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Activequity acquired 100% of Liberty Wines in a full buyout of the London wine distributor

The deal installs Fergal Tynan atop a distributor that handles more than 2,000 wines from about 400 producers

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Activequity has acquired 100% of Liberty Wines, taking full ownership of the London-based wine importer and distributor in a deal announced on Thursday, November 12, according to a company statement from Liberty Wines. The price was not disclosed,

and the announcement did not give details on debt, valuation, expected synergies or any changes to supplier contracts or customer pricing.

The buyer said it had purchased all shares in Liberty Wines, including the stake held by Sogrape, the company's previous majority shareholder. The transaction shifts full control of a well-known intermediary in the UK and Ireland wine market, where Liberty Wines supplies restaurants, hotels and independent retailers and acts as a route to market for hundreds of producers.

Liberty Wines said the ownership change comes with a leadership change. Fergal Tynan, a Master of Wine and former managing director of Alliance Wine, has taken over leadership of the business. In the statement, Tynan said the company's priorities would remain centered on producers, customers and staff, as well as the quality of the portfolio, wine education and service. He said the immediate focus was on serving customers during the busiest trading period of the year.

The company did not spell out a financial timetable or integration plan in the announcement. It also did not say whether Activequity held any previous stake in Liberty Wines before the deal, so the disclosed figure is limited to the confirmation that the investor now owns 100% of the company.

Activequity described itself as a specialist investor whose sole focus is supporting the higher-end wine trade with active backing and equity capital. The announcement did not provide a measure of assets under management or other financial data about the firm. Alexander Bartholomew, Activequity's managing partner, said in the statement that Liberty Wines had a strong team, a respected portfolio and long-standing relationships with producers and customers, and that the investor planned to support the business over the long term.

Liberty Wines has built its business around importing and distributing wine across the UK and Ireland. According to the November 12 statement, it imports more than 2,000 wines from around 400 producers. The company said its selection is particularly deep in Italian wines and that it has expertise in both the on-trade, which includes hospitality venues such as restaurants and bars, and the independent off-trade, meaning specialist retail.

That scale matters because Liberty Wines sits between overseas wineries and key sales channels in Britain and Ireland. For producers, a distributor with a large portfolio and established customer relationships can shape access to restaurant lists, independent merchants and other outlets. For customers, a change in ownership can signal possible shifts in capital backing and strategy, even when the buyer says the existing focus will remain in place.

Sogrape, which had been the majority shareholder, said it would continue its commercial relationship with Liberty Wines after the sale. Fernando da Cunha Guedes, Sogrape’s chairman, said in the statement that the company remained confident in Liberty Wines and expected the partnership to continue through Liberty’s distribution of Sogrape wines in the UK. The statement did not say how long Sogrape had held its majority position or whether any other shareholders exited as part of the transaction.

John Ratcliffe, a central figure in Liberty Wines’ history, will remain involved as a long-term advisor to the business. The statement said he would continue in that role after the leadership and ownership changes. It did not indicate whether he would keep any equity interest after the sale.

Liberty Wines used the announcement to emphasize the standing of its portfolio and service in the trade. The company said its wines won more than 100 medals from the International Wine and Spirit Competition in 2025 across ten countries. It also pointed to several 2026 trade awards, including The Drinks Business Awards’ Drinks Company of the Year, IWC Trade Educator of the Year and Sommelier Wine Awards Large Merchant of the Year.