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Artificial intelligence sommelier debuts with new digital wine platform in the United States

The Wine Engine aims to make wine selection easier and more accessible through personalized recommendations and interactive features

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On June 26, a new digital wine platform called The Wine Engine will launch in the United States, introducing an artificial intelligence-powered sommelier named Grapevine. The service is the latest venture from Matt Ovenden, a drinks retailing entrepreneur known for founding Borrow a Boat. The Wine Engine aims to simplify the wine selection process for consumers by using AI technology developed by OpenAI.

The platform will operate as a wine subscription service, offering users access to an initial selection of 400 wines. According to Ovenden, the goal is to make wine more approachable and less intimidating for everyone, regardless of their level of knowledge or experience. Grapevine, the AI sommelier, is designed to answer any wine-related question, no matter how basic or complex. The system draws on a vast database of wine information and uses interactive features to guide users through their choices.

One of the main features of The Wine Engine is a quiz that helps determine each customer’s taste preferences. Based on the results, Grapevine suggests wines that match those tastes and provides simplified tasting notes. The platform also offers food pairing recommendations, making it easier for users to select wines that complement their meals.

Ovenden explained that many people feel uncomfortable asking questions about wine in traditional retail settings because they fear appearing uninformed. He said that Grapevine is intended to remove this barrier by providing a judgment-free environment where users can learn at their own pace. The AI is available around the clock and can be accessed from any location, making it convenient for both beginners and experienced wine enthusiasts.

The Wine Engine’s launch comes at a time when interest in personalized digital services continues to grow in the beverage industry. Ovenden emphasized that the platform is not meant to replace human sommeliers but rather to supplement traditional expertise with accessible technology. He believes that by making wine education more interactive and less exclusive, more people will feel empowered to explore new varieties and expand their palates.

Plans are already in place to expand the range of wines offered on the site after its initial launch. Ovenden said he hopes The Wine Engine will help demystify wine culture and encourage more people to enjoy and appreciate the stories behind each bottle. As the platform prepares for its debut next week, industry observers are watching closely to see how consumers respond to this blend of technology and tradition in the world of wine retail.