



Start-Up Company Acquires Washington Hills Brand

Precept Brands, a Seattle-based start-up that is less than 2 years old, has added a fifth label to its portfolio with the purchase of the [Washington Hills](#) brand, which produces several varietals from Washington's Columbia Valley priced at \$10 and under.

The brand was owned by Washington Hills Cellars Inc., which continues to produce two other higher-priced Columbia Valley labels, [Apex](#) and [Bridgman](#). The purchase price was undisclosed.

Precept Brands is focusing on affordable quality wines, said CEO Andrew Browne, who had been president/CEO of Corus Brands until Canandaigua Wine Company acquired most of its portfolio, which included Washington's well-known Columbia Winery.

Earlier this year, Precept launched four Columbia Valley brands -- Avery Lane, Barrelstone, Pavin & Riley and Sockeye -- which target the \$15-and-under market. The company's portfolio also includes three wines from Australia's McLaren Vale -- Shingleback, The Gate and Red Knot -- and a Spanish wine, El Paseo. Before this week's acquisition, Precept projected its first-year sales would hit 70,000 cases. The addition of Washington Hills is expected to boost that number to about 130,000 cases.

Winemaker Brian Carter, who co-founded Washington Hills Cellars Inc. in 1988 with Harry Alhadeff, will continue making the Washington Hills varietals at the company's facilities in Sunnyside. Carter will also retain his winemaker duties at Apex and Bridgman. Precept will provide the sales and marketing force.