

Direct to consumer: WineJump shortens the distance between winemaker and consumer

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A “jump” into wine. It has never been easier for consumers to buy wine directly from wineries across Europe. That’s what [WineJump](#) offers. The new marketplace for wine from cellar door to front door follows the Airbnb model but applied to the wine world. In order to discover how it works, we interviewed the Dane **Thomas Winther, WineJump founder and CEO**. Thomas, spend his early professional years working for the Danish government and the European Union. Then he venturing into first innovation consulting. Later he ventures into wine, his first step as importer and retailer of premium South African wines. Now lives in Silicon Valley, California. Together with German co-founder **Marco Angermeier**, they have created WineJump. WineJump is an offer to both producers and

consumers. Through the marketplace winemakers have direct access to customers and vice-versa, consumers have direct access to great, mostly small-volume, wines they do not find in local stores.

When and how was WineJump born?

WineJump was founded in 2019 and launched one year ago on 2 March 2020. For wineries the model is similar to that many people know from Airbnb: The winery registers, presents themselves, lists the wines and when they sell, they pay a flat fee of €1 per bottle. In exchange WineJump offers wineries a fully automated system for payments, shipping, customs and VAT compliance. WineJump was born from the idea of fully liberating the wine trade – to the benefit of both winemakers and wine lovers.

How many countries do you work with?

Currently it is possible to sell on WineJump for wineries located in Italy, France, Germany and Spain. More than 1200 wineries are already active on WineJump: Almost half of them are Italian wineries. In the first year WineJump has been available to consumers located in 7 European countries: Italy, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland and Spain. In the spring 2021 we will open WineJump also to consumers in Sweden and Austria.

How does WineJump work concretely?

We provide our platform for free. Each winery creates their own window to Europe. They decide themselves if they want to sell in all or some of our consumer markets. Our first-of-its-kind compliance system allows us to manage shipping and customs procedures, all the way from cellar door to consumers' front door. We work with UPS as courier. As part of our compliance system WineJump manages payments of applicable VAT and excise duties in all markets. This complete service we offer wineries for a commission of 1 euro per bottle sold. Consumers do not

pay to shop on WineJump – and WineJump do not add mark-ups beyond actual costs of shipping, excise and VAT.

Our technology is very intuitive so it's easy for wineries to start selling on WineJump. In addition our team – including our team in Italy – supports wineries with additional information like: registration tutorials, pricing tips, marketing tips to grow sales, order management etc.

What concrete advantages do the wineries have using WineJump?

First of all wineries get access to millions of consumers across Europe that they could not access before. Why? Because without WineJump the only way a winery can sell to private consumers in another country is by selling first to middlemen, that then re-sell the wines to consumers. For many wineries it's a lot of work finding good importers and distributors to work with. With WineJump wineries no longer need the middlemen to reach consumers. Also, when selling without the middlemen's cost and margins, wineries can improve their own margins – while they can still offer consumers great wines for less.

WineJump also provides a new opportunity to present yourself as winery. To tell the unique stories about the great people and land behind great wines. We encourage wineries to use this opportunity to tell consumers what makes them special and unique – in words, to convey the analogue cellar door experience that we know, but now in a digital form.

Order management is easy: On orders the winery receive an email. They print the order and transport documents. They pack the box of wines. They order UPS pick-up in one click. Wineries are paid within 7 days. It's very much hassle-free and no worries.

What is your philosophy?

We want to truly liberate the wine trade with an offer of new opportunities and value to both wineries and consumers. We

keep everything as simple and hassle-free as possible.

Our approach is always democratic. We never put one winery above others. For example we do not accept paid advertisements because all wineries are important to us.

Some wineries *do* get more visibility on WineJump. This is because these wineries are very actively promoting their WineJump shop window towards consumers. Of course we encourage that. That's how you build community. But again, the offer is available to all wineries. We then support with for example social media cross-marketing campaigns.

What marketing strategies do you suggest to wineries?

We focus on attracting new and loyal consumers to the WineJump community. Our side we work hard on e.g. search engine crawl, social media, media and influencer outreach etc. And we do this in all our consumer markets. But again, it's very important to us that we address marketing *together* with the wineries.

This includes for example efforts to develop simple – yet effective – efforts to convert broader consumer awareness about WineJump to winery sales, and for wineries to sell repeatedly to the same consumers. We approach marketing in a data-driven way: Knowing, learning, iterating, adding. We share this information with wineries. Soon for example, we will provide wineries with a “Social Media Marketing Kit”, where we pick up on all lessons learned so far to inspire wineries in their online marketing efforts.

Similarly we are developing “Tasting Rooms Marketing Kits” to inspire wineries on how convert in-person cellar door sales to repeat online sales on WineJump. We know COVID is fortunately soon behind us. Wine lovers will celebrate this more than many I'm sure! Is there a better to meet new loyal customers than at the cellar door? No, nothing can replace that. But what a shame it has been in past that that the chances of sharing

wine love in the future was slim – well non-exiting with regard to the foreign visitors. Now the cellar doors are open across Europe, 24/7, 356 days a year.