



Tree chic: Boisset's company is planting one tree for every four bottles of wine sold in the US in a bid to 'serve Mother Nature'

Putting a face to human capital

Co-operation as well as cash is helping non-profits to succeed, says Paul Sullivan

GROWTH IS THE BOTTOM LINE: FRENCH RABBIT AIMS TO BE FOREST-FRIENDLY

Jean-Charles Boisset's corporate philanthropy is integral to the launch of his newest line of wine. Boisset, whose family has been producing wine in the Burgundy region of France for two generations, began turning certain vineyards over to sustainable and biodynamic farming methods in the 1990s.

This year his import company, Boisset America, launched French Rabbit wines in the US in what the company calls ePods – a Tetra Pak with a special top.

The design has several advantages. It is lighter than glass and uses 90 per cent less packaging. It is easier to carry and holds two more glasses than a traditional bottle. And it keeps the wines – pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and chardonnay – air-tight.

Essentially the marriage of a Gallo box wine and a half-gallon milk carton – consecrated by a hip reverend – the bright orange ePods are Boisset's way of selling \$10 wine in a more ecological way.

According to the company, 25 trucks of glass equals one truck of Tetra Pak, reducing the pollution in transporting bottles to and from the vineyard; the ePods are 75 per cent paper and recyclable with the newspapers. "It represents three key attributes: value, convenience and the most ecological packaging," says Boisset.

He also tries to encourage environmentally friendly behaviour by tying the new line of wine to corporate

philanthropy. For every four bottles of French Rabbit a customer buys, the company will plant one tree. Working with American Forests, a tree conservation non-profit, the company has promised to plant 30,000 trees by the end of the year. That way, Boisset hopes to see "French rabbit groves" growing all over the US.

"We want to orient charity toward the environment," he says. "How can we better impact how we live than to serve Mother Nature?"