

## **NORTH CASTLE PARTNERS COMPLETES SALE OF AVALON NATURAL PRODUCTS TO THE HAIN CELESTIAL GROUP**

Greenwich, CT, January 11, 2007 – North Castle Partners, L.L.C., a leading private equity firm focused exclusively on consumer businesses that benefit from “Healthy Living and Aging” trends, announced today that it has completed its previously announced sale of portfolio company Avalon Natural Products, Inc., to The Hain Celestial Group, Inc. (NASDAQ: HAIN) for \$120 million. Avalon is a leader in the natural products category in the areas of skin care, hair care, bath and body and sun care. The transaction included the Avalon Organics® and Alba Botanica® natural and organic personal care brands.

The Avalon transaction was one of four announced investment exits for North Castle Partners over the past 12 months. Earlier this month, North Castle closed its sale of Naked Juice Company, a leader in the fast growing super premium juice category, to PepsiCo (NYSE: PEP) for an undisclosed amount. During the period, North Castle also completed the sale of CRC Health Group, the nation’s largest provider of drug and alcohol treatment services, to Bain Capital in a transaction valued at \$720 million. In addition, North Castle closed on the sale of Equinox Fitness, a leading operator of upscale fitness clubs, to The Related Companies for \$505 million.

Richard D. Gersten, a North Castle Managing Director and developer of the firm's Aesthetics and Personal Care business, said, “We believe the success of the Avalon brands illustrates the benefits our focused approach provides to management teams as we partner to build great companies. We are proud to have played an integral role in the development of Avalon and believe the company is poised for further growth.”

“Within the Aesthetics and Personal Care arena, North Castle will continue to expand its expertise through investments in Caleel + Hayden, Inc., a recently acquired developer, marketer and distributor of mineral-based cosmetics and high-end skincare products to the professional markets; Red Door Spa Holdings, the world's leading owner and operator of full- service salons and day spas; and HDS Cosmetics Lab, Inc., a leading clinical skin care company operating under the brand name Doctor's Dermatologic Formula,” Mr. Gersten concluded.

### **About The Hain Celestial Group**

The Hain Celestial Group (NASDAQ: HAIN), headquartered in Melville, NY, is a leading natural and organic food and personal care products company in North America and Europe. Hain Celestial participates in almost all natural food categories with well-known brands that include Celestial Seasonings®, Terra Chips®, Garden of Eatin’®, Health Valley®, WestSoy®, Earth’s Best®, Arrowhead Mills®, DeBoles®, Hain Pure Foods®, FreeBird™, Hollywood®, Spectrum Naturals®, Spectrum Essentials®, Walnut Acres Organic™, Imagine Foods™, Rice Dream®, Soy Dream®, Rosetto®, Ethnic Gourmet™, Yves Veggie Cuisine®, Linda McCartney®, Lima®, Grains Noirs®, Natumi®, JASON®, Zia® Natural Skincare and Queen Helene®. For more information, visit [www.hain-celestial.com](http://www.hain-celestial.com).

### **About North Castle Partners**

North Castle Partners is a leading private equity firm focused exclusively on investments in consumer-driven product and service businesses that benefit from "Healthy Living and Aging" trends. North Castle is a hands-on, value-added investor in high-growth, middle

market companies in the (i) aesthetics & personal care, (ii) consumer health, (iii) fitness & recreation, (iv) home & leisure and (v) nutrition industries.

North Castle's current portfolio includes such well-known brands as GloMinerals, Red Door Spas, Doctor's Dermatologic Formula, Enzymatic Therapy and Octane Fitness. Prior portfolio company holdings include Equinox Fitness, EAS, CRC Health Group, Grand Expeditions and Naked Juice Company.

North Castle is led by a seasoned group of five partners and supported by eight additional private equity professionals. The North Castle team is further enhanced by eleven proactive operating advisors who bring a wide range of operational and investment capabilities as well as an extensive knowledge base and network. The strength of the North Castle team, combined with our focus and network, is creating significant competitive advantages in building world-class companies. North Castle is headquartered in Greenwich, CT. For more information, visit [www.northcastlepartners.com](http://www.northcastlepartners.com).