

# Sigva

*A modern family business and  
focused importer of wine*

Wine importers of Sweden

Sigva AB | Vinia Sweden AB | Sigva Partner AB



# Wine importer of Sweden

Sigva is a second-generation family business. As one of Sweden's leading importers of wine we have extensive experience of our industry, having grown and developed into a well-renowned, modern business with strong resources.

Our key word is focus. Focus on our wines, on our producers, on our market and on good results – for all those involved.

## **We know Systembolaget**

Sigva has extensive experience of working with Systembolaget, the Swedish government-owned monopoly system for the sale of alcoholic beverages. This has given us in-depth knowledge of how Systembolaget thinks and operates, positioning ourselves as a mediator between our producers and Systembolaget's purchasers. This way we are able to preserve our producers' unique style, while at the same time giving them access to the tools and paths required in order to get their products onto the Systembolaget range. Sigva focuses strongly on Systembolaget's tender requests and works hard to find products to match these. We also pioneered what is known as blending. We visit our

producers' factories several times a year and blend wines to suit the character requirements issued by Systembolaget's purchasers in collaboration with the producers. We know what works and what sells on the Swedish market. Focus is the key word and our success stems from long-term business deals based on solid experience and knowledge.

“The journey of development has

*“The journey of development has enriched us with great experience and know-how”*

enriched us with great experience and know-how of this unique market ensuring a forefront position at Systembolaget, among HoReCa actors and media.” Says Sigva's CEO Stefan Christiansson.

## **We know HoReCa**

Since the start Sigva has been strongly linked with HoReCa, and this is still the basis of our activities. We have a large and stable client base through Sigva Partner, where many of our clients have

been with us since the start. All Sigva Partner sales staff have trained as sommeliers and have a solid background in the restaurant industry. The personal relations are connection is important, which is why Sigva's field sellers always visit clients on site. In addition to field sellers, Sigva also has customer service and in-house sales departments. Sigva has a comprehensive product portfolio

and our sales staff always share their knowledge with clients, through wine courses or by helping them find the perfect wine matches for their menus.

“Our clients really appreciate our personal approach and connections relations. We convey a personal yet professional approach,” says Sigva Partner Sales Manager Magnus Stenberg.

Sigva Partner's sales office is located in Stockholm. We also have regional offices in Gothenburg and Falun.

Facing page: Typical interior from one of the Systembolaget stores in Sweden.

# How does the Swedish alcohol monopoly work?

The Swedish government operates a monopoly on retail sales of alcoholic beverages. This means that all retail sales of spirits, wine and beer, with an ABV superior to 3.5 volume percent, takes place through the government-owned company Systembolaget. Systembolaget operates more than 410 stores nationwide and has more than 500 representatives in smaller communities. Goods are sold in the stores without profit maximisation and up-selling is prohibited.

## Systembolaget's history

Systembolaget was founded in 1955 following centuries of attempts to regulate alcohol consumption in Sweden, for example through the use of measures such as spirit rationing and the introduction of the ration book. For a long time it was only possible to purchase products over the counter, which resulted in long queues. Today's stores are more customer-centred, with an extensive range of products, more generous opening hours and well-trained and knowledgeable staff. When Sweden joined the EU in 1995 the country was allowed to retain its retail sales monopoly on alcohol but

the monopoly on production, import, export and restaurant sales was abolished, making it possible for businesses to begin importing and selling directly to restaurants.

## Figures and statistics

Systembolaget has 414 stores and 508 representatives all across Sweden. The company stocks just over 10,800 items, 2,305 of which feature in the fixed product range, and 8,500 in the range available to order. Systembolaget serves nearly 116 million customers each year.

## Consumption in Sweden

Wine consumption represents 42% of total consumption, followed by beer, 34%, and spirits, 6%. Swedes drink on average 9.2 litres of pure alcohol per person over the age of 15 per year.

## Swedish rules and regulations

You must be 20 years old to buy alcohol at Systembolaget. Strict regulations apply to the marketing of alcoholic beverages in the media. Alcohol management is also heavily regulated in the HoReCa

sector. Wrongful handling may lead to a fine or loss of the licence to serve alcohol. Sigva has extensive knowledge in this field, meaning that we can make it possible for us to handle matters in the best possible manner. We use our experience and expertise to ensure that our producers' brands are handled correctly and in accordance with Swedish legislation.

