quite special."

The artwork

"This is a Dali print. It's a woman drinking wine, done in 1958, which is my birth year. I bought it at an auction in Miami."

The tasting island

"It's actually a Canadian antique from the early 1900s. Originally, it was an altar in a church. I am always at the altar, which I think is appropriate."

The doors

"They are from the early 1900s, from a bank in downtown Toronto. I found them at the Door Store. Made of bronze and glass, they have a beautiful, classic feel. They're perfect for displaying the wine cellar because they are transparent. They were originally exterior doors, so the thickness of the glass helps maintain the temperature."

The floor "

It's natural stone from Italy, a travertine in an espresso colour. The stone here is important because it helps the cellar retain its coolness."

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