



AT THE CUTTING EDGE

The Oxford Wine Company pulls out all the stops to engage with consumers and keep their interest

RETAILER
Theo Sloom
SHOP
The Oxford Wine Company

The Oxford Wine Company has a small chain of shops in Oxford and the Cotswolds and a wine café in Oxford's Summertown area. Its range covers everything from specialist top-end European fine wines to ones the company has sourced itself from yet-to-emerge New World regions. With a clean and clear retail presentation, a varied programme of customer events and well-trained, experienced staff, it combines the best bits of a traditional wine merchant with a contemporary, accessible feel. Theo Sloom handles fine wine and PR for the business.

Sum up your shops in one sentence.

We have two main shops, a wine warehouse, a very successful and innovative wine café and an imaginative and creative range of more than 2,500 wines and spirits.

What sets you apart from other drinks retailers?

Our broad range, our involvement with many small growers and our

extensive range of informal and humorous tasting events.

Who is your fiercest competitor?

Undoubtedly Majestic, which has a number of stores in our area.

How do you maintain an edge over it?

We offer much more in terms of innovative wine and tasting events as well as wine education. We also have a far larger range of boutique wines and a characterful wine café with a constantly changing list through which customers can discover and enjoy our wines.

How do you keep customers coming back?

By offering personal and characterful customer service and highly flexible local services and delivery.

What area of the business is performing best at the moment?

We have three sides to our business.

The wine café in the heart of north Oxford is hugely successful, while wholesale is consistent and retail is growing steadily around Oxford as we become more established.

What's your biggest challenge as a retailer?

Constantly maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of customers and keeping our list fresh for them.

What is your top retailing tip?

Be innovative, be creative, be humorous - and create a place where customers can enjoy drinking your products in stylish surroundings.

What has been your biggest business mistake?

Underestimating the timescale of retail growth of different shop locations during the recession - new shops need time and constant work to become established.

What's the best advice you've ever been given?

Take cash. ☺



Be innovative, creative, humorous