

# By The Glass hopes it has a corker of a proposition

BY SIMON BINNS

Property entrepreneur Stuart Law is hoping to turn his love of fine wine into a business.

Law, managing director of Stockport-based Assetz, is also a director and shareholder of Brandnetics, which recently acquired the UK and Ireland distribution licence for a new product called By The Glass.

The machine, manufactured by a Netherlands-based company, uses pressurised nitrogen to fill the empty space in a wine bottle, keeping it chilled and preserved for two weeks. The wine can be served in small and large measures without exposing the rest of the bottle to the air.

Mark Hotchkiss, commercial director at By The Glass, said the company was looking for a bar, restaurant or hotel in Manchester city centre to showcase the product for a month on a free trial.

"We made a few calls to some places in Manchester city centre and we've had a bit of interest, but we want the right place and we're happy to let the operator have it for a month," he said.

## Wastage

"Operators are worried about wastage and we think this product overcomes that. You don't want to have to open a bottle just to serve a glass, and it also gives you the option to offer more variety by the glass, instead of the two or three house wines you'd normally put on the menu."

Depending on the size of the unit, which can hold between six and 16 bottles, the price ranges from £6,000 to £14,000.

Hotchkiss added: "We saw the product at the London Wine Fair and thought there was a gap in the market. We got the licence last November and we've already sold around a dozen.

"We've sold them to hotels, restaurants with private dining areas and wine bars. Staff can use them or you



**'Turnover and profit are not so important in the first year, it's about getting the product established in the market'**

MARK HOTCHKISS, BY THE GLASS

can load them up with credit and customers can serve themselves, although it's mostly a behind the bar product."

Hotchkiss said the firm wanted to sell or lease 100 units by the end of 2010, which is when the distribution deal will be reviewed. After it has found a venue in Manchester, Hotchkiss said Cheshire villages such as Alderley Edge would be the next target.

"Turnover and profit are not so important in the first year," he said. "It's about getting the product established in the market."

Craig Ince, manager of the Kitchen at Circle and the Circle Club in the Barton Arcade in Manchester, said the product was a good idea and

could cut down on wastage. He added: "It makes sense. When we've had a bottle open for two or three days we generally have to get rid of it, although we tend to sell most of the bottles we open."

Ince said the club had increased the quality of wine it sells through a tie-up with Hanging Ditch Wine Merchants on Manchester's Victoria Street, and sales were improving.

"We've noticed wine sales are up and people are spending more," he said. "If people are prepared to pay for a nice meal, they are prepared to pay for a nice wine, and they are actually spending more on that than the food."

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