## What is it like delivering to Sweden?

Apart from HoReCa, Systembolaget represents the only opportunity possibility for foreign producers to sell their goods in Sweden. Systembolaget is very discerning with regard to the type of wines and other alcoholic beverages that they stock, in order to be able to offer as wide a range as possible. In-depth knowledge and understanding of the specific requirements sought by Systembolaget is required in order to get products onto the store shelves. Suppliers supplying goods for Systembolaget's fixed range must also be able to guarantee that the products are always in stock.



VÅRA NYHETER

18

VÅRA NYHETER

Röda viner till  
höstmiddagen

Välj ett stort & robust  
rött vin till utfyllnad.  
Behöver du hjälp att välja  
fråga gärna oss!

Röda viner till  
höstmiddagen

Välj ett stort & robust  
rött vin till utfyllnad.  
Behöver du hjälp att välja  
fråga gärna oss!

RÖDA VINEN

15

Välj rätt bland  
våra röda viner

Tag ett recept!

Tag ett recept!

Tag ett recept!

Tag ett recept!

Tag ett recept!

Tag ett recept!

Tag ett recept!

# The purchasing process in brief

## Tenders

A launch plan is sent to all authorised importers describing the products that Systembolaget wishes to add to its range in the coming year. This is followed by a tender request specifying the products that Systembolaget wishes to add to its range, down to the smallest detail. Wines that match this description have a chance of being added to the fixed, temporary, exclusive or to-order range. The fixed range is updated twice a year (April and October). The wines selected for the fixed range tend to stay there for a longer period of time.

## Tender submissions

The tenders are examined once submitted. Systembolaget may reject any tenders that have not been completed correctly, or that lack any of the requested information. Some of the product suggestions submitted are then selected for taste sampling.

## Wine testing

The wines are assessed in a blind test by three independent wine experts

and evaluated individually based on a special points system. The wines are given scores based on how well they match the required taste profiles which

*“The wines are given scores based on how well they match the required taste profiles”*

are clearly described in the tender request. The wines can score 1-9 points in each test, making the top score sum 27 points.

## Winners

The wine with the highest score wins the launch and the purchaser responsible notifies the importer on the same day. Further samples must be submitted at this stage for a technical assessment to be performed in a lab.

## Start

Ten weeks prior to the launch a crate of the selected wine is sent to System-

bolaget for checks. This involves Systembolaget inspecting the submitted samples of the winning wine in order to ensure that the wine delivered is

the same as that which was tested. A characterisation test is also held, in addition to a tasting for wine critics and journalists.

New wines are presented in Systembolaget's own publication Varunytt prior to being launched. This publication is distributed on the launch day and is available in all stores. The wine is thereafter launched for purchase in the stores.

We issue an order to the producer once we receive the launch samples, ten weeks ahead of the launch.



# What is it like being one of Sigva's producers?

We believe in focusing on each individual producer that we work with. This means that we assess our needs strategically and carefully and adapt our product portfolio accordingly. Sigva has never, and will never, simply aim to become the biggest importer. Instead we aim to grow at a pace that enables us to form the right collaborations based on mutual trust, with the attitude that together we can achieve the best results. Our clients know wine; we know the Swedish market and understand the Swedish system.

## **Our story**

Sigva's history has its roots in the late 1980s, when the company's founder, Sigvard Christiansson, bought a holiday home in southern France with his wife. There he witnessed first-hand the development of the local wine industry away from mass production towards the creation of quality wines. Sigvard had a long career in the IT sector behind him but felt it was time to dedicate himself to something he felt passionately about. Sweden's entry into the EU brought about the abolishment of the import

monopoly on wines and spirits. By then Sigvard had already founded the company Sigva AB together with his son Stefan. The original business idea was to sell unique and unknown, high-quality

*“We wanted to offer consumers something new — wines of a high quality from places they'd never heard of”*

wine wines from areas not represented in Sweden at the time.

“We wanted to offer consumers something new — wines of a high quality from places they'd never heard of,” explains Sigvard Christiansson.

