

Bid for Wine – New website promises to redefine the wine trade

The Old and New World are set to collide as Cambridge web application specialist Ept Computing brings innovative technology to the wine trade. Ept Computing is working with BidForWine.co.uk to create an auction site for buying and selling wine. For the first time in the UK, wine lovers will be able to trade wine directly online, avoiding the high charges and inefficiencies associated with brokers and traditional auction houses.

When Bid for Wine goes live later this year it will change the rules of the wine market in the UK. Sellers will reach a much larger audience than with the traditional auction houses, allowing them achieve a higher price at lower commission rates. Connoisseurs will find a wider range of unusual and older wines online, and restaurants will be able to source mature offering for their customers.

“Bid for Wine is an ambitious project and we are proud to be developing it”, says Martin Kleppmann, Managing Director of Ept Computing. “The website is personalised to a high degree, which means that we can cater for the needs of professional wine traders as well as for private buyers and sellers. All the complexity of calculating the right duty and VAT is handled by the site, so that users don’t need to worry about it. It makes wine trading simpler and more transparent than ever before.”

Ept Computing began this project by first carefully analysing the requirements of users of the site and their client’s business. The site was not to be simply a clone of eBay, but rather a sophisticated and smooth experience, perfectly attuned to wine enthusiasts. The rest followed on naturally from there: a user-centred, scalable and maintainable design was developed with great attention to detail and a long-term vision.

“We looked at several off-the-shelf auction software packages, but none looked like it could be adapted to suit our needs”, comments Lionel Nierop, Managing Director of Bid for Wine. “Fortunately Ept Computing were able to take the project forward with lots of energy, analytical thinking, and a deep understanding of technology. We are seeing a new version every few days and it’s looking very good — we are very excited and convinced that it will be a great service for our users.”

Bid for Wine’s co-founder is Spenser Hilliard, a barrister at Middle Temple. Hilliard was the first to recognise the market need for peer-to-peer wine trading in the UK: “Few brokers would be interested in odd bottles of Cru Bourgeois or Bourgogne Blanc, though many wine lovers would happily buy them for Sunday drinking. Traditional auction houses often charge high buyers premiums and promote their auctions poorly, which makes them a bad deal for both buyers and sellers. Bid for Wine will change this, and Ept Computing is doing a great job in developing the site.”

Lionel Nierop sums it up succinctly: “Whilst technology has revolutionised almost every other industry, the wine trade is still stuck in the 19th Century. Bid for Wine will change that.”

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