



Berry Bros. & Rudd online revenues reach £25 million in 2011 growing 72% following Berrys' Broking Exchange launch

Berry Bros. & Rudd, the 300 year old wine retailer and vintner to the queen, has reported its best ever year for Internet sales – both through its own retail site and through Berrys' Broking Exchange, (which enables customers to sell and buy privately stored wines in Berrys' UK bonded warehouse – making it an “eBay for fine wine”).

Berry Bros. & Rudd, which has become one of the biggest specialists online, sold over £25 million of wine through *www.bbr.com* and Berrys' Broking Exchange (BBX) during 2011. The 2011 figure was 72% up on 2010 and the company's best ever online performance. The retailer had a strong festive period, with sales in December 2011 alone reaching £1.7 million.

The retail site, *bbr.com* site now lists over 3,000 wines and saw sales of £12.0 million in 2011, up 7% on 2010. The biggest sales of fine wine online have been £69,000 for a collection of 12 bottles each of Ch. Margaux, Ch. Lafite-Rothschild, Ch. Haut-Brion and Ch. Petrus (the biggest single transaction). The most spent on a single bottle of wine on *bbr.com* included an 18-litre bottle of Ch. Ducru-Beaucaillou 2005 sold for £4,048 and an Imperial of Ch. Lafite-Rothschild 2010, which sold for £8,083.

While *bbr.com* had a strong year, the most substantial growth in online sales has come from sales on Berrys' Broking Exchange (BBX), set up by Berrys' to enable customers to trade the wines they hold in the company's UK bonded warehouse, which had a remarkable year.

Wines worth £13.2 million were sold on BBX in the whole of 2011. BBX showed strong year-on-year growth. The service launched in August 2010 and delivered sales £3.5 million to December. Sales on BBX rose 56% for the comparative period in 2011. BBX, which charges lower commission than auctions, allows customers to list wines they hold for sale to other collectors or to visitors to the Berrys' website either to be stored or to be delivered to their new owners.

Simon Berry, Chairman of Berry Bros. & Rudd said of the results:

“In Georgian times, our shop windows were famous for their size and the range of products they displayed, today, our shop window is our website and we've become the internet's biggest specialist wine retailer. Technology may change, but we've always believed in using it to answer changing consumer demands.

“Our retail site continues to perform well and is experiencing strong growth. However, the investment we have made in BBX is really paying off – with better-than-expected sales of wines. By

creating, in effect, an eBay for fine wine, we feel we're potentially changing the way that collectors and investors trade fine wines and our customers have clearly embraced the new service.

"Overall, our online sales figures this year are a clear demonstration that investment in content, fulfilment and distribution has paid off and we're forecasting continued growth particularly from international markets including the Far East."

The company has also invested in social media, with senior staff blogging and using Twitter extensively. These include family member David Berry Green and all five of Berrys'-employed Masters of Wine (of the fewer than 300 MWs worldwide) writing on Berrys' Wine Blog or on Twitter.

During 2011, the company recorded its biggest social media sale, with a customer ordering £20,000 worth of wine following Sales Director and Bordeaux Buyer Simon Staples' Twitter-based advice. The use of Twitter, Facebook and Berrys' Wine Blog is estimated to have contributed to a substantial value of online sales during 2011.

Simon Berry continues:

"We recognised early that, if we were to take the internet seriously, we had to become in part a media and content business. I think we've shown that, even at the age of 314, you're never too old to get to grips with the web. More recently, social media has allowed us to use our expertise to deliver quality advice and information about our wines online - and that has paid off. We now regularly have people coming into our shops asking for wines they've seen recommended by the team on Twitter or on one of our blogs."

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About Berry Bros. & Rudd

Over 310 years ago, Berry Bros. & Rudd opened its shop at 3 St James's Street, opposite St James's Palace, where it still stands today. Berrys' now has shops in Hong Kong and Basingstoke, as well as a business in Japan and duty free presence in Dubai.

Berrys' range comprises over 3,000 wines and services include The Wine Club, The Cellar Plan, Fine & Rare Wine Advice, comprehensive Wine Tastings, Fine Dining and Wine School. The cellars and Pickering Place at Berrys' are available for corporate entertaining, cocktail parties and wine tastings. Berrys' award-winning website www.bbr.com is a one-stop shop online and includes expert advice from Berrys' own wine advisors.

For further discussion on this and other topics with Berrys' experts please visit Berrys' Wine Blog. To keep up-to-date with the latest wine news from Berrys' as it happens, follow @berrybrostrudd on Twitter. It only takes a few seconds and it's free. Become a fan of Berry Bros. & Rudd on Facebook at www.facebook.com/berryswine.