# Secret Food Tours to expand offering with core and complementary acquisitions – co-founder

28 Oct 2025 | 11:25 GMT | United Kingdom | Leisure & Recreation-Services Mergermarket | Proprietary

by Lloyd Vassell

- Food-focused local tours provider operating in 100 cities
- Could buy peers in new locations, adjacent services
- Focus on targets turning over GBP 500,000–GBP 10m

Secret Food Tours (Essor), which offers food-focused tours, plans to expand its offering by acquiring in its core and complementary verticals, co-founder Oliver Mernick-Levene said.

The UK-based business, which generated GBP 17.9m in revenue in 2024, could acquire peers operating in locations where it isn't yet present, Mernick-Levene said, adding that the company has a global M&A outlook. Separately, it could also pursue providers of adjacent food-led activities such as cooking, walking, bicycle, and tuk-tuk tours in cities where it operates.

The food-related tourism industry is present in more than 500 cities globally, he said, and is fast-growing yet fragmented, filled with thousands of smaller counterparts that could add to Secret Food Tours' offering. The company operates in more than 100 cities

Secret Food Tours is focusing on businesses turning over between GBP 500,000 and GBP 10m, Mernick-Levene said, adding that a target's operations, EBITDA and the synergies achieved through a deal are among the driving factors.

A number of businesses in the segment have reached their financial ceilings, being unable to get sufficient extra funding from family and friends, but too small to attract interest from private equity and venture capital institutions, he said.

Management is interested in hearing about potential opportunities from any source, he said, adding without elaborating that Secret Food Tours has the financial means to satisfy transaction payments.

The company's past acquisitions include Quebec, Canada-based Local Food Tours in August; and in the US, Miami, Florida-based Little Havana Tours, and Seattle, Washington-based Seattle Bites Food Tours, as reported by *Skift* in December 2022.

Secret Tours is not in transaction talks at present, having spent the last few months expanding its executive team, Mernick-Levene said. In September, it announced the appointments of COO Bastien Delapre and CMO David Moak, who join CFO Tannah Matus, appointed in 2023, and co-founders Mernick-Levene and CEO Nicolas Jacquart.

Incorporated in 2013, Secret Food Tours is a technology-enabled tourism company that matches experienced local food guides with people seeking new food experiences in the city they are visiting. It operates in cities across Europe, North America, and Asia.

In March, *The Times* reported that Growth Partner and Harwood Private Capital had acquired a 40% stake in the company for an undisclosed sum. The report, citing Mernick-Levene, said that after many offers from the private equity and venture capital sectors, the co-founders "de-risked" by disposing of a major chunk of shares, and longstanding investor Pembroke VCT also sold stock, but retains a holding in the business.

While there are no current plans to offload any more shares, a sale of Secret Food Tours will occur at an unspecified point, Mernick-Levene told this news service now.

Secret Food Tours ranked 14th on the *Sunday Times 100* list of fastest-growing private businesses in the UK this year. It had an average monthly employee count of seven during the year ending January 2024, according to *Companies House* data.

by Lloyd Vassell

© 2025 ION
This document is protected by applicable copyright law and may not be shared, reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or published, in its entirety or in any part, to anyone that does not have access to the materials contained herein under the terms of your agreement with ION. You may not alter or remove any copyright or other notice from this content. Any unauthorized recipient or distributor of this document is liable for unauthorized use and copyright breach, and distribution by you constitutes breach of copyright and other obligations under the terms of your agreement with ION.