

## Single-serve wine catches on



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James Martin has his hands full these days. On the heels of an ambitious redevelopment of a downtown historic flour mill into a new wine-tasting room and cultural center, the 46-year-old entrepreneur from The Dalles is pushing a first-of-its-kind new product into the California market, hoping to pioneer the largely untapped “ready-to-drink” market for wine.

Martin’s eight-employee company, [Copa Di Vino](#) (Italian for “cup of wine”), was founded in 2009 and hit the market in the spring of 2010 with single-serve containers of wine. The key to the business is packaging innovation, and the fact that Copa recently won an award in the Dupont packaging competition indicates potential.

The product is selling in 20 states, and the move into the 21st — California — is key to Copa’s future. As Martin noted at a recent gathering of entrepreneurs and investors, California has 19% of the nation’s population and produces 90% of the nation’s wine. He’s hired a Southern California sales rep and has been traveling south regularly to pitch his idea to major retailers, big wine producers and investors. He hopes to raise \$1.5 million over the next few months.

The Copa idea is to offer consumers fine wine for less than \$4 a glass, with the type of convenience that has made single servings of beers and sodas an \$80 billion business in the U.S. Specialty retailers with busy deli sections such as Whole Foods and New Seasons Market are carrying the product, as

are outdoor concert venues such as the Gorge Amphitheatre. Most importantly, the largest chain of grocery stores in Southern California, Ralph’s, began carrying Copa last month, offering the biggest market opportunity yet with 350 stores.

Martin has a three-pronged strategy for making money: sales, bottling for other wineries (he’s already established a deal with Kendall Jackson) and licensing the company’s patented packaging technology to other bottlers. He says he chose the “somewhat nebulous” name of Copa Di Vino to allow companies to become partners and to raise the brand to the profile of other first-to-market