



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Louise Bassett (707.284.2888 x13, lbassett@radoux-usa.com)

Tonnellerie Radoux Launches Radoux OakScan™ Instant Analysis of Tannins in Oak Barrel Staves

Santa Rosa, California (December 18, 2008) -- With the introduction of Radoux OakScan™, Tonnellerie Radoux becomes the first cooperage in the world to develop a system that rapidly analyzes and classifies the oak staves used to make barrels for the beverage industry. The innovation utilizes *near infrared spectrometry (NIRS)* to deliver the instantaneous quantification of the *extractable tannins (ellagitannins)* in individual oak staves before they enter production. Since extractable tannins have a profound effect on the organoleptic properties of the wine or spirits they contact, Radoux OakScan™ enables customers to understand the potential tannic contribution of finished barrels and how it relates to their products.

French oak barrels made with Radoux OakScan™ will roll out of Tonnellerie Radoux, France starting in June 2009.

“Our OakScan™ process takes a giant step in the world of barrel making,” said Vice President, Sales and Marketing Nicolas Mähler-Besse of Tonnellerie Radoux. “It is the greatest evolution in the cooperage industry in the last 20 years.”

Radoux OakScan™ was developed following a three-year study in partnership with the French research institutes INRA, CEMAGREF, CIRAD and the Ondalys company.

Trials carried out in France by qualified winemakers and consultants during blind sensory analyses confirm the significant advantages of Radoux OakScan™.



Scientists have been able to measure extractable oak tannins for decades, but the existing methodology -- a lengthy laboratory analysis of random samples from batches of rough staves -- does not provide a useful means of testing individual staves.

How Radoux OakScan™ Works

Oak staves move along a conveyor and are analyzed by a near infrared spectroscope that measures their extractable tannins. The tannic potential of each stave is recorded and the staves are bar-coded for production. Staves are grouped according to their level of extractable tannins, shaped and refined, and later assembled into barrels with known tannic potentials.

Traditional Oak Selection and Processing

For centuries, coopers maintained that the *forest of origin* and *drying time* were the two most important factors in predicting the quality of oak barrel components.

Barrels made from trees sourced in the French forests of Allier, Nevers or Vosges, for example, commanded higher

prices because they were considered superior. With diminishing inventory in pedigree growths, and the discovery of quality trees in alternative regions such as Eastern Europe and the United States, coopers are now challenging that postulate.

Consequently, some coopers have joined Radoux in shifting their focus away from the *forest* toward *grain width*: in general, tighter grains are more aromatic and release less tannin than wider grains. However, tighter grains sometimes produce higher tannic levels than wider ones, so grain is not the last word either.

Similarly, the aging process is also subject to variation due to seasonal weather patterns. While experts acknowledge that longer drying times (24-36 months outdoors) produce superior staves, aging for extended periods alone cannot be considered a definitive quality factor because meteorology has never been entered into the equation. As a result, Tonnellerie Radoux developed OakScan™ to assess staves after aging and measure their tannic potential.

“OakScan™ gives us an edge over the competition,” said Mähler-Besse. “While the choice of grain has been an important development compared to the choice of forest, there is still variance in a selection solely based on grain. OakScan™ corroborates the effectiveness of our grain-selection and drying regimes. We measure tannic potential just before the barrels are assembled, and consequently, eliminate the risk of variation due to grain size and drying time.”

Representatives of Tonnellerie Radoux will be at the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium (booth 935) in Sacramento, California on January 28-29, 2009 to discuss Radoux OakScan™ with interested parties. See www.unifiedsymposium.org for more information.

About Tonnellerie Radoux

With its American subsidiary Tonnellerie Radoux USA (www.radouxcooperage.com), Tonnellerie Radoux (www.radoux.fr) is one of the World's leading cooperages, manufacturing the finest French oak barrels, tanks, puncheons, casks, chips and insertable staves. The company also makes high-quality oak barrels from Eastern European forests as well as the United States from the three regions renowned for their white oak: Minnesota, Missouri and Appalachia. Established in 1947, Tonnellerie Radoux is certified by ISO 9001:2000 standards, and is recognized by the quality-assurance agency Bureau Veritas.

###