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**First Wine Cork Company to Receive ISO 22000:2005 Certification
Exclusive supplier of M.A. Silva Corks, USA unveils state-of-the-art quality management system**

Santa Rosa, California (February 2, 2006) Furthering its commitment to providing the North American wine industry with wine closures satisfying the most stringent standards available, M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda. was awarded ISO 22000:2005 food safety certification following official testing December 12-13, 2005. It is one of the first companies in the world to be certified with this new standard, and the first cork producer anywhere to garner the distinction. M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda. is the exclusive supplier for M.A. Silva Corks, USA.

ISO 22000 is backed by international consensus and standardizes the requirements for *systematically managing safety in food supply chains* while offering a unique solution for good practices on a worldwide basis.

"As a global player, we welcome ISO 22000:2005 because it provides us with a normative reference that can be recognized and accepted worldwide," said Manuel Silva Sr., founder and president M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda. "ISO 22000 certification enables us to offer our customers the guarantee that our natural corks are a strong link in the supply chain, and demonstrates the advantages of using a natural product to seal wine bottles."



In conjunction with their Portuguese supplier, M.A. Silva Corks, USA maintains complete data on all incoming stock. Shipment information coupled with in-house protocols allows them to give customers the satisfaction of knowing they are receiving wine corks that have successfully achieved the highest standards of quality control.

"A well-defined Quality Management System is essential to maintaining a competitive edge in today's wine cork industry," said Neil Foster, president and co-owner of M.A. Silva Corks, USA. "We feel it is important for wineries to source from a company that is always looking to improve processing and continually investing in the latest technology. Our continued growth in the U.S. market is a reflection of the investments and systems implemented in Portugal."

ISO 22000 incorporates the principles of the Codex HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) system for food hygiene, and covers the requirements of key standards developed by various global food retailer syndicates within a single document. It also makes it easier for organizations worldwide to implement the Codex HACCP system for food hygiene in a consistent manner among different countries and a wide range of food products and packaging.



ISO 22000 extends the successful systematic management approach of the ISO 9001:2000 quality management standard that is widely implemented in all production sectors *to include food safety measures* not addressed in ISO 9001:2000. The development of ISO 22000 was based on the assumption that the most effective food safety systems are designed, operated and continually improved *within the framework of a structured management system*, and incorporated into the overall management activities of an organization.

Furthermore, the application of ISO 22000 lowers costs arising from waste and product failures, better utilizes time and resources, and increases product traceability throughout the entire supply chain. We have traceable knowledge of our corks from forest to all customers at the winery level, said Milouda Larsen, sales manager of M.A. Silva Corks, USA.

While ISO 22000 can be implemented on its own, it is designed to be fully compatible with ISO 9001:2000 so that companies already certified to ISO 9001 will find it easy to extend the certification to ISO 22000. M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda. has been an ISO 9001 certified company since November 7, 2002.

The ISO 22000 standard was developed within the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) by experts from the food industry and representatives of specialized international organizations in close cooperation with the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the body jointly established by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) to develop food standards.

About M. A. Silva Corks, USA

Established in 2000, M. A. Silva Corks, USA is a collaborative effort between Manuel Silva Sr. of M.A. Silva Cortiças, Lda., and long-time industry representative Neil Foster. The company imports high-quality natural cork wine stoppers from the southern region of Portugal, and processes them domestically for distribution throughout the United States. Backed by a strong supplier, M. A. Silva Corks, USA is a customer-focused company supplying the finest corks in America.

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