



ANTIQUES IN STYLE

ANTIQUÉ VINEYARD TREASURES FOR THE HOME

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“Wine is light, held together by water.”

- Galileo Galilei

The art of winemaking has been revered by countless ancient civilizations. In early mythology, the subject was so worshiped that Bacchus, the god of wine and frivolity, was wondrously conceived. The grateful Romans and Greeks were so enamored by the elixir that in their imagination, only the gods could have bestowed such potions upon us.

Today, we do not build antique altars to the deity of such libations, instead erect wine rooms, caves and cellars to house and display prestigious vintages derived from precious grapes of the harvest.

On our antique buying trips we scour the European countryside to find antique and vintage wine accessories created by winemakers - sometimes crafted many decades and even centuries ago. These vineyard relics we seek are truly cultural effects of a proud industry steeped in grand traditions, and they bring an instant ambiance to our kitchens, dining rooms, wine rooms and cellars.

One such item is the antique bonbonne, which is a hand-blown glass vessel that is a particularly versatile and ornamental culinary antique. Originally, they were produced to store wine, but today they can be used as wonderful decorative accents. They were the “magnums”

of their day, each one unique due to the methods by which each was designed and created. They come in multiple colors from a rich emerald green shading all the way to clear. Occasionally, we even come across an amber example.

Many times they would be wrapped with wicker and even sometimes metal baskets and then packed with straw to protect the glass. This way many could be piled in the back of a horse-drawn wagon and transported from village to village. Vintners would use them to keep larger quantities of vintages that were especially pleasing to serve friends, guests and relatives. Taverns and inns would use them to serve their customers.

The end of summer and early fall is a very important season in Europe – especially in France and Italy. It is the time of the grape harvest across the continent. Vintners from Burgundy to Tuscany are busy gathering and creating the “magic nectar of the gods.” John and I have visited many wineries through the years, and it always amazes me how much knowledge, talent and care goes into the production of a single bottle of wine - one must have perfect weather, soil conditions, solar orientation and soil moisture. The list is amazing!

Now is the time of the year to stock your wine room or wine cellar. Many wineries traditionally release new vintages at this time, so it’s great - just before the fall entertainment season - to stock up on some wine and

plan a wine tasting party. Now is an ideal time to be a wine lover because so many wineries gladly and freely share their wine expertise, resulting in educated wine consumers. Even with just a little knowledge, you can sound like an expert.

After you stock up, it is important to create a fabulous atmosphere for your event, and what better way to do that than by incorporating antique and vintage treasures from European wineries into your decorating? It’s ideal to use antique breadboards as cheese trays. Petite wine barrels and presses make instant centerpieces, especially charming when draped with grapes and ivy. Used for the commercial transport trade, these were more durable than bottles and could be transported between villages so that merchants, taverns and restaurants could enjoy the wines from other regions without losing half of the shipment due to the bottles breaking. Antique furniture, with its earthy patina and charm, will give your interior the soul of authentic ancient wine caves. In addition, wine-related antiques make great conversation topics.

If you are a wine buff or just a lover of the occasional good vintage, we’re sure you can appreciate these collections of great antique settings of accessories for wine rooms - all designed to enhance your enjoyment of the elixir of the grape! These great cellar-related items also make wonderful gifts for any connoisseur that you know.