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Activequity bought Liberty Wines, taking control of a leading premium distributor in Britain and Ireland

The purchase follows its Alliance Wine investment, putting two major distributors under one sponsor with Fergal Tynan set to lead Liberty

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On Monday, November 16, Liberty Wines said British private equity firm Activequity had bought all the shares in the London-based wine importer and distributor, including the majority stake previously held by the Portuguese wine group Sogrape.

The deal puts one of the best-known premium wine distributors in the UK and Ireland under the control of an investor that has already been building a position in the trade. Activequity said it was created specifically to invest in the global premium wine business, and earlier in 2026 it bought a majority stake in Alliance Wine, another established distributor in the market.

Liberty Wines, founded in 1997, sources and imports more than 2,000 wines from about 400 producers in more than 25 countries. The company supplies hospitality and retail customers across the UK and Ireland, including restaurants, hotels, bars, caterers and independent wine merchants. Its portfolio and market reach have made it a significant route to market for premium wine producers seeking distribution in Britain and Ireland.

As part of the transaction, Activequity said Fergal Tynan, the former managing director of Alliance Wine, will take the lead role at Liberty Wines. The appointment links two distributors that now sit within the same investor’s portfolio, although neither company announced any operational combination or merger on Monday, November 16.

Commenting on the acquisition and his new role, Tynan said Liberty’s priorities would remain centered on its producers, customers and staff, as well as the quality of its portfolio, wine education and customer service. He said the company’s immediate focus was on serving customers during its busiest trading period. Tynan also said Activequity’s backing would help Liberty build on its existing base while keeping a full focus on wine quality and service.

Liberty Wines said the change in ownership would allow it to speed up its service-led strategy by drawing on Activequity’s experience in funding expansion, sales and marketing efforts, and working capital. That signals that the new owner may look to support growth through investment rather than a short-term restructuring, at least based on the first statements released after the transaction.

Activequity managing partner Alexander Bartholomew described Liberty Wines as “the most respected business in the UK and Ireland premium wine trade.” He said the company had a strong team, a high-quality portfolio and long-standing relationships with producers and customers, and added that Activequity intended to back the business for the long term.

The acquisition matters beyond one ownership change because it brings two important premium wine distributors, Liberty Wines and Alliance Wine, under the same financial sponsor. That could further concentrate parts of the UK wine distribution market and may affect how some wineries reach retailers, restaurants and other buyers. Any effect on commercial terms or market access remains uncertain, but the deal strengthens Activequity’s influence in a part of the drinks industry where scale, producer relationships and logistics are central to winning business.

For suppliers, customers and competitors, the immediate question is whether Activequity will keep the businesses operating separately while investing in growth, or whether closer alignment will emerge over time. For now, Liberty Wines has emphasized continuity in service and strategy, while Activequity has presented the purchase as a long-term investment in a company with an established position in premium wine distribution.