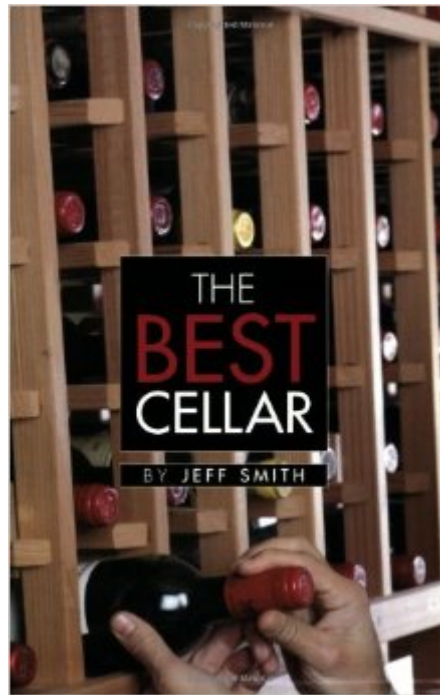


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The Best Cellar



Synopsis

If it happens in a wine cellar, Jeff Smith has done it. As owner-operator of Carte du Vin, the country's leading wine cellar management company, Smith knows his wine. In *The Best Cellar*, he lays out step-by-step advice on how to buy and sell, how to maintain your collection, and how to prepare a Carte du Vin wine cellar inventory. A must-have book for wine lovers, his adventures in the wine trade make for an insightful and riotously funny read.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book based on recommendation in *Wine Spectator*, hoping to learn more as I may wish to build wine cellar. Well, I learned little if anything from this book, except that the writer has a very high opinion of himself. My advice: look elsewhere.

If you are looking for information on how to build or maintain a wine cellar, this is not the book for you. On the other hand, if you are looking for a book on how to be a wine snob... written by THE wine snob, this may be your book! The part on building a spreadsheet has some merit.. but some of the following quotes from the book will give you an idea of the contents..."The only bottles I ever get are either great bottles meant to impress or those brought by wine-challenged people who have absolutely no idea: B. V. Coastal. I put them in the closet marked "cooking wine" (page 7)He calls the wine column of the *Wall Street Journal* by Gaiter and Brecher "two nincompoops" (page 31). I happen to like their advice.He is a strong advocate for hiring a company to organize your wine

cellar for you... and he owns just such a company. And his comments that no wine under \$50 a bottle seems worthy of a wine cellar... I only know what I like, but I have had some very good wines that were \$12 a bottle... on page 86 his interpretation of the wine point scale states that anything 86 or under, it would be better to drink a beer. Mr Smith seems like he knows wine... to the point he thumbs his nose at anything that doesn't meet his snobbish expectations. Perhaps his book should be titled "How to be a Wine Snob in 152 pages"...

The author assumes we all have the ability to acquire a 4,000 bottle collection of wine, and at times looks down upon those of us who enjoy wine, but don't have the proper credentials to qualify as wine snobs. This book needs more practical support for those people who want to collect a variety of good value wines, and store them over time. This book does not deliver on that point.

In my opinion this book is really more about wine collecting than it is wine cellars. There is some decent info about building and keeping a wine cellar but the most of the pertinent information on that subject in this book could have ended on chapter 3 possibly 4 if you're interested in cataloging your wine. The bulk of this book is made up the author's personal antidotes that might give some insight into wine cellaring but can be difficult to trudge through while he uses terms like "grocery store wine", blasts the wine critic in the Wall Street Journal for recommending cheap wine (gasp!), or tells the story of how his dad first started cellaring wine using the closet in the maids room in the back of his house "leaving just enough space for the poor woman to hang a single with dress uniform on a single wire hanger". If you need a 152 page book that has 70 pages on the core components of building a wine cellar shouted down to you from a very high horse... this is the book for you.

It's not bad. A big chunk of the book are just stories that Jeff Smith has about his clients. Not a ton of useful information but it's not bad.

Carte du Vin proprietor Jeff Smith spins highly entertaining tales and offers excellent practical advice largely based on his time in other people's cellars. Depending on your wine budget, Smith's experiences will offer either vicarious thrills or buying suggestions. Those with small cellars will want to organize them using Smith's system. Those with large cellars will want to hire this man.

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