

**Clarion**

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## **Northern champagne bar flies high with new outlet at Manchester Airport**



Northern-based Thornton Inns Limited which runs the Epernay chain of champagne bars has celebrated the opening of a new outlet in Terminal 1 of Manchester Airport.

The latest Epernay champagne bar is a 345m<sup>2</sup> unit which has undergone a £500,000 refit and opened opening last week (26 November). Thornton Inns was assisted by legal firm Clarion in Leeds whose commercial and property experts negotiated a concession agreement with Manchester Airports Group PLC.

Based in Leeds, the company which is run by entrepreneurial brothers, Geoff and Nick Thornton, has a number of bars including Epernay Leeds and Manchester, and Taps Manchester and Leicester.

“This latest bar is an extension of our successful formula of building on the wine bar concept and catering for discerning customers who enjoy champagne and cocktails on a regular basis rather than purely on special occasions,” explains Geoff Thornton. “The move into a prestigious airport location is a great opportunity to build on the strong, high quality brand which we have established and use it to create another stylish venue which can be enjoyed by international travellers. We have a second



media relations and profile

development in the pipeline at Manchester Airport and if both go to plan, we will be looking for opportunities to expand the concept to other airports.

“We have worked closely with Clarion since we opened our first champagne bar in 2005 at The Electric Press in Leeds. The team has proved able to help with all of our legal needs, including commercial, corporate and property expertise. They are able to work to a budget and offer excellent value.”

The Clarion team was led by Matthew Hattersley, head of commercial, and Lucie-Jane Hugill, senior associate in the firm’s property division. Lucie comments: “It’s always good to work with a client over a number of years to get close to the business and also to see it develop. It’s great that we’ve been able to grow along with Thornton Inns as the company has developed its portfolio of high quality champagne bars.”

Clarion’s property team offers a full range of services from developer, investment, asset management, corporate occupier work through to secured lending. It is complemented by Clarion’s commercial division which handles commercial contracts, IT contracts and information law; and its corporate experts who advise on all aspects of corporate finance work.

The firm offers eleven specialist service areas consisting of Clarion Advocates (formerly business crime and regulatory); corporate, commercial and IP; corporate recovery; private client; employment; property; dispute resolution; family, debt recovery and costs and litigation funding. Clarion has grown to 60 fee earners including 17 partners.

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**Photography:** Epernay champagne bar at Terminal 1 of Manchester Airport.