Father and son travelled southern France visiting wine producers and making contacts. Soon thereafter the company began selling high-quality French wines to restaurants in Sweden. Stefan himself travelled around to deliver the bottles straight from the boot of Sigvard's Audi 100, which had luckily been equipped with shock absorbers! The wines were soon to be found in Stock-

holm's top restaurants, and before long Sigva began making a name for itself in the wine industry as a tuned-in, reliable and knowledgeable importer. The good reputation that we created back then has

stayed with us through the years.

Sigva's product range was soon extended to include wines from several other countries such as Italy, South Africa and New Zealand. A number of sales staff were taken on in 1998 and the business grew. Sigva's core business remains focused on the restaurant industry, however, a targeted initiative in 2003 directed at Systembolaget led to many of our products finding their way onto the stores' shelves. The company reached another important turning point in 2005 when the subsidiary Vinia was launched, focusing on quality wines with a strong sales potential.



Facing page: We bring the world of wine to Sweden. Total volume sold for the Sigva Group year 2010: 2 020 882 litres.

Sigva Partner was founded in 2009 as a focused sales organisation directed at HoReCa while 2010 saw the further development of the Sigva Group's marketing and PR departments.

#### **Our situation today**

The family business has now undergone its first generational shift. Stefan Christiansson became CEO of Sigva in 2004, heading up a group of enthusiastic and skilled employees. Sigvard Christiansson serves as Chairman of the Board and continues to play an important role in the business by contributing knowledge and experience. The incorporation of Vinia into the Group has significantly boosted sales. The Group posted its best results since the 1994 start in 2010. The Sigva Group is one of the

largest wine importers in Sweden today and the company has the financial position, resources and expertise required

high-quality product range. The family business' value basis, including open-mindedness and a close-knit workplace

*“We have the knowledge and the ability to create sales successes for brands on the Swedish market”*

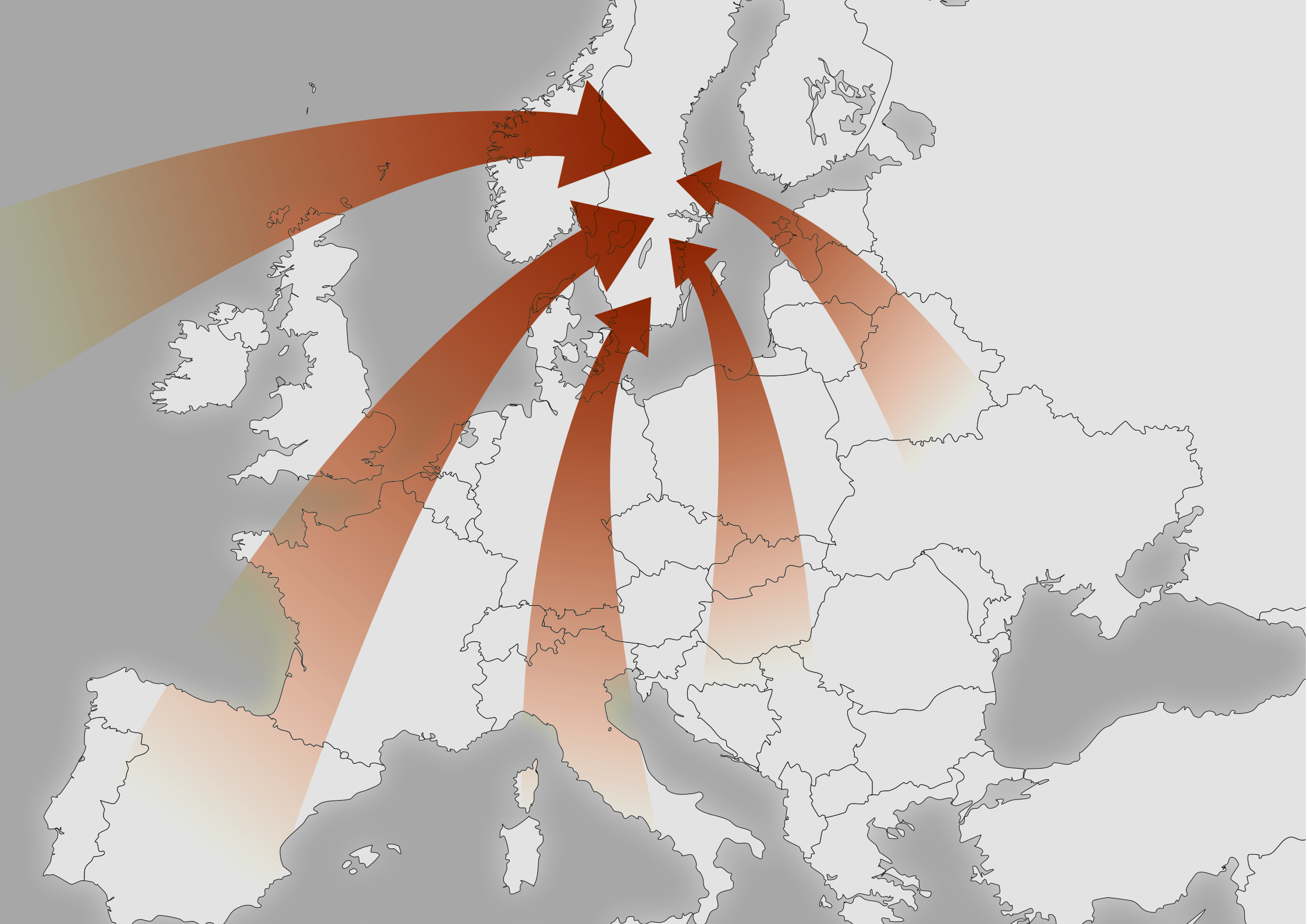
to be able to collaborate successfully with the most important producers in the world.

