

Wine Retailer The Sampler secures £1million investment for ambitious expansion plans

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The Sampler, the innovative independent wine retailer, has today announced that it has raised almost £1million of funding to open branches across London, following the success of its first shop in Islington.

New investors - specialists from the retailing, finance, and wine markets, will combine their experience and capital to help expand The Sampler from a single-site operation, and to bring its revolutionary approach to more high streets across the capital. The Sampler will open branches at sites in South Kensington and Notting Hill later in the year.

The Sampler has seen enormous growth and industry recognition since it was launched in 2006 by Dawn Mannis and Jamie Hutchinson. Customers can try before they buy; using 10 Enomatic sampling machines that provide small sips of 80 different wines, from everyday quaffers through to first growth clarets. The bottles on tasting vary daily. By enabling customers to sample before buying they are able to buy less branded, higher quality wines with the guarantee of enjoying their purchase.

The company has won numerous awards including Innovator of the Year at the IWC in 2007 followed by Regional Independent Wine Merchant of the Year 2008 at the IWSC and Independent Retailer of the Year at the 2009 Drinks Retailing Awards.

New investor, Keith Prothero says, “ I see The Sampler as the future of wine retailing. By offering over 1000 interesting wines at all prices and styles, and enabling customers to sample the wines, the experience is fun, educational and most importantly the customer buys a bottle of wine that they know they like.”

Darrel Connell, of Grant Thornton, who handled the fund raising says, “It is a great achievement to be able to raise equity funding in a retail environment as challenging as this, but the combination of true innovation and extremely strong financial performance has enabled the company to buck the trend and attract premier investors. The company is now in a position to hire more personnel and open more stores to expand its operations significantly and become a real alternative to the drudgery of current high street operators”

Co-Founder Dawn Mannis says, “ We’re very excited about the future. With the investment we can open up more shops, and bring what we have done in Islington to a much wider audience. It’s our crusade to make wine non –elitist, introduce customers to wines they wouldn’t usually buy, and bring excitement and profit back to high street wine retailing.”

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