

Oregon vintner pursues success in single servings

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SUMMARY: Copa Di Vino | James Martin's company in The Dalles markets quality wine in well-sealed individual helpings

When it comes to wine, it's rare that good things come in small sizes.

The small, single-serving bottles available on airplanes, for instance, are commonly filled with juice from grapes that could, and probably did, come from just about anywhere.

James Martin, founder and CEO of a new business called Copa Di Vino, or "wine by the glass," is out to change all that.

Martin, in partnership with a French company, is selling what he calls North America's first high-quality, fully sealed single-serving wine. It sold out at last month's Rose Bowl game in Pasadena and is now available at Whole Foods, New Seasons, Mt. Hood Meadows ski area and Elephants Delicatessen.

"A few others have tried something like this, but until now, no one has figured out how to create an effective seal," said Martin, 46, who hails from a seven-generation farm family in The Dalles. "The key to our success, in addition to the product's convenience, will be making sure there is great wine inside every container."

Initially, the \$2.99 single servings will feature chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon and merlot produced by Martin's own Quenett Winery. Later this year, he hopes to talk with other Oregon vintners about the possibility of bottling their wines in the product's 6.3-ounce recyclable plastic containers.

"Bottling for the entire Oregon industry would be a dream," he said. "This would open a lot of doors for a whole bunch of people."

Martin recently installed patented bottling equipment at his winery in The Dalles to handle the task. He has also signed an agreement with Tri-S Superior Screen Systems in Tualatin to print logos and additional bottling information directly onto the plastic containers.

He got the idea for the new product after seeing something similar while riding on a bullet train in France with his wife, Mollie, in 2008. When subsequent research indicated how difficult the seemingly simple product was, he contacted Pascal Carvin, the French patent-holder, and struck an agreement for Martin to hold exclusive North America production and distribution rights.

With penny-pinched consumers already "trading down" when it comes to wine purchases, Martin hopes the time is ripe for the world to embrace the idea that smaller is better --at least when it comes to wine.

"Some of the biggest wine companies in the world tried to do this and failed," he said. "We're very excited to see how far we can take it."



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