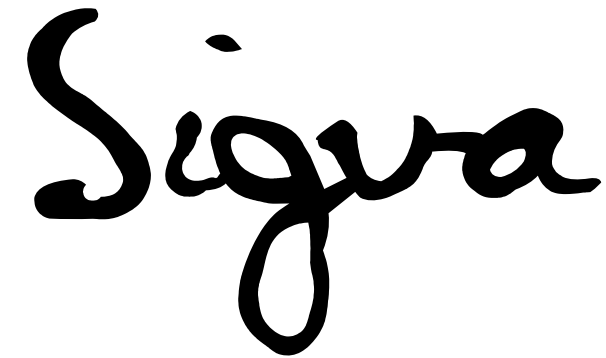
#### **Our vision**

The Sigva Group's aim is to grow steadily in a targeted manner, within the framework for secure financial decisions, and to continue to offer a

relationships, resonates well with modern business ideas relating to sales and marketing.

“We have the knowledge and the ability to create sales successes for brands on the Swedish market, and we are proud to be able to do this in close collaboration with the producers,” says Sigva's CEO Stefan Christiansson.





## The Sigva Group

### Three main components

The Sigva Group currently comprises three components: the parent company Sigva AB, which for a long time has focused on offering a broad portfolio of products to Systembolaget, the sales organisation Sigva Partner which serves the HoReCa market, and Vinia Sweden AB, which has managed to create a strong, niche portfolio of products aimed at Systembolaget despite only having existed for a few years.

### Finance – freedom to make rapid decisions

From the very start Sigva's financial value basis has been based on taking one step at a time and growing sensibly by limiting risk. Sigva is completely independent financially and operates without any involvement of external capital, which is an advantage when it comes to making decisions of a financial nature. This financial strategy has been made possible by continual rein-

vestment in the company, which in turn is possible because we are not subject to any yield requirements from exter-

to any importer's business. Sigva works with the world's largest warehouse distributors and through them we are

*“Sigva works with the world's largest warehouse distributors and through them we are able to reach more than 9000 recipients”*

nal stakeholders. Sigva is a pure family business owned by the Christiansson family. The business' development curve has steadily pointed upwards. Despite being founded just five years ago, our subsidiary Vinia has posted strong growth and quickly multiplied its sales.

