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CODES OF THE WEST

West Coast microbreweries step up their product coding game to ride the rising market tide for canned craft beer

See stories on pages 15 & 19



IN THIS ISSUE: PACKAGING FOR FRESHNESS • AUTOMATE *NOW*

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NO LONGER JUST A PIPE DREAM

It feels almost surreal, but after decades of hostile opposition from political and law enforcement establishments still prevalent in most industrialized nations, marijuana legalization will be a real thing in Canada by summer's end. And while it will be far from warmly embraced by all sectors of the society, for the Canadian packaging industry and profession it will be the closest thing to Christmas arriving early.

No longer to be confined to hand-packed nickel and dime bags hustled at seedy street corners, the promise of unveiling a whole new consumer market sector guesstimated to be worth at least \$10 billion a year is naturally fueling high expectations among many entrepreneurial startups and established firms aiming to profit from the coming cannabis boom and spinoff stimuli unleashed by industrial-scale production, retailing and packaging of recreational weed.

Although some provincial governments have already proclaimed they will subject cannabis packaging to the same heavy-handed 'plain packaging' approach used to regulate Big Tobacco, common sense dictates you must have high-quality packaging products to support any industry of that size.

And with Canada being only the second country in the world to legalize recreational pot use nationwide, Canadian-based producers and distributors of packaging machinery and materials are in the best position to benefit from the new game-changing approach to pot consumption and distribution in the Great White North.

While the number of U.S. states that have legalized medical and/or recreational marijuana continues to grow, the painstaking pace with which this is done across the country in an uneven patchwork manner has left many major packaging suppliers there reluctant to enter the market in a meaningful way.

By enacting cannabis legislation across the country, Ottawa automatically removes many of the legal and regulatory obstacles to the production, distribution and supply chain efficiencies still plaguing the budding U.S. weed industry—providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Canadian packaging companies to get an all-important head start before their U.S. counterparts get over their initial hesitation.

To some extent, it's happening already. According to a new report from the U.S. packaging industry group **PMMI-The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies**, the breathtaking growth in legal cannabis sales in the U.S. promises lucrative rewards for those willing to take the risk.

"In the past five years, the [U.S.], cannabis industry has grown by over 200 per cent, as more states began legalizing some marijuana use for medical purposes," says the PMMI study, aptly titled *Here to Stay or Up in Smoke?*

"Last year, the industry topped US\$7.3 billion to record 35-percent growth over 2015, which is higher than the dot-com and broadband booms and which many believe is conservative," PMMI points out.

"When sales were under US\$5 billion, most packaging companies were not willing to invest in creating new products specifically for the cannabis industry," PMMI states, "preferring instead to borrow and adapt packaging from other industries such as pharmaceutical and cosmetics.

"Now, however, with cannabis sales approaching US\$15 billion, firms are finding it worthwhile to develop products specifically designed for the unique needs of cannabis companies."

As always, money changes everything, and with legalization just around the corner, any latecomers to what may be our packaging industry's biggest party this century will only have themselves to blame.

George Guidoni, Editor

★ COVER STORY

15&19 CODES OF THE WEST *By Andrew Joseph*

As Canadian microbreweries increasingly turn to canned beer as their primary product, the importance of choosing the proper product marking and labeling systems to market their brands cannot be overstated.

Cover photography by David Buzzard

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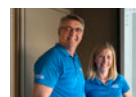
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Leading Mexican cement producer upgrades its filling and palletizing capabilities to solidify hard-earned market share gains.



COTTAGE COUNTRY CRAFT BREWER TAKES A SLIGHT DETOUR WITH A NEW DOCKSIDE DRINK SENSATION

Living up to the spirit of its popular flagship *Detour* beer brand, Ontario cottage country's stalwart craft beermaker **Muskoka Brewery** has a whole new way to beat summer heat with the launch of its **Docker** brand of pre-mixed gin-and-tonic cocktails.

Featuring a refreshing hint of lime, a hint of cucumber and natural tonic made with cinchona bark, the golden-hued *Muskoka Spirits Docker Gin & Tonics* are packed in direct-printed 473-ml aluminum cans made by **Crown Beverage Packaging**.

Depicting many of the familiar cottage-inspired graphic elements found on the company's diverse beer products—including the iconic wooden Muskoka dock chair—the lakefront-inspired design created by Vancouver-based agency **123 West** oozes with the promise of a light, refreshing and effervescent adult thirst-quencher with a refreshing twist of lime and slight crisp bitterness.

"Ontarians typically have to wait so long to get on the dock and patio, so we wanted to make a drink that's refreshingly simple and delicious," says Muskoka Brewery president and co-founder Todd Lewin.

"With Docker, we set out to create the perfect summer drink where you don't have to compromise on taste or worry that it's loaded with calories and sugar or artificial sweeteners."

Made with the company's own **Legendary Oddity** small-batched distilled gin brand launched last summer, the ready-to-drink *Docker* cooler contains 160 calories, 9.9 grams of carbs and 9.9 grams of sugar, compared to the average pre-mixed cocktails packed with 260 calories, 24.6g of carbs and 22g of sugar.



"Mixing our *Legendary Oddity* Gin, a traditional dry gin with wild juniper berries and orris root with all-natural ingredients, gives the drink an inviting golden hue, enhanced with the pleasant, fragrant aroma of a fresh cucumber with a hint of citrus," Lewin explains.

"And unlike the many other coolers out there, it's actually made locally—right here in Muskoka," he states.

Founded in 1996 in the heart of southern Ontario's cottage country in Bracebridge, Ont., Muskoka Brewery employs over 130 people to produce a growing award-winning portfolio of premium handcrafted beer brands.



MINIATURE PLASTIC WINE BOTTLES SHINE WITH BREEZY SUMMER VIBE AND MOBILE CONVENIENCE

Putting good things into small packages is never out of season, and Ontario wine lovers will find plenty to cheer this summer with the release of single-serve plastic 200-ml bottles of three popular **EastDell** brand varietals produced by **Diamond Estates Wines & Spirits Ltd.** in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Containing the equivalent of a standard six-ounce serving of wine, the clear PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles of *EastDell Pinot Grigio*, *Summer Rosé*, and the signature *Black Cab* red blend feature innovative **Stelvin** aluminum enclosures—developed by **Amcort**—with a special oxygen seal to protect and preserve the wine with 12-month shelf-life.

Developed as a safe alternative to wine glasses during popular summer outdoors activities like golfing, camping, fishing, etc., the 100-percent recyclable plastic bottles—produced with an Amcor mold—weigh a fraction of their glass counterparts, enabling effortless consumer convenience and portability for wine lovers on the move.



"Us Canucks like to spend as much time as possible outdoors soaking up the summer months, and these plastic wine bottles are a natural fit for having fun in the sun," says Diamond's director of marketing Fiona Buchan.

"Not only are these little bottles fun and convenient, they boast significant environmental advantages too," Buchan points out.

"At one-sixth the weight of glass, they reduce freight costs, reduce the need for secondary packaging and almost eliminate breakage on bottling lines and store-shelves.

"Moreover, they have a vastly lower carbon footprint versus glass by requiring much less energy to make and transport," she states.

The new shatterproof bottles are decorated with elegant, nature-inspired graphics developed by Edmonton-based design agency **Vision Creative**, with Vaughan, Ont.-based **ASL Print FX** supplying the adhesive paper labels printed with metallic inks.



CEREAL BOXES GET FULL ROYAL TREATMENT IN ONLINE TRIBUTE TO WEDDING OF THE YEAR

The much-anticipated Royal Wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle may have come and gone, but for fans of some of **Kellogg Canada Inc.**'s most famous cereal brands, indulging in a posh regal breakfast is now the proverbial piece of cake—thanks to the venerable cereal maker's creative collaboration with former Royal Chef Darren McGrady and up-and-coming fashion designer Kelly Dempsey.

Posted on Kellogg Canada's **Facebook** page and website (www.kellogg.ca), the three one-of-a-kind celebratory breakfast recipes created to mark last month's wedding of the year each feature a box of **Kellogg's** brand breakfast cereal as part of a sumptuous spread of authentic British upper-class treats and delicacies. (See picture above)

The three recipes and serving suggestions include:

- *Stately Scones*, featuring Kellogg's **Frosted Flakes** scones with macerated strawberries with basil and whipped **Froot Loops** cream;
- *Imperial Pudding*, featuring Kellogg's **Mini-Wheats** bread-and-butter chocolate-and-banana pudding;
- *Majestic Pops*, featuring Kellogg's **Froot Loops** as an ingredient in the caramel cake push-pops.

As an extra treat, there's even a recipe for using **Kellogg's Two Scoops Raisin Bran** cereal to make the *Lemon Elderflower* cereal-infused tea.

"There are plenty of ways to add regal flair to a meal, and I'm thrilled to demonstrate that with something as fun and versatile as cereal," says McGrady, who spent 15 years as the chef to Queen Elizabeth II, Diana Princess of Wales, and Princes William and Harry.

"I hope that when home cooks are recreating this menu, they will be wowed by all of the ways you can reimagine cereal beyond the bowl," says McGrady, a bestselling cookbook author that has also cooked for five different U.S. presidents.

For her part, rising fashion world star Dempsey chipped in with a stylish repurposing of the Kellogg's cereal boxes into six different "regal fascinator" headpieces, with the how-to instruction on Kellogg Canada's **Facebook** page.

"It all works in harmony to add a posh twist to every Royal Wedding Viewing Party or any other majestic occasion," according to Kellogg's, whose status as the "royal warrant holder" reflects the fact that the company has served as the official cereal provider of the royal household for three different monarchs.

As Kellogg proclaims, "Even after the big day and the ceremony concludes, these recipes are the perfect memento to reuse at your own regal occasions, like helping Mom feel like a queen on Mother's Day, or making any bride feel like a princess at her bridal shower."

NEW STAND-UP POUCHES DELIVER PASTA PERFECTION IN ONE MINUTE FLAT



For sheer versatility, pasta has few rivals as a wholesome and nourishing key ingredient in a diverse array of popular Mediterranean and other global recipes, which sometimes obscures the fact that a serving of well-made plain pasta is also a perfectly enjoyable

dish entirely on its own.

Seasoned with just a sprinkling of virgin olive oil and sea salt, the new **Barilla Ready Pasta** single-serve stand-up pouches from **Barilla Canada Inc.** can remind consumers of that fact in the mere 60 seconds it takes to microwave a tasty serving of *al dente* (firm) penne, elbows or rotini noodles cooked inside the pouches themselves.

Easy to tear across the top and featuring two *Cool Touch Zone* panels along the side for safe handling of the heated contents, the 241-gram stand-up pouches are filled and sealed in the U.S. at a Chicago-area factory opened up in 2015 by the world's leading pasta producer **Barilla Group**.

"With recent data continuing to reveal pasta's long list of health benefits, Ready Pasta makes eating this delicious carb anytime and almost anywhere possible—bringing a bit of Italian happiness to your desk-side dining," says Barilla.

Founded in 1887 in Parma, Italy, Barilla today ranks as one of Italy's largest food companies with a strong global market share in the global pasta and pasta sauce businesses.

"Whether you want to throw a few additional veggies and plant-based proteins into a bowl with your Ready Pasta, or just eat it out of the bag on-the-go, you can make many creative dishes when you have such a delicious and simple base to work with."

Boasting the globally recognized **NON-GMO Project** certification label to acknowledge the product's all-natural credentials, the matte-finished blue BPA (bisphenol)-free bags can also be recycled in Canada through a

cross-country recycling program run by Barilla Canada and the Toronto-based recycling specialists **TerraCycle Canada Inc.**

Under the free **Barilla Ready Pasta Recycling Program** (terracycle.com/barilla) consumers can go online and request a pre-paid **UPS** shipping label,

which they can affix to any box at their disposal to ship it directly to TerraCycle to be reprocessed into useful new materials or finished products.

According to Barilla, the recycling programs fit in perfectly with the parent company's commitment to packaging sustainability based on four key principles of:

- Reducing the quantity of material in packaging;
- Utilizing recyclable packaging;
- Utilizing materials from responsibly managed forests;

- Validating the choice of technical packaging solutions using credible LCA (life-cycle analysis) impact data.

According to the company's website, "Barilla has always been very attentive to the quality of its packaging: both in designing new solutions and constantly improving the packaging it has already developed.

"The role of packaging is pivotal for food companies to protect the product, to keep it from spoiling, and to enable it to be consumed away from where it was produced."



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BABY GIFT BASKET PACKS SUPREME CONVENIENCE FOR TODAY'S BUSY MOMS AND DADS

Caring for newborn babies is an around-the-clock job that never really ends for young parents of any generation. But thanks to some creative mix-and-match packaging done recently for the **Baby Dove** brand of skin-care products of **Unilever**, today's moms and dads can get through their baby grooming chores with far less stress than ever before.

Packed with a wide assortment of premium-quality washing and cleaning products, the recently-launched **Baby Dove Complete Care Baby Essentials Gift Pack** features a thoughtfully selected collection of mild, gentle and hypoallergenic products developed specifically for cleansing delicate baby skin from head-to-toe to provide the utmost care for babies from their very first day in the world and onwards.

Using consumer research and feedback from real-world moms and dads, global branding and promotions group **Supremia International** helped Unilever and its co-packer **Menasha Corporation** create an immensely practical all-in-one baby-shower gift basket oozing with the *Dove* brand's message of love and tenderness.

"The advice sought for the Baby Dove gift basket was ideally aligned with our creative specialty premium products and packaging expertise," explains Jessica Warwick, sales director at **Supremia Americas** in Plainsboro, N.J.

"We were thrilled to help create these highly functional, aesthetically pleasing, and brand-supportive baskets."

Mandated with providing the overall project guidance—including conceptualizing, developing and executing of the design and manufacturing of the basket—Supremia was challenged to create a basket that looked in line with the *Dove* brand's clean, mostly white appearance, along with enhanced functionality, portability and reusability.

"The basket also had to be durable and sturdy enough to serve the dual function of vehicle for store shelf-display and collapsible, reusable storage container for parents at home," Warwick recalls.

Capably rising to the occasion, Supremia proceeded to design two different-sized reusable baskets of slightly varying dimensions to accommodate different



distribution channels.

Because some baskets would need to be shrinkwrapped for shipping through e-commerce sites, "They needed to be snug and sturdy, and prevent product protrusion," Warwick relates.

"In addition, the basket needed to incorporate the Baby Dove logo and closely match the brand colors."

As Warwick reveals, several members of Supremia's team were new parents who personally tested the products for both size and comfort on their own newborns, which sparked development of an exceptionally gentle 100-percent polyester terry cloth added to the gift baskets.

States Warwick: "This personal involvement by real moms and dads tied in nicely to the Baby Dove campaign launched by the company last spring, that says, 'There are no perfect moms, only real ones.'"



CARTON

TRAY

CASE

PALLET

■ Montreal-headquartered flexible packaging products group **TC Transcontinental Packaging** has not only swept the *Wide Web/Process/Film* category at the recent **2018 Excellence in Flexography Awards** competition of the **Flexographic Technical Association (FTA)** by winning a Bronze, Silver and Gold award, but was also proud recipient of the coveted *Best of Show* award for the second straight year with the **Post Fruity Pebbles** and **Post Cocoa Pebbles** brands of flexible packages produced by the company's **Transcontinental Robbie** division in Lenexa, Ks. "It is very rewarding to win FTA's back-to-back Best of Show award and be recognized by the industry," says Transcontinental Robbie's general manager Pepper Stokes. "The challenge in printing this particular project was running the two different SKUs on the web that are on totally opposite ends of the tonal range: the Fruity Pebbles largely high-key, bright colors; and the Cocoa Pebbles largely low-key dark colors," Stokes explains. "Both represented very busy designs with a lot of individual elements requiring great detail to be produced, but with the leading-edge technology in prepress, plate materials, and world-class pressroom execution, we were really able to show what flexography printing can accomplish."



■ London, Ont.-based packaging machinery group **Crawford Packaging Inc.** has completed the acquisition of **Celplast Packaging Systems Ltd.**, a leading provider of shrink films, food trays and lids, lidding films and heat-sealable films, and **BVM USA**, a major supplier of shrinkwrap, overwrap, bundling, and feeding equipment for packaging and other industrial applications. "This

purchase just reaffirms our goal to offer the best products and services we can to our clients," notes Crawford Packaging president John Ashby. "Celplast and Crawford have very similar approaches to market and cultures, and we are very fortunate to be able to bring the talent and experience of the Celplast employee group into the Crawford team. According to Ashby, the new assets will significantly strengthen Crawford's existing *Shrink It Right* shrinkwrap packaging program aimed at helping customers achieve material cost-savings of up to 30 per cent through better packaging efficiencies.

■ **Graybar Canada**, Halifax-headquartered wholesale distributor of industrial and electric components for industrial automation, utility, security and oil-and-gas applications, has been selected as a technical distributor for Atlantic Canada for the full range of pneumatic and electrical components and systems supplied by **Festo Inc.** of Mississauga, Ont. "We look forward to leveraging Graybar's considerable technical know-how on behalf of our customers, and theirs, to provide the best possible service and support in the region," says **Festo Canada** president and chief executive officer Roger Hallett. "High-quality support is a key component of Festo Canada's market strategy, and with Graybar we have great confidence that this partnership will deliver that level of service and expertise throughout Atlantic Canada."

■ Global packaging product group **Amcors** has won two **2018 Alufoil Trophies** at the recent **European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA)** awards competition in recognition of two new sustainable packaging innovations addressing the need for greater efficiency and improved consumer convenience. Designed to enable sensitive pharmaceuticals to be packaged in stick-pack format made with 40 per cent less material than the standard four-side-seal sachets commonly used for pharmaceutical powders, liquids and gels, the company's **PolyInert** laminates—featuring stable and inert high-barrier that does not interact with

HARPAK ULMA

HARPAK-ULMA ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF Kevin Roach as President



May 8, 2018 – Harpak-ULMA, distributor of packaging equipment and systems in Taunton, MA, has announced that Kevin Roach has been named president of the company effective immediately.

Kevin is a senior-level technology executive with proven global leadership and distinguished performance in operations and sales, as well as financial and general management. He is also experienced in strategic planning, R&D, manufacturing and marketing across multiple industries. A growth focused

leader, Kevin exhibits extraordinary creativity and success applying technology to business problems with endless focus, passion and energy.

For more than 25 years Kevin has successfully held executive level positions in which he made a significant impact on sales and marketing and created a culture of continuous improvement. Kevin spent eight years with TW Kutter, a Harfing Company, as Director of packaging and automation systems.

As is the philosophy of Harpak-ULMA, Kevin strongly believes in a customer-centric approach and in providing a world class product. He will work on continued company growth and improvement reporting to Charles Harfing, who will serve as Chairman of the Board.

Kevin holds an MBA from the Lally School of Management at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He has Green Belt and Black Belt certifications from GE.

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the pharmaceutical ingredients—won in the competition's *Resource Efficiency* category. For its part, Amcor's **AluFix Retort Xtra** aluminum membrane—printable, puncture-resistant and sealable onto both plain and PP-lacquered tin-plates and lacquered aluminum rings—won the *Technical Innovation* award for providing an effective end-solution for canned foods with about 50 per cent less weight. "We are constantly innovating and improving our products and services, and these latest Alufoil awards are further evidence of what we're achieving," says Andrea Della Torre, Amcor's senior R&D director. "We are giving customers best-in-class technical solutions that also helps them differentiate their products in the market."

■ Swiss-based strapping equipment manufacturer **Fromm Holding AG** has completed the acquisition of **PAC Strapping Products Inc.** of Exton, Pa., and **U.S. Strapping Company Inc.** of Lancaster, S.C., as part