

John Chapman, the Oxford Wine Company

"Grouping like-minded independent merchants in one place is always a great move. The most conclusive thing to come out of the seminar was a realisation that social media is a tool for our business and not just a trendy fad. A closer look at our website and e-marketing is needed, with a view to maximising our offering without incurring expensive new IT work."

"A closer cohesion of buying power and industry knowledge can only benefit the independent merchant. Areas that lend themselves to this are courier services, packaging, EPOS and credit card services. Also vehicle purchasing, legal/license assistance, printing services, freight forwarding and HR assistance."



Peter Minshull, Clear Back Wine, Wrexham

"The event was very well thought out in that it enabled a cross-section of merchants the chance to openly chat about the day-to-day running of an independent."

"It also reaffirmed that Hatch Mansfield is willing to help my business, not just sell product. Costs can be saved on a day-to-day basis if we were made aware of the introduction of new laws and working practices, and their impact they might have on our business. Along with an ongoing forum to sound out any next moves."



Dean Pritchard, Gwin Llyn Wines, Pwllheli, Wales

"I thought the seminar was very well thought out. As no one was in direct competition with anyone attending, everyone was frank and open about all aspects of their business. As a one-shop retailer it gave me the opportunity to get out of my comfort zone and look at the business from a fresh perspective."

"What I learnt is to pay more attention to our website and not to be complacent with local regular customers. Also it's important to put yourself about and not assume everyone knows there is a local independent wine shop in the area."

"Learning and sharing information with other merchants is so important, especially with the nuts and bolts of the business, be it EPOS systems, couriers, point of sale and even shop window displays. The trip to Ted Sandbach's new shop opened my eyes to the prospect of opening a satellite store within a store in our locality. Something we are now looking into."



Rupert Pritchett, Taurus Wines, Bramley, Surrey

"The social media seminar highlighted the glaringly out-of-date pages on our website that we are now updating."

"It was interesting to hear the current growth in Tempranillo, low-alcohol and Argentinian wines. I will be looking to expand these areas."

"Couriers/deliveries are an obvious area where stores could work together, as they seem to be the weak link in the chain of supply to the end user."

"It seems there is a gaping hole in the market for an Interflora-style wine store network where, on a certain number of core wines, a local shop would deliver wines to customers, as the trade seems to make a better job of it than professional delivery firms."



Ann Hayes, Ann et Vin, Newark

"Meeting up and chatting with like minded indies is incredibly useful. It was very interesting to see the trends in the drinks business (I have upped my posh spirits range). The open forum was very useful, particularly the tips on internet trading and couriers, etc and I have put into practice some of the social media tips (particularly tweeting)."



THE MERCHANTS PANEL

- John Chapman, the Oxford Wine Company
- Patrick Eyres, Bin 21, Morpeth, Northumberland
- Vince Fusaro, Luvians Bottle Shop, St Andrews
- Roy Gillingham, Peake Wine, Fareham, Hampshire
- Ann Hayes, Ann et Vin, Newark, Nottinghamshire
- John Hodges, The Vineyard, Dorking, Surrey
- Tom Jones, Whalley Wine Shop, Clitheroe, Lancashire
- Peter Minshull, Clear Back Wine, Wrexham, North Wales
- Andrew Morris, Cheers, Swansea
- Jayne Morris, Noble Green Wines, Twickenham, London
- Dean Pritchard, Gwin Llyn Wines, Pwllheli, North Wales
- Rupert Pritchett, Taurus Wines, Bramley, Surrey
- Ted Sandbach, the Oxford Wine Company
- Greg Sherwood, Handford Wines, Kensington, London
- Hal Wilson, Cambridge Wine Merchants