### Logistics – the importer's backbone

Being able to receive and deliver products smoothly, quickly and safely is key

able to reach more than 9,000 recipients such as Systembolaget stores, wholesalers and restaurants across the whole of Sweden. Just like everything else that Sigva does, this part of the business is based on close collaboration and personal relationships. This way we can minimise the risk of mistakes and any problems can be rectified rapidly. All products are dispatched from one warehouse in Stockholm, close to Sigva's head office, which facilitates the performance of checks.



## Vinia – a fast-moving subsidiary

Vinia Sweden AB was founded in 2005 as a wine importer focused on high-quality wines with major sales potential. The aim is to offer a wide range of modern, value-for-money wines in various price ranges. The common theme in the product portfolio is that the high quality of the wine shall be relative to the price, which requires a close dialogue with producers.

“Commitment and passion are important key words for Vinia. We have created a well developed network of producers who share Vinia’s values and produce some of the world’s most interesting wines,” says Per Engström, CEO of Vinia.

As a young and modern business, Vinia focuses heavily on added-value

through social media marketing, which has generated excellent results. Vinia sells its products both to Systembolaget and to the restaurant industry and recently posted sales of SEK 70 million. Sigva AB owns a 51-percent stake in the company and we share the same logistics, finance and sales departments.

## Some of our most important clients

### **Examples of our collaborations**

Nores is the Nordic region’s most important purchasing organisation for the hotel and restaurant industry. Sigva is one of five wine suppliers delivering exclusively to Nores, meaning that our products are well represented in hotels, conference facilities and at trade shows. We also use restaurant wholesalers such as Martin Olsson.

### **Well known restaurants**

Sigva sells products to more than 500 restaurants in Sweden. Some of the most well known ones are listed below:

Edsbacka Krog  
Den Gyldene Freden  
Berns

Grill  
F12  
Le Rouge  
Mancini  
Operakällaren  
Coque au Vin  
28+  
Sjömagasinet  
Fond

# How we communicate

## **With clients**

Sigva's sales staff enjoy a close relationship with their clients. In addition to daily client visits, field sellers create product presentations and introductory evenings and help develop entire wine ranges and concepts for restaurants. Clients get access of information and news on an ongoing basis through newsletters and an up-to-date website.

## **With producers**

Sigva endeavours to always be as proactive as possible in communicating Systembolaget's specific needs and requirements to producers, acting as their eyes and ears in the Swedish market.

## **With the market**

PR is the corner stone of our product communication work, which is based

on a well developed network of journalists working in the written press and in radio/TV. PR is essential as the Swedish alcohol legislation strongly restricts what is and is not possible in the field of marketing. Sigva is also at the forefront of efforts to reach both clients and end-customers through popular social media such as Facebook and Twitter. The Group's various websites offer added-value information in the form of streamed videos of wine tastings, wine and food matching and other leisure-related articles. It goes without saying that part of our marketing strategy is based on more traditional channels such as advertising and banner campaigns. This combined with strategic PR work creates results. We also view the creation of ambassadors, through word of mouth, as an important factor for

achieving success in the Swedish market. Associations such as Munsänkarna (The cup-bearers), which involves some 20,000 wine aficionados all over Sweden who regularly organise tastings, are very important.

"With all the strict legislations in Sweden it is crucial to find new and innovative solutions when it comes to marketing. Social media, ambassadors, traditional marketing – they all interact together. If you combine that together with PR, based on good personal relations, then you have many of the important keys to succeed!" says Daniel Esberg, Marketing Manager of Sigva.

# We do our bit – Corporate Social Responsibility

In Sweden both companies and individuals impose stringent requirements on companies in areas such as the environment and technology. Systembolaget carries out checks on an ongoing basis to verify that producers and importers

comply with their regulations relating to environmentally friendly transport and ethical trading (CSR). As an importer we naturally play an important role in this work. Smart logistics solutions and optimised load factors enable us to mini-

mise our emissions for each product. Our responsibility also involves selling and marketing our products in a responsible way, and thereby also representing our producers and brands in an ethical and correct manner.

