

Wine Spectator

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The Carton Craze

As wineries and consumers look beyond corks and bottles for more convenient packaging that better preserves wine, there's been a boom in a surprising alternative: Tetra Pak cartons. Better known for housing soy milk and fruit juice, these cartons have taken off.

U.S. sales of wine in cartons leapt from zero in March 2004 to \$4 million in March 2006, reported ACNielsen. Essentially paperboard lined with aluminum foil and polyethylene, the cartons are already popular in Europe and South America.

The jump in U.S. sales came after a major industry player and an innovative newcomer both championed Tetra Pak in 2004. Constellation Brands

first put its Almaden fruit-flavored wines in 500ml Tetra Prisma containers, then its Vendange varietals, while the creators of the Three Thieves jug wines debuted the Bandit line, starting with Pinot Grigio and Cabernet Sauvignon, in 1-liter Tetra Briks.

Now the market is expanding. This spring, Three Thieves released Bandit wines in single-serving, 250ml cartons. The Pinot Grigio and Cabernet Sauvignon are each sold in packs of four for \$9.

A French wine company, too, has gotten in on the action. Boisset introduced the French Rabbit line, in 1-liter Tetra Prismas, across the United States in February. The vintage-dated varietals, priced at \$10, include Chardonnay,



Newly launched French Rabbit employs innovative packaging.

Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, all from the Vin de Pays d'Oc.

The user-friendly French Rabbit cartons are closed with an easy-to-open, resealable plastic cap, which eliminates the problem of cork taint. The containers are also designed to extend the life of the wine, be taken places where glass isn't appropriate and reduce packaging waste.

—Eric Arnold,
Alison Napjus, Dana Nigro

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