

Wine Fulfilment: Privileged Hub in UK

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We interviewed Valentino Minotti, executive director of Wine Fulfilment.

Let's put ourselves in the shoes of an e-commerce company, of a retail shop or an Italian wine producer that wants to enter the British market. Why would I be turning to you? Can you please give us an overview of your peculiarities?

Wine Fulfilment clients are wine companies, e-commerce and retail shops that want to expand their market in UK. On the other hand, we need producers to satisfy the growing demand both online and in the Horeca Channel. It is a win/win.

Wine Fulfilment is the ideal solution for e-commerce companies that want to diversify their sells and have an import, storage and distribution platform in UK. We have an external department that help us create ad hoc website. We are very

interested in e-commerce companies that have a very expanded stock and this factor allows a very rapid references rotation.

With Wine Fulfilment we would like to help retail shops: there are many retailers in Italy that do not want to expand themselves in the online market anymore for various reasons, or they are online but they are not able to manage adequately the sales. We help them by letting them know and expand their opportunities in the UK market.

The Wine companies have an advantage: they have great stock quantities available that allow them to transfer 2000-30000 of their UK production bottles and let them have the sale stock ready in practically no time.

As you underline – regarding the wine shipping – “an efficient service is not sufficient”.

Can you explain this paradox?

The Wine Fulfilment Team is made of people that have years of experience in the beverage world in UK. The excellence is a strong part of our company standard. The whole team is focused on the same working level: in English we call it “Quality Culture”.

Besides working with logistics, you are also importers and distributors of Italian wine in the United Kingdom.

What are the advantages for your clients?

We are importers exclusively for certain Italian and French companies and we have the AWRS (Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme) license granted by the English government for storage, online sales and restaurants.

This allows us to work at 360 degrees for our clients, so we not only work as logistics infrastructures/storage, but also as fiscal agents for the alcohol distribution.

Your proposal seems to go beyond the traditional shipping services, granting a particular care for the wine product and the extensive knowing of the sector which differs you in the market. Of what is this approach made of?

You were able to understand the importance that lies in the managing the wine not only as one of the products to ship, but as a luxurious product that needs to be respected in its whole supply chain process.

Wine Fulfilment selects the best logistics services exclusively and our packaging – which is 100% biodegradable – protects the wine from every impact and strike. We have a breakages/missing parcels percentage lower than 1%. Given the considerable shipping quantities due to the passage between many companies, the online shopping and the exponential increase of this channel, I think that our logistics partners are doing an exceptional job!

The logistics sector stands in a particular moment, given the actual problems tied to the international expeditions: delays, lack of container, increasing prices, closing of ports, long delivery time. How are you coping with these difficulties that involve all the sectors and what are the perspectives and the developments for this situation?

Regarding the logistic we are living a unique historical moment, but we are conscious about the situation. I think that we need to be patient even if sometimes it is hard to do so: people that work for us are victims themselves of both the deficiency of workers and the increase of the demand. So, in case a wine shipping in Italy is late, we need to work on top of things and take into consideration this possibility by moving in advance.

How do you grant the conservation condition to be ideal during the transport?

The wine conservation has many standard strategies that can be requested. For example, we do not import during the hottest months. Generally, we import until May, then we stop until middle September, unless there is no particular necessity.

We export in Asia, where, in that particular context, we do not take the season into consideration since the cargo, along the way, passes through different seasonal periods in order to arrive to destination.

Moreover, during the transport there is the variable tied to the wave movement (Madeira effect), but the fragile container (like the one of the wines) are positioned in the external part of the cargo and thermal blanket are added over the pallet so that the wine is not subjected to the temperature leaps during the transport. Obviously, this is a problem that is strictly connected to oceanic transports, while in Europe and UK we are much faster.

Since we take care of the client's goods, in 7 working day we manage to have the wine in our storages in London. We have created an efficient import mechanism that allows us to rapidly rotate the stock, having it at our disposal at high frequencies.

What are the peculiarities of you Pick&Pack service?

Wine Fulfilment, like any other industry, works using automatization services, but our integrated technology is limited by the fact that the human intervention is necessary given the necessities required by the wine product. We are able to process 70/100 consignments in just a few hours, granting a very high accuracy.

We have a cut-off time for the delivery within the next day at 13:00 and we always succeed to process it all. We accept the same day inbound until 12:00, so if a Fulfilment client sends us the wine before 12:00 the consumer will receive the order the day after.

We are growing with the e-commerce here in UK where speed and efficient, safe and green logistic is needed.

Moreover, this speed in the inbound allows our clients to always have a very low stock that can be rotated rapidly.

Storage, bottles manipulation and packaging.

How do you manage these three aspects?

We operate from Bow (2nd zone East London), we are close to the motorway that allows us a rapid access to all London and the articulated lorries can unload directly because we have enough space at our disposal.

The units are all thermal controlled with a constant humidity between 50-60% so that the corks do not dry.

The temperature does not vary much, the minimum – during the winter – reaches 14/15° and during summer it stands between 18/19°. This is possible thanks to the proximity to the East London canal and the fact that our warehouse is made of bricks and does not have large windows.

This room – with high ceiling and low exposure to the outdoor, permits the creation of a micro-stable environment.

We do not advise this kind of environment for a long-term aging. In fact, for this kind of storage needs we have agreements with external companies that offer solutions dedicated to the wine aging and we leave our wine there to age for year.