# Numbers and hard facts

Below: Total wine volume sold at Systembolaget in Sweden. (Litres)



Below: Sigva Group turn over. (Euro)



## Sales at Systembolaget 2010

Beer: 225 763 000 litres  
Wine: 187 872 000 litres  
Spirits: 20 003 000 litres  
Cider & Mix beverages: 19 281 000 litres  
Non alcoholic beverages: 1 337 000 litres

## Sigva AB

Founded: 1994  
Location: Täby, Stockholm; Sweden  
Ownership: Private, Family Christiansson  
Turnover 2010: € 18 591 000  
Employees: 15  
Sommeliers: 7  
Listings at Systembolaget: 35  
Sales by Segment: 10% HoReCa,  
90% Systembolaget

# Our portfolio

Sigva has a portfolio of quality wine producers from all around the wine atlas. Many of these are well known and relatively large, some are small and not yet that known. Common to all of our producers is that they have a strong quality awareness and values a cooperation based on personal relationships and trust.

Some of our producers:

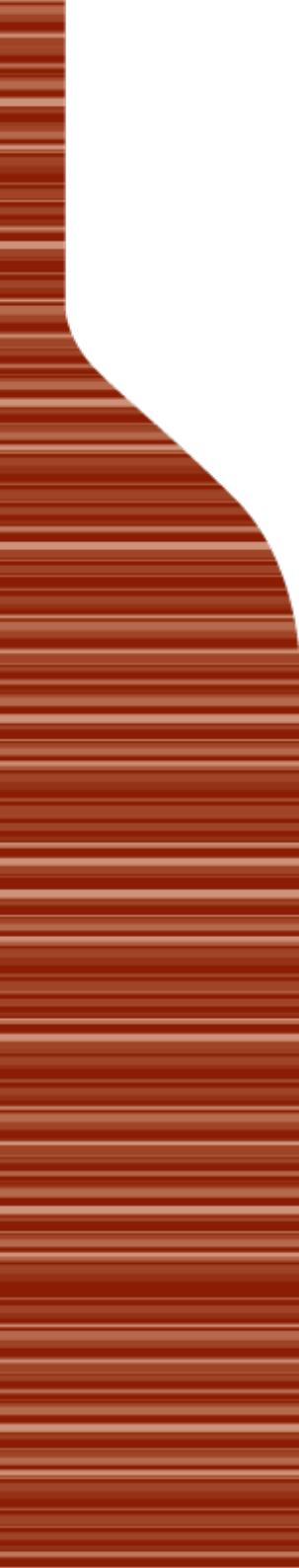
Adegas Valminor  
Alfred Gratien  
Alphonse Mellot  
Alsina & Sarda  
Antinori  
Badet Clémant  
Blaauwklippen  
Bodegas Ontañon  
Bonnaire  
Bronco Wines  
Cave Vinicole d'Orschwiller  
Cellar Piñol

Celler Ronadelles  
Celler Sort del Castell  
Cemovsko field Vineyard  
Chateau Carsin  
Château de Jau  
Château de Pibarnon  
Château de Suduiraut  
Château Pech-Latt  
CJ Pask Winery  
Compagnie Medocaine  
Disznoko  
Domaine Bellier  
Domaine Bouzerau-Emonin  
Domaine Cauhape  
Domaine des Entrefaux  
Domaine des Malandes  
Domaine du Pescquier  
Domaine Mouton  
Domaine Rolet  
Earl Bronzo  
Ébano  
Fiuzo & Bright  
Gratien & Meyer  
il Molino di Grace

Facing page: Sigva is a second-generation family business, father Sigvard Christiansson, founder and Chairman (left) and son Stefan Christiansson, CEO (right).

Jean Bousquet  
L'etoile  
La Ferme du Mont  
La Velona  
Las Niñas  
Laurenz V  
Los Aljibes Winery  
Louis Max  
Luna Beberide  
Mocavero  
Moritz  
Paul Clouet  
Prunotto  
Quarisa  
Quinta do Noval  
Saint Clair Estate Wines  
San Leonardo  
Sula Vineyards  
Terrapieno  
Tormaresca  
Veenwouden  
Vignoble Klur  
Villa Huesgen  
Wurtz





# Sigva

## **Contact**

Sigva AB  
Kanslihusgränd 3  
183 68 Täby  
SWEDEN  
Tel: +46 (0)8 - 732 59 95  
Fax: +46 (0)8 - 732 67 20  
[www.sigva.se](http://www.sigva.se)