



## California Label Takes Humanitarian Approach to Wine

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*By Tim Fish*

Giving to a good cause is something for which the wine industry is known, but a new label named Humanitas hopes to take charity a step further by donating all of its net profits to organizations fighting hunger, homelessness and illiteracy.

Humanitas, which roughly translates to "humanity" in Latin, is a one-man operation. Judd Wallenbrock, 45, came up with the concept and works on it when he's not at his day job as head of sales and marketing at De Loach Vineyards in Sonoma County.

"I came up with the idea a few years ago when I turned 40," said Wallenbrock, "and I was asking myself, 'What happened to all those ideals I had when I was 20?'"

While Humanitas is a bonded winery -- officially Wallenbrock's garage in the city of Napa -- for now he's acting as a négociant, buying wine on the market and blending and storing it at Courtside Cellars in San Luis Obispo. Except for a few barrels, he has virtually no overhead.

"To be quite frank, I can buy better wine in the market right now than I can make," said Wallenbrock, who has spent 23 years in the wine industry. While he worked in winery cellars in college and has done some amateur winemaking, most of his professional experience has been in marketing and management.

Wallenbrock has released three wines so far, totaling about 2,500 cases. The Humanitas Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands 2000 retails for \$22 a bottle, and the Humanitas Cabernet Sauvignon Monterey 2001 and Chardonnay Edna Valley 2001 each sell for \$12. (Wine Spectator has not yet rated them in a blind tasting.)

While the company is set up as a for-profit business, Wallenbrock describes his business model as "cause capitalism." He took inspiration from the Newman's Own line of food items and Stonyfield Farms dairy, which both donate a portion of their profits to charity.

Wallenbrock's goal is to donate 20 percent of his revenue to three organizations: Habitat for Humanity, America's Second Harvest and Reading is Fundamental. He hopes to make his first contribution within a few months.

"First, I have to make a profit," said Wallenbrock, who released his first wine in July 2002. He sells it direct and in several markets around California and Colorado. "It would be nice just to break even."

The San Francisco Food Bank is affiliated with America's Second Harvest, and Paul Ash, the food bank's executive director, is one of the people Wallenbrock turned to for advice. Ash hasn't seen a check yet, and he admits that he has seen his share of businesses that use the charity ploy for free publicity, but he believes Humanitas is more than that.

"A lot of these things are just business relationships," Ash said. "It's pretty clear to me that Judd is someone who has a deeply held belief in turning his dream into something that will really do some good for the charities that concern him." He added, "And the wine's pretty good."

For more information, visit [www.humanitaswines.com](http://www.humanitaswines.com).