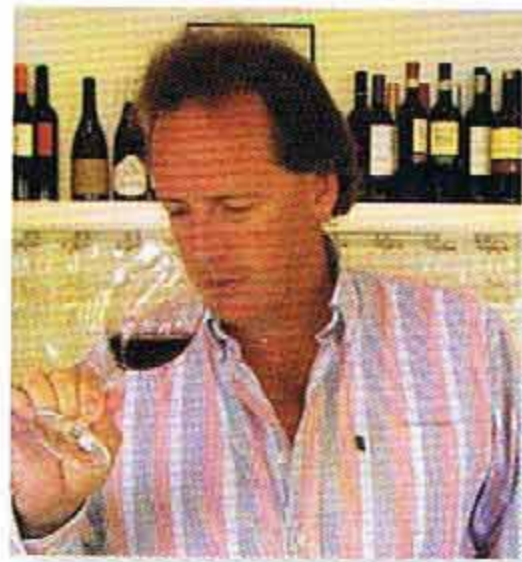


## From teaching to 'leaning on the grape'

Ted Ted Sandbach left Allhallows (Stanton) in 1971 and after 3 years at Loughborough became Head of Major Games at Magdalen College School Oxford, where he was master in charge of cricket and rugby and also continued



to play both sports himself, the latter to county and divisional level, for some years. However after 8 years teaching and having just got married he was beginning to contemplate the future. The decision to give up teaching was made on the beach in Barbados where Ted had organised a cricket tour, quite novel in those days, for his unbeaten 1st XI. At the end of a great trip he lay rum ridden on the beach next to his captain, the film producer Sam Mendes and announced to all and sundry that this was the time to stop – on a high. So he went back to the UK, handed in his notice and started looking for something else to do. The wine boom was in its infancy and Ted had developed a basic interest. He wandered into a new wine warehouse that had set up on the outskirts of Oxford to buy some wine and have a look around and one hour later walked out as the new Manager.

So began the long journey to where Ted is today. Owner and managing director of The Oxford Wine Company ([www.oxfordwine.co.uk](http://www.oxfordwine.co.uk)), winner of the 2011 Independent Wine Retailer of the Year and Independent Wholesaler of the Year and named by The Daily Telegraph as one of "the top 5 wine merchants in the UK".

However it has taken some time and patience to get there! Ted spent his first 5 years with the other company taking all

his exams, travelling to many of the major wine regions of the world and absorbing himself in the world of wine. He also gained valuable business experience, but broke away in 1989 to set up The Oxford Hamper Company, which was subsequently sold and Ted emerged with The Oxford Wine Company in 1991.

Initially this consisted of a garage, a few cases of wine sourced from new contacts and a beaten up old Saab. After a great deal of hard work and foot slogging the company was able to afford a van and two part time staff. Then bigger premises were required and Ted took on a salesman to help develop the business which was solely selling to pubs, clubs, hotels and restaurants as well as a few friends. In the meantime a shop and coffee bar was created in Lechlade which, after 5 years of successful trading, was sold. So all Ted's efforts went on the trade side and he moved into new larger premises on the outskirts of Witney. This ideal site has a large car park as well as storage cellars and offices, although a great deal of work was required to bring it up to modern standards. The main warehouse was opened to the public which was great for cash flow and marketing and the trade side operated from the naturally temperature controlled cellars. The Head Office is still here but has been extended with 3 additional units for storage. Meanwhile the team was being developed. The company now has 6 vans and drivers, 5 full time sales staff, covering Cardiff to London as well as an accountant and office staff.

The quality of his staff is something of which Ted is very proud. The company is run on a day to day basis by John Chapman, who has colossal knowledge of both the wine and spirit sector. Theo Slood, who used to run Oddbins Fine Wine, has taken over the fine wine, PR and marketing, whilst Heather Miller, an Oxford graduate with

an MBA and a few international hockey caps, is part of the successful sales team. She is also studying for the Master of Wine, acknowledged by most people to be one of the hardest exams in the world. Incidentally Phil Tuck OH has achieved this prestigious honour and in fact he and Ted do a small amount of business together. The recent appointment of Marcia Waters, who is a Master of Wine, adds to the already impressive list of management at The Oxford Wine Company. Marcia was formerly GM at Anglo American Farms UK (Boschendal and Vergelegen) and currently Chairman of the Education and Examination Board of the Institute of Masters of Wine. Ted says "I try to send the key members of the company on a least one wine trip a year – this year we managed Chile, Argentina, Virginia, France, Spain, Italy, Austria and Germany between us" This gives them opportunities to meet other members of the trade, see new producers and keep in touch with current trends.

Ted has now branched into retail. As well as the Head Office site, he last year gutted an old motorcycle shop on the Botley road in Oxford and has converted it into a fantastic retail shop which is thriving and giving a strong presence to the company. He also took over a small business in Tetbury, Gloucestershire and has again created a wine store out of three shops which have been knocked into one. A fourth retail shop

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