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**Washington Hills Introduces Premium Varietal Cask Wines**  
New Package Offers Consumers Improved Quality and Convenience

Seattle, Wash. -- Washington Hills, one of Washington State's founding premium wineries, will begin shipping 3L cask wine today. The wines are expected to be on store shelves in the Pacific Northwest and select markets on the east coast by early November. Consumers will find the new product at retail in the table wine section of the store alongside 750ml and 1.5L varieties. The new product will retail for \$20.

"Cask wine offers consumers better quality over a longer period of time," says Washington Hills marketing vice president Alexandra Ootkin explaining the winery's decision to introduce both Chardonnay and Merlot in the new package. "It stays fresh up to four weeks after opening. This is a tremendous benefit for consumers who enjoy a single glass of wine over several evenings as well as restaurants wanting to offer their patrons fresh, high quality wine by the glass," she says citing both consumer and restaurant interest in the new product.

The new Washington Hills cask wines feature a wood-cut illustration of Columbia Valley vineyards with Mt. Adams in the background, similar to the winery's newly revised 750ml package and case shippers. The cask wine side panels also include an appellation map of Washington State with details boasting the growing region's strengths and points of difference.

Ootkin believes the market will embrace the new package. "Consumers are ahead of the industry in their desire for innovative, non-traditional packaging that reduces barriers

to everyday, casual enjoyment,” Ootkin says. According to industry analysts Gomberg, Fredrikson & Associates, “boxed wine” as the product is often called, is one of the fastest-growing market segments in the business.

Cask wine is contained within a bag and as the wine is dispensed, the bag collapses thereby preventing oxygen from contacting the wine and reducing freshness. In addition to a longer shelf life, cask wines offer consumers greater convenience. “The portability of this package is great. It is perfectly suited to today’s active lifestyle because it travels well and eliminates the need for a corkscrew,” says Ootkin.

Precept Brands, Washington State’s fastest growing premium wine company, acquired the brand last year from Harry Alhadeff who founded Washington Hills in 1989. Washington Hills' case shipments are expected to reach 60,000 in 2004.

Precept Brands, founded by former Corus Brands CEO Andrew Browne and a team of wine industry veterans in 2003, expects case shipments of 220,000 in 2004. Other brands in the Precept portfolio include Sockeye, Avery Lane and Shingleback, among others. All of the wines are available nationally.

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