

PRESS RELEASE



Virgin Wines Wins Innovator of the Year Award

Virgin Wines has been named as “Innovator of the Year” at the International Wine Challenge Merchant of the Year Awards.

The award was presented last night at the International Wine Challenge Awards Dinner and Summer Ball held at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Innovation has been a key focus for Virgin Wines in recent years and the online wine retailer based its submission into the Innovator of the Year category on its Virtual Winery project. The aim of Virgin Wines Virtual Winery is to bring together a group of impassioned wine lovers in the creation of a new wine, via the power of the internet. Virtual Winemakers are given the opportunity to actively play a part in the decisions that shape the future of a wine through a series of democratic votes. Last August 700 Virtual Winemakers came together to help create a red wine in conjunction with Finca Manzanos winery based in Rioja, Spain. The project culminated in May when the wine, which was named Doncella Roja (meaning red maiden) by majority vote, was completed.

Commenting on the award, Jay Wright, Managing Director at Virgin Wines said: “We’re delighted to win the award for Innovator of the Year at the International Wine Challenge Merchant of the Year Awards. We are constantly striving for new ideas and technologies to set us apart from our competitors and this award is a true reflection of all the hard work and effort put in by the team to do just that. Our Virtual Winery is one of several recent innovations and came about from our desire to make wine as fun and exciting as possible, while truly engaging customers by involving them at every step of the winemaking process. Our most recent Virtual Winery project was a resounding success and we’re over the moon that it has been recognised at the prestigious IWC awards. We’re looking forward to launching another Virtual Winery again soon.”

The International Wine Challenge Merchant of the Year Awards aim to recognise and celebrate the best of the UK wine trade. According to its website, winning an IWC Merchant of the Year Award acknowledges the team behind the company, builds consumer and trade awareness, and establishes the company in the highest regard amongst its peers.

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Editor's Notes

- Virgin Wines was launched in 2000 and sources boutique-quality wines from talented, passionate winemakers from around the world. Over 75% of its range is exclusive to Virgin Wines.
- Virgin Wines stocks around 600 wines with everything from award-winning English bubbly to powerhouse Californians; from artisanal Austrian and German Rieslings to the most exceptional, Sancerre-trouncing Sauvignon Blanc on the market.
- Virgin Wines sells one case of wine every minute.
- The company currently employs 145 people at its offices in Norwich and Preston.
- Virgin Wines won the award for Best Multi-Media Strategy at the CCF European Call Centre Awards 2008 and was named as The Observer's Mail Order Wine Merchant of the Year 2008 by Tim Atkin. The company was named as Specialist Merchant of the Year for Chile and was Highly Commended in the Direct Merchant of the Year and Large Independent Merchant of the Year categories at the International Wine Challenge in September 2009. It was shortlisted for Retail Buyer of the Year and Retailer of the Year

at The Drinks Business Awards 2010, and for Specialist Merchant of the Year for Chile, for Argentina and for South Africa at the International Wine Challenge 2010. Virgin Wines was also named as a finalist in the Online/ Direct Mail Retailer of the Year category at the Drinks Retailing Awards 2011.

- In 2011/12 Virgin Wines recorded a turnover of £38m, selling over 700,000 cases to 200,000 households around the UK.
- Virgin Wines has been part of the Direct Wines Group since 2005.
- Virgin Wines delivers to anywhere in the UK – including the most remote corners of the Scottish Islands, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Scilly Isles – with a next day delivery service for orders placed before 4pm the day prior.
- 2010 saw the company go global with the launch of Virgin Wines in the USA and Australia.