

best cell

DR RON GEORGIU

■ DR RON Georgiou knows a good drop when he tastes it. One of only 237 Masters of Wine in the entire universe, the NSW connoisseur is an expert when it comes to vintages you should have stashed in your cellar.

What's the point of collecting expensive wine if you can't drink it?

If you want to make money, it's a viable alternative to the stock market. In terms of investment, wine has seen a substantial appreciation over the last few years.

Is owning expensive wine and not drinking it the same as marrying a supermodel but closing your eyes when she takes her clothes off?

It depends on how passionate you are about it. Some of the worst hoarders of wine are people who are purely investing in it. Sometimes you have to think, at what point does common sense overtake the passion?

Besides a headache, what type of return can you get from a good wine?

That's a difficult question because wine is such a diverse product, but it's not unusual to see 15-20-per-cent annual growth.

Let's just say I have a brilliant four-litre Lindemans cask riesling that I've been saving since 1982...

You'd throw it in the bin.

But it must be worth a fortune by now. Zero.

Even though it's been lovingly aged in its original plastic bladder and encased in high-quality cardboard?

Absolutely no good at all. Once you take wine out of that bag you allow air into the system and air is an enemy of wine.

What's the most expensive wine you've ever drunk?

A 1985 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Romanée-Conti. It's worth about \$6500-\$7000 a bottle at the moment.

Was it any good?

Sensational.

Do you feel guilty drinking expensive wine?

Very much so. Once wine starts to get to that level, you really have to question whether it's worth drinking or whether it's worth selling.

Should collectors trust themselves to store their wine at home?

You have to be careful how you store wine. Wine's ideal storage temperature is 12-15°C and humidity of about 75 per cent. If you don't have appropriate cellaring facilities at home, there are specialist wine storage facilities available, such as Millers or Wine-Ark in Sydney.

So the wine method of keeping fine wines in brown paper bags is no good?

Definitely not.

If you had your stash at home, is there a risk your mates could come over for a pizza night and end up drinking your retirement fund?

That's one of the major problems serious collectors have with their teenage sons. They go out and the boys come around to watch the footy and decide to pull a couple of corks out of Dad's reds. It happens a lot.

I want to impress my girlfriend by pretending to be rich and sophisticated. Can I borrow the key to your wine cellar and say it's mine?

A cellar's a very personal thing and I think every wine in mine is special. I've got a plan for every bottle.

Owen Thomson

For those looking to invest in a classic vintage or two, Dr Ron reckons it'd be pretty hard to go wrong with any of these blue-chip Australian wines.

Rockford Basket Press Shiraz

(\$50-\$120)

Henschke Mount Edelstone

(\$60-\$120)

Henschke Hill of Grace

(\$230-\$500)

Irvine Grand Merlot

(\$90-\$140)

Penfolds Bin 707

(\$100-\$150)

Penfolds Grange

(\$260-\$10,000)

Giaconda Pinot Noir

(\$80-\$150)

Jim Barry The Armagh

(\$100-\$160)

Wendouree Shiraz

(\$50-\$120)

Yarra Yering Dry Red No. 1

(\$80-\$140)

ly meant to be square,
wasn't circulated.