

MANSION

Before



WASTED SPACE Mark Oldman bought his apartment in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood in 2010 for \$2.2 million.

ADDING IT UP

Demolition, living/dining area
\$9,500

Building materials
\$5,000

Labor
\$13,000

Light fixtures (living room, kitchen, bedroom)
\$47,000

The Wine Wall (light box, metalwork, wood frame)
\$13,640

Blue-bottle glass panel
\$1,070

Cabinetry
\$12,000

Furnishings (Italian doors, couches, tables)
\$145,500

Remote-control lighting system and wireless smart system
\$12,200

Miscellaneous
\$8,250

TOTAL
\$267,160



ON DISPLAY Wine memorabilia in what Mr. Oldman calls the Feline Room, above, includes bottles of wine once owned by convicted financier Bernard Madoff that were sold at auction.



GRAPE EXPECTATIONS Mr. Oldman, above, is a co-founder of career website Vault.com, which was sold in 2007. Above right, a light box that holds wine; the home office, center, and the master bedroom, bottom. At left, a memorable bottle of Domäne de la Romanée Conti La Tache 1962.

BALANCE SHEET

A Fine Home For Wine

A wine expert uncorks his creativity to remake his apartment around a quirky collection of art and artifacts

After



'VINO-ORIENTED PAD' Mr. Oldman spent \$267,000 to redo the apartment, the living room area shown above, with wine-themed décor.

BY NANCY MATSUMOTO

WINE EXPERT Mark Oldman's attitude toward home design mirrors his approach to wine: "I love a bottle of Cristal if someone else is paying for it, but I also love a fine sparkling wine that is one-eighth of the price but 80% of the joy," he says. "You're tasting victory."

In 2012, Mr. Oldman embarked on a nearly two-year renovation of his 2,200-square-foot loft apartment in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood. He bought the unit in 2010 for \$2.2 million, and he spent an additional \$267,000 to create a "vino-oriented pad" that didn't feel like the lair of a "wine obsessive."

He nixed his initial plans to hire an interior designer after interviewing a few candidates. "I had prima donna decorators coming in, arching an eyebrow and cursing their tortoiseshell glasses, telling me it was going to cost some obscene amount," he recalls. So he embarked on the project alone—with his mother and sister as unofficial advisers. (Mr. Oldman, 45 years old, is single: "I'm taking the scenic route to marriage," he says.)

Most of the effort went toward what Mr. Oldman calls the Wine Sanctuary, which includes part of the living/dining area and an adjoining room the previous owners used as a nursery. The room's centerpiece is a sort of light box illuminating an enlarged image of a 1907 Gustave Klimt painting and fronted with a handcrafted metal grille that can hold up to 150 wine bottles. Through a friend of a friend, he found an artisan in North Carolina to craft the metal work. The 9-foot-tall ebouized structure, with hidden compartments to house glassware, was built by a New Jersey cabinetmaker. After sketching the installation on paper and commissioning the various parts, Mr. Oldman says he lived in fear that his plan wouldn't work. There were a few glitches: The metal grille's dimensions were off slightly, enough that they didn't hold the wine bottles. When the maker suggested acrylic bands to fix the problem, Mr. Oldman says he "gently but firmly implored" him to redo the piece.

He found other design ele-

ments "through old-fashioned detective work" that took him to North Carolina antiques stores, a Miami oriental-rug shop that was going out of business and Chinatown lighting emporiums. A New York-based digital printing firm enlarged a poster of the Klimt painting for the light box.

A self-described "novice art appreciator," Mr. Oldman added other wine-themed finds to his living room, including a piece of signage emblazoned "WINE TRAIL" fashioned into a chair by sculptor Boris Bally.

Mr. Oldman's 1911 building was converted to left apartments in 1999, and his unit didn't need much structural renovation. But he did create an alcove for three of his wine fridges, concealed with a remote-controlled velvet curtain. He also knocked down one wall to eliminate a hallway and enlarge the former nursery, and had a new doorway cut into the living room wall. The opening leads to the space he calls "the Feline Room," which Mr. Oldman describes as "one part gentleman's club, one part raffish lounge." It features a curio cabinet filled with wine memorabilia, including bottles of wine from disgraced financier Bernard Madoff's collection bought for \$1,200 at auction.

In the door frame above a set of antique Italian doors from a Jersey City architectural-salvage shop, Mr. Oldman added a stained-glass type panel made out of the bottoms of 47 cobalt blue wine bottles.

Mr. Oldman was a co-founder of career website Vault.com (which he sold to a private-equity firm in 2007), has written two books on wine and is a frequent speaker on the food- and wine-event circuit. He held two events in his apartment before the renovation was completed in April. One was a sit-down wine seminar for 48 alumni from his alma mater, Stanford Law School. The other was a wine-tasting for eight people—an experience won't be repeated for \$3,500 to benefit a Food & Wine magazine charity.

"Until the curtain comes up, you never know what people's reaction will be," he says. He smelled success when guests lingered late into the night in the Feline Room. "It was exhilarating."

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ENTER HERE Mr. Oldman found these antique Italian doors at a Jersey City, N.J., architectural-salvage shop. A stained-glass panel made from the bottoms of cobalt-blue wine bottles was mounted above the doors.