

NATIONAL liquor news

The Wine Society and Cracka Wines announce merger

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Liquor retailers TWS and the Online Liquor Group, which owns Cracka Wines, My Wine Guy and Winegrowers Direct have announced that they have merged.

The merged company has said it is in a strong position to become the sector's number one independent online trader and will combine a traditional direct-to-consumer business model with an innovative digital business.

The Wine Society's new CEO Lloyd Heinrich has been focused on rebuilding the industry stalwart by improving its digital capability and offering a vastly improved range of wines.

"This merger puts our group in pole position to lead the expected consolidation in the online liquor industry and be a serious contender for the number one independent within the sector. It's a very exciting time," said Heinrich,

"With total revenue of \$400.5m in 2016-17, online sales represent just 4 per cent of the overall liquor market in Australia. Online is the fastest growing channel in Australian retail and with our combined credentials, we'll be a significant player in this space with the expertise to grow quickly."

The merged company will bring together over 400,000 wine lovers and will be led by Heinrich alongside Cracka Wines founder Dean Taylor, as joint CEOs.

"Cracka Wines had planned to be the first company in Australia to complete a crowd-funded capital-raising project but instead saw the merit in joining forces with The Wine Society. Cracka has invested heavily in technology to drive a direct-to-consumer model and has grown revenues rapidly since its formation only seven years ago," says Mr Taylor.

Heinrich said that it was this focus on technology and a platform for growth that inspired the merger.

Taylor added his enthusiasm for the merger, saying he is excited about the opportunities it presents, including the critical mass it creates. "The Wine Society is one of Australia's most respected and trusted wine brands. It has been instrumental in introducing tens of thousands of people to the world of wine. The merger will see us provide a broader based network of members to our suppliers and a far superior product range to our members."

Read more about: [Cracka Wines](#), [The Wine Society](#),