KIMBARRY: Making Room for Treasured Collections in Everyday Life

Designing a wine cellar can sometimes begin with pulling a chair back.

In KIMBARRY's published design illustration for the Yinhu private wine cellar in Shenzhen, timber wine racks follow the walls and a long stone-topped table stands in the middle. In the image, each has its place. But pull a chair back and questions arise: once someone is seated, can another person still pass behind them? To turn and take a bottle from the rack, must someone at the table move aside? From a seated position, does the view open onto a wall of wine, or a light above the table that feels too bright?

A distant rendering cannot answer these questions. They need to return to the floor plan, allowing for chair backs, cabinet doors and passageways, and considering where people will stand and what they will do when the room is in use. An attractive wine rack is easy to recognise. Making it work with a room and the lives of several people is harder.

This is also a straightforward way to understand KIMBARRY. Starting with wine racks and wine displays, the brand gradually extended its work to wine cellars, private collection spaces and commercial displays. A row of racks can decide where things go. A room for a private collection must also address who will use it, how objects are retrieved and displayed, and how it will be maintained after handover. KIMBARRY's work is to consider these questions together.



Yinhu private wine cellar, Shenzhen · Spatial illustration prepared with reference to the historical brochure

Starting with a wine rack, learning to understand a room

Designing wine displays begins with understanding the bottles. Which can be arranged in rows, which need more space, and which labels should face the viewer? In a shop, what visitors see from the entrance and what they can reach once beside a rack are different questions. Whether a rack works well depends on more than its joinery dimensions: it also depends on whom it serves and where it stands.

KIMBARRY's early work included a group of projects presented under the name "KIMBARRY Workshop". A project compilation whose article page is dated 2010 brings together wine spaces in different locations. A wine shop in Yunfu features local stone and pine wine racks in its design, with glass display stands distinguishing individually presented bottles from rows of stock. Another shop in Xuzhou uses layers of timber racks and a relatively symmetrical arrangement to create a display order visitors can grasp at a glance. The same compilation also includes an underground wine cellar in Xiamen. Different locations called for different approaches.

Viewed together, these older examples show that the workshop was never dealing only with timber and bottles. Shops need visitors to know where to look first, while operators have to replenish stock each day. An underground cellar first requires an understanding of the room's conditions, entrances and storage arrangements. A piece of stone can give a display stand its character; beside a passageway, its position and dimensions also affect how people move. The further the work develops, the more there is to consider beyond the cabinet itself.

In 2011, an earlier design article entitled "How Is a Good Wine Cellar Built?" brought art, culture and technology into the same discussion. Art took shape in materials, lighting and proportions; culture concerned how owners understood, displayed and shared their collections; technology had to answer a more basic question: could the finished room be used as originally intended? By 2012, posts on a wine-industry forum were introducing KIMBARRY's walk-in wine cabinets. These records, published within a few years of one another, show an early wine-rack workshop moving from individual pieces of joinery to entire rooms.

The earlier article also described three very different approaches: some wine cabinets extended in continuous rows to the ceiling; some paired timber compartments recessed into walls with exposed brick; others left space between racks. Bringing three styles onto one page suggests a preference for responding to the setting, rather than for a particular timber colour. Storage capacity, circulation and the room's existing shape should be established before a style is named. This is why those early designs remain worth revisiting.

2015: Bringing unseen engineering into the design

According to the brand's historical materials, 2015 marked a further shift in KIMBARRY's storage technology and spatial services. It had already worked with whole wine cellars before then. Afterwards, the emphasis became clearer: wine racks, doors, environmental equipment and site works could not be treated as separate drawings with no connection to one another.

Imagine someone converting a spare room at home into a wine cellar. Their first instinct might be to measure a wall and see how many racks will fit. But preparing the actual drawings raises more questions. Will the room door strike a cabinet door when opened? There may be room to install a machine, but can it be removed if it fails? Through which wall should services pass, and before what stage of the fit-out must openings be reserved? Even a small difference in a door's position may require both cabinetry and walls to be redrawn. The problem often lies not in a single product, but where two elements meet.

That is why KIMBARRY's website now discusses racks and cabinetry, the room envelope, doors, temperature and humidity control, lighting and construction interfaces as parts of one wine-cellar service. Decisions vary with the collection size, room structure and actual equipment conditions. Some households simply need several rows of frequently used wine to be arranged clearly and neatly. Other private cellars need room for a larger collection, occasional guests and future acquisitions. Filling every wall is unnecessary merely to make a photograph more striking.

Another distinction is to include maintenance in the drawings. Environmental equipment does not become maintenance-free once installed. If cabinetry, walls and equipment block one another, replacing a component later may disturb finishes that otherwise have no reason to be touched. Reserving a little more service space may appear to sacrifice a few bottles, but it preserves a route for future use. For long-term storage, that trade-off matters more than how full the room looks at first glance.

A room is made for people to use over time. Timber, stone and glass shape the first impression on entering; how doors open, where hands reach and how equipment can be accessed for repairs shape every visit afterwards. KIMBARRY considers both, and includes them among the questions to settle before handover.

Two cellars in Shenzhen, two ways of living with a collection

Return to the Yinhu private wine cellar in Shenzhen. The illustration published on the website with reference to the historical brochure does not treat the table as an ornament to fill the centre of the room. Timber racks extend along the walls, while the long stone-topped table draws the eye inward. The distance between table and racks determines whether people can still move through the room once others are seated. Replacing this arrangement with several narrow aisles for standing access might fit more wine into the same area, but it would create a different room with a different purpose.

Now consider the Shenzhen private wine museum. Illustrations in the historical brochure show an arched entrance, wine collections displayed behind glass and separate stands for individual objects. Where should visitors look first? Which objects invite a pause, and where should people turn and continue? Can those managing the collection open a door and retrieve something without interrupting the visiting route? This layout provides both grouped displays and spaces set aside for individual pieces.

What makes these two proposals interesting is that they do not share a single "private wine cellar template". The long table at Yinhu invites people to stay; the museum's stands lead the eye through the collection. One first makes room for people around a table; the other first establishes a sequence for viewing. Changing only the timber colour, while leaving furniture positions and circulation unchanged, would merely produce two versions of the same space.

These are the decisions worth examining when KIMBARRY talks about customisation. Which wines are used regularly, and should their bottles be recognisable at a glance? Which objects should others be able to see, without being touched by everyone passing through? Once these two questions are answered, cabinet depths, shelf clearances and lighting directions naturally require different responses.

After 2019: From storing wine to storing art and objects

On 17 September 2019, a Hunan Design Power lighting-design forum was held at the Red Star Macalline Pinghu shopping centre in Shenzhen. The event report's list of supporters included "KIMBARRY Jinbali Zuncang". The brand's historical materials also identify 2019 as a point of expansion from wine cellars into art storage. Seen within the same year, one was a public event for the design community, the other an extension of the brand's services. Their shared thread was the exploration of different lighting, display arrangements and spatial relationships to address different collections.

A bottle of wine can be placed in a row with others from the same group; a painting needs room for someone to step back and look. The most expressive side of an object may only become clear when light from the side reveals its texture. Once the collection changes, familiar wine-cellar methods cannot simply be transferred. Everything needs reconsidering, from reflections in glass to the stability of a wall supporting a painting and the working space needed to bring objects in or replace them.

In the design renderings of the Hunan private art gallery published on the website, some works hang on walls while other objects rest horizontally, with space around them to pause and move. The relationship between walls and display surfaces deserves attention: the eye follows a painting along the wall, then lowers to an object on a surface. If everything were arranged on one line under the same light, even carefully chosen pieces could compete for attention. Giving viewing its own rhythm allows each object a moment of consideration.



Hunan private art gallery · Design rendering

Think one step further: what if the owner wants to install a larger painting next season? Can it be brought in along the usual route? Is there a clean surface on which to rest it temporarily? Where can someone stand while attending to both the frame and the wall? Hanging a work and taking it down are different operations. Establishing display duration, work dimensions and handling arrangements in advance makes room not only for the present collection, but also for its gradual evolution.

At this point, a "private collection" need not mean keeping everything out of sight. Owners can decide which pieces remain in view, which groups are stored behind them, what visitors may see and what is retrieved only when needed. Display and storage both have a place, leaving room for objects as well as

for people to view and care for them. This art of arrangement continues through KIMBARRY's development from wine cellars to private collection spaces.

The same engineering discipline can take very different forms

In the design rendering for the wine cellar at Chongqing Xiexin Residence, the curved brick ceiling catches the eye before the timber racks extending along either side. The vault already draws the gaze into the room, so the racks need little additional ornament. What matters is how they respond to changes in the walls, how access is preserved on both sides of the aisle, and whether light illuminates the texture of the brick or the shelf of wine someone is looking for. Handled well, the room's original shape becomes part of the design.

The design rendering for the Zunyi hotel custom wine cabinets presents another approach. Neither timber racks nor a brick ceiling plays the leading role. Beside the dining area stand cabinets combining metal frames with glass. Passers-by can see clearly from outside, but staff need to use them differently: on which shelf should frequently retrieved items sit? Will an open cabinet door narrow the passage? Must restocking be routed around guests? Here, the direction in which doors open matters as much as the display.

Domestic storage must suit its owners' habits. Hotel and dining spaces must also accommodate staff changes, daily cleaning, restocking and service circulation. A wine wall that invites a leisurely, close look in a villa may not work in an area with constant movement. That is the value of viewing these examples together: they can look very different, yet follow the same criterion. Understand how the place will be used before deciding what should be visible and what should be concealed.

A tea cake, a leather bag, a wristwatch: each needs its own place

KIMBARRY's website has individual design features for wine, cigars, tea, agarwood, art, leather goods and clothing, fine food ingredients, and equipment and precision collections. They sit under the same brand, but are not fitted into one universal cabinet. The differences are practical: retrieving each object involves different movements; once returned, it encounters different light, air and neighbouring items.

Consider tea. Some is used often, while other batches are stored and must remain identifiable years later. A tea-storage room does not necessarily benefit from displays on every wall. Keeping everyday tea close at hand and whole cartons or batches further inside may suit some owners better than a large open shelving wall. Agarwood storage requires separate consideration of how objects are divided, how packaging is kept, and the surrounding odours and light. It may look like another group of timber cabinets, but its internal arrangement cannot be the same.

Leather bags and clothing raise different questions again. A frequently carried bag should be within easy reach in the morning. Objects kept in their original packaging need sufficient depth and height. A long coat should hang without its hem folding up. Sometimes a bag's height determines the shelf spacing; sometimes a row of clothes occupies the space intended for a light. Drawing a grid of equal squares does not account for these everyday actions. Leaving one or two adjustable sections may be more useful than filling an entire wall.

Storage for fine food ingredients requires decisions about separating items, changing packaging and which batch to use first. Cigar storage poses another spatial question: how should original boxes, individual storage positions and display areas be arranged? How should equipment and doors work together, and will servicing disturb the display? All are called “storage”, but there is never just one way of using them.

The equipment-collection space proposed on the website includes a sorting table alongside shelves and glass cabinets. For someone who enjoys photography, that surface has a clear purpose: lay out cameras and lenses before leaving, select them and pack the bag; on returning, take equipment out, organise it and put it away. Without the table, the cabinets could still hold the equipment, but many tasks would have to happen elsewhere. Whether these sequences of use appear in the plan is what distinguishes a display space from a collection space that works well.

These tasks share a starting point: establish what will be stored, who normally retrieves it and whether more will be added. Instead of beginning with ten door-panel options, it may be better to measure the tallest box and decide where the next acquisitions will go. Cabinetry that takes shape from these specific answers belongs more naturally to a home than something chosen from a style catalogue.

From the first measurement to the checklist after handover

Many decisions about a collection space need not wait until the final stages of a fit-out. Before walls and ceilings are closed and floor construction is fixed, equipment, service routes and insulation boundaries can still be adjusted. Once they are set, even a change of a few centimetres may involve other trades. KIMBARRY’s website describes a service extending from initial discussions and site conditions through concept design, detailed development, coordinated implementation and handover, emphasising that costly-to-change decisions should be settled early.

A few photographs, a floor plan and an approximate collection list can provide a starting point. For a collection cabinet at the end of a corridor, first check whether materials can travel through the stairs, lift and doorways. For a room to become a walk-in cellar, examine usable area, equipment positions and relationships with adjoining rooms. Even two similarly sized spaces in the same home can call for different designs, construction arrangements and budgets if their connections to equipment, power and transport routes differ.

Only as the proposal becomes clearer can decisions be made about what goes in front, what stays behind, which materials remain visible and where building services meet cabinetry. For example, changing an environmental unit raises questions beyond its supplier’s scope: is the original ceiling space still large enough, and must power, drainage, heat dissipation or service openings also change? Recording these conditions in one coordinated set of drawings and specifications determines whether the next people on site are all working to the same proposal.

A common misunderstanding is that entrusting an entire room to one team means everything is made by a single factory. KIMBARRY’s website describes a different approach: select suitable equipment, manufacturers and specialist suppliers for the project, then have KIMBARRY check materials, configurations and production requirements and organise site implementation as a whole. Clients do not

have to carry an equipment supplier’s dimensioned drawing between joiners, fit-out trades and installers to reconcile their answers. Their decisions can remain focused on what matters to them: capacity, ease of use and where additional spending is worthwhile.

Budget discussions follow the same principle. To reduce costs, compare omitting a display unit with changing a finish, rather than removing essential maintenance access and trying to restore it later. Sometimes leaving part of a space unfilled allows spending to focus on immediate priorities while reserving room for future acquisitions. Where storage, display and entertaining coexist, owners should decide which comes first in the budget according to how often each will actually be used.

At handover, attractive photographs can be kept as memories, but the essential records are equipment configurations, operating arrangements, maintenance access and the agreed acceptance requirements. Commercial projects must account for managers who may not have been involved in construction. Private projects should enable owners to know where to check and what to watch during daily use without searching old construction-group messages. As the lead design-and-build contractor, KIMBARRY takes responsibility for overall coordination and delivery; the precise scope and deliverables are confirmed in the design and project agreement. Settling these points before signing and site entry matters more than asking every participant separately after completion.

Starting in Shenzhen, with your particular room

KIMBARRY’s studio is in Shenzhen. Its website also provides an enquiry route for projects in other cities. Whether the work concerns a local alteration, custom production for another location or an overseas project, the first information to confirm is the same: address, site stage, spatial conditions, the intended collection, and how local implementation and subsequent maintenance will connect. Matters that can be discussed remotely are addressed first; those requiring a site visit are left for that visit. The purpose is to move early from “Can it be done?” to “How should this room be made?”

You do not need to have chosen a style before first contacting KIMBARRY. Begin with an unresolved question. After fitting one hundred bottles on the racks, will there still be room for a table? Could reflections in glass interfere with displaying newly acquired objects? Can that empty wall at home give both everyday items and treasured pieces their own places? A site photograph and a clear account of what you want to do can make the discussion concrete.

A row of wine racks can keep bottles in order. A collection space designed around people also makes room for different wishes: what they want to see each day, what they want within easy reach and what they would like friends to examine closely. Returning to the beginning, the ideal situation is simple: a chair pulls back and someone can still pass behind it. One person remains seated while another fetches a bottle, without either having to get up and make way because of the room’s layout.

This is what KIMBARRY has continued to pursue as it moved from wine racks to private collection spaces: giving treasured objects a place, while caring for the people who collect them.

Contact KIMBARRY

Contact KIMBARRY WhatsApp +86 186 8155 8730 kimbarry2857@gmail.com