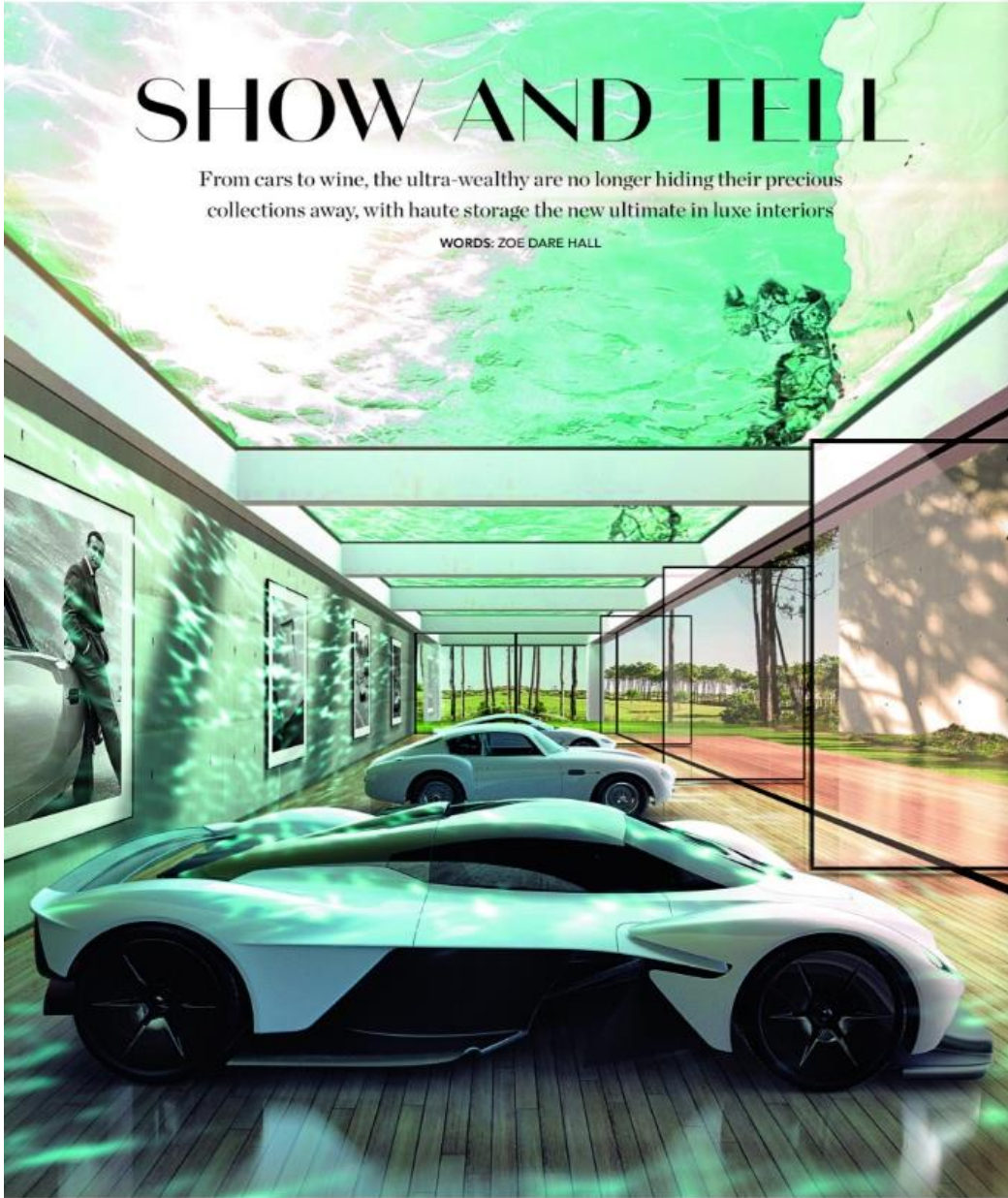


INTERIORS

SHOW AND TELL

From cars to wine, the ultra-wealthy are no longer hiding their precious collections away, with haute storage the new ultimate in luxe interiors

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Clockwise from far left:
Aston Martin Automotive
Galleries and Lairs, the
car is centre of attention in
the *Autocave* design; a
dramatic route down to an
Octagon-designed garage



In the homes of the super-rich, one's wine and wheels, hardbacks and handbags aren't merely possessions that require simple storage — they are objects of desire and rarity calling out to be paraded in far more lavish ways.

"There has definitely been a shift in how the wealthy choose to display their most precious collectables," comments Jo Eccles, founder of London-based property search company SP Property. She mentions one North London client whose enormous wine collection filled the entire perimeter of the circular walls of his study, with his circular desk in prime position in the centre. "Where once wine and the like was confined to the basement, behind the scenes, these valuables are being showcased in ever more opulent ways," she says.

Is it simply showing off? Partly, perhaps. Why else build a glass wall between your private pool and Porsche garage if not to invite admiration? But it's also about passion, says Charu Gandhi, founder of Elicyon design studio. "Such people source and keep these collections because they are true aficionados

"One client has housed his fleet of 12 classic cars in individual fibreglass pods, with the requisite glass wall between them and the pool and spa room"

and, above all, they want their storage spaces to be practical," she says. Here is how practicality and pomp meet in the world of posh storage.

CARS

The rise of London's most opulent iceberg homes, with their multiple subterranean levels dedicated to pleasure and leisure, has also given birth to the in-house "car museum". These spaces to house collections of prized classic cars have always been rather soulless, but now they are shifting a gear design-wise as the likes of Aston Martin and Ron Dennis announce their move into creating ultra-luxe garages for private clients.

The recently launched Aston Martin Automotive Galleries and Lairs initiative sees the marque translate cutting-edge design concepts into bespoke, conceptual auto spaces, allowing owners to show off their car like never before.

London-based basement company Knowles has also entered the sphere with *Auto Cave* (autocave.uk.com), "bringing the bat cave, or man cave, to life", says Robin Knowles, managing director. "We're giving

clients the ability to have their prized collection entirely at home, a solution that has been lacking in the car market, until now," he says. "We work with the client from concept to completion, designing everything from futuristic spaces with innovative technologies to classic, country-style designs. Sometimes they want a space in keeping with the surrounding location, but some clients want a space of their dreams that differs from the main property."

Aesthetically, such garages are becoming an extension of the house, with their heated floor tiles and perfect plastered walls, says John Pope, director of Octagon Bespoke (octagonbespoke.com). "One client has housed his fleet of 12 classic cars in individual fibreglass pods, with the requisite glass wall between them and the pool and spa room. They are his pride and joy and it makes quite the impact," says Pope.

This example, like many private garages, also doubles up conveniently as an art gallery — as does the basement lair at Residence 950 (residence950.com). Priced at \$40.5m, it's San Francisco's most expensive house and the ultimate in high-tech and wellness. The underground car park — approached by a sweeping moodily up-lit black tunnel — contains an auto turntable and Tesla charging station, and can turn into a double-height gallery with theatrical lighting.

In rural English properties, climate-controlled "display barns" fulfil a similar purpose, says Jess Simpson of Jess Simpson Property Search. "Some collectors will have up to 50 vehicles — with separate workshops for the on-site mechanic — and cars on display will be rotated. It's also the ideal space to exhibit art."



Top to bottom: the show apartment at Clivedale London's The Mansion in Marylebone includes a wine wall, showing would-be residents what they can have in their home; bottles are electronically logged in London Projects' wine pod

WINE

Thanks to a combination of trend evolution and technology, wine rooms and cellars are out and wine walls are in. "We can now re-create the conditions of a walk-in wine cellar in an above-ground wine wall display," says Andrew Speer, founder of Cellar Maison (cellarmaison.com). "This allows a dining or wine-tasting experience to be enjoyed at a comfortable room temperature rather than the coats-on, hurried experience of a typical 12-15° wine room."

His clients typically spend between £28,000-£60,000 on a wine wall installation, "although we recently installed a walk-in room with a series of wine walls that cost £180,000," he says.

The design of these private shrines to wine is often influenced by the latest high-end bars and restaurants. "These new handcrafted wine galleries are often installed alongside bespoke bars. They are practical, but attention-grabbing," comments Octagon Bespoke's Pope.

Prime new developments may influence owners too, such as Finchatton's Twenty Grosvenor Square (20gs.com) in Mayfair, where residences are serviced by Four Seasons and start at £17.5m. The wine gallery, with its 34 glass-fronted, temperature-controlled cabinets for each resident, is the showpiece of a tasting room concealed behind a large tropical aquarium.

Or there's Clivedale London's The Mansion in Marylebone (themansionl.com), where apartments cost £5.3m-£10.1m through Savills. As a suggestion of what residents might like to include in their apartment, the



show flat designed by AFK includes a wine wall. "The design of ultra-prime residences is being driven by the desire to display one's assets, almost as art, when guests come to visit," comments Fred Scarlett, Clivedale's sales and marketing director.

Aesthetically, wine wall designers are looking to push boundaries with new materials and finishes — Cellar Maison's most contemporary designs often incorporate polished acrylic, glass and onyx stone with classic in-vogue finishes such as bronze or antique brass and dark wood. "Plenty of tastefully placed LED or fibre-optic adjustable lighting is also critical to introduce the desired ambiance," says Speer.

Meanwhile in Chelsea, London Projects (londonprojects.co.uk) has designed an entirely glazed wine pod, containing 500

electronically-logged bottles, that can be admired from the dining room. "Most of our super-prime clients are avid wine collectors and put a lot of thought into how they store their vintages. They want a show-stopping addition to their property," comments London Project's co-founder Nick Stuttard.

Technology-wise, being able to remote control and monitor your wine wall from your mobile is a popular new feature. Security is key, too; Cellar Maison offers biometric or voice-controlled door entry systems.

Clients also want convenience. "Intelligent inventory software links clients' wine collections to their wine wall, so they can easily locate a specific bottle for an occasion," says Speer. "This is only scratching the surface in terms of the innovations our team is working on using AI technology."