

# business

## Corker of idea for wine butts

By DENICE RICE

NOT having a cellar is no longer a show stopper for wine butts who want to put down a few drops for future consumption.

They can now hire a cellar, as they would hire a storage unit for their household clutter.

Self-storage company National Storage, which already has 300 climate-controlled private wine vaults at its Humberston site, says demand for this type of storage means the company will build 500 more vaults at its Osborne Park premises.

Peter Greer, director of operations for National, which recently combined its business with specialist wine storage company Wine Ark, said demand for climate-controlled Australia's escalating alongside Australia's love affair with wine.

Mr Greer said that National's wine-storage facilities, including the new 1500sq m storage bunker in Osborne Park, would be repurposed under the Wine Ark name. Wine Ark chief Dean Taylor said the facility would increase the company's total capacity in the Perth market to more than one million bottles.

He said the company was expecting huge demand from private collectors.

"While there are a number of restaurants, retailers and wine producers that use our services, 95 per cent of our customers are private wine collectors and we expect the demand for our new facility to be enormous," Mr Taylor said.

A growing understanding of wine by Australians was responsible for the large number of people collecting wine, according to Mr Taylor.

"Understanding and being able to talk about wine has become a social necessity," he said.

"Also, as Australian wine has improved, so has the demand for it both nationally and internationally, which has led to a dramatic increase in the value of Australian wine.

"An average-size cellar of 40-50 cases can easily be worth \$50,000 or more and an investment like that needs to be protected."

Mr Taylor said that cellar hire prices worked out to about \$3 a bottle a year for up to 500 bottles, dropping to about \$1.50 for larger collections.

Insurance is charged separately and the cost varies according to the value of the goods.



VALUABLE VINTAGE: Lee Barrett, regional manager of National Storage, which is offering wine lovers a place to store their precious drops. Picture: LINCOLN BAKER