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Home Listings Show Where Wine Flows

A analysis of home listings with wine cellars and related amenities offers insights on where tipplers and teetotalers live.

By ADAM BONISLAWSKI

In 2013, the U.S. surpassed France to become the world's largest wine market, with the country drinking 892 million gallons of wine, or about 2.8 gallons a person, according to the Wine Institute, a trade group.

Those gallons aren't evenly distributed, though. To get a sense of what locales drive the country's wine consumption, Spread Sheet, with the help of real-estate website Trulia.com, took a look at the housing markets best outfitted for tippling.

Based on the percentage of 2014 for-sale home listings that included a mention of a wine-related feature like a wine room or wine cellar, the Trulia analysis identified Orange County, Calif., as the country's most likely spot for raising a glass. Roughly 2.4% of the county's listed homes included a wine-related feature. That makes it more than 10 times as thirsty as the nation's most teetotaling market, Cincinnati, where just 0.2% of listings featured a wine-related amenity.

As might be expected, California dominates the top of the list, with San Francisco, Ventura County, Los Angeles and San Jose all making the top 10. Perhaps more surprising is the strong finish of St. Louis. Famously a beer town, the city nonetheless places eighth for wine amenities, with 1.4% of listings including such a feature.

Leading the list of underperformers is Las Vegas, which ranks 96 out of the 100 markets analyzed. New York City, meanwhile, places 15th.



A light box illuminates Mark Oldman's collection at his apartment in Manhattan.
PHOTO: DOROTHY HONG FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

In New York's case, space might be the issue. The Trulia analysis also looked at properties by size, finding that less than 0.3% of homes under 1,999 square feet mentioned a wine feature, compared with 4.6% of homes 4,000 square feet and up.

Cellar Sellers

Metro markets in which wine-related terms appeared in home listings in 2014.

HIGHEST	% of listings with a wine feature
Orange County, Calif.	2.42%
San Francisco	2.26%
Dallas	2.10%
Fairfield County, Conn.	1.93%
Ventura County, Calif.	1.79%
LOWEST	
Cincinnati	0.20%
Nashville	0.21%
Palm Bay-Melbourne- Titusville, Fla.	0.21%
El Paso, Texas	0.24%
Las Vegas	0.25%

A high-end wine cellar typically runs in the \$40,000 to \$90,000 range, says David Spon, owner of Wine Cellar Concepts, a national wine-cellar designer and builder. And while U.S. wine consumption is rising, Mr. Spon says that, at least in his experience, cellar sizes are shrinking.

“My projects 20 years ago averaged around 3,000 to 5,000 bottles,” he says. “Now between 800 and 1,800 bottles is the norm.”

Mr. Spon attributes this in part to increased mobility among his clients. “People travel more because they can work remotely, so it doesn’t make sense to keep as much wine [in any single residence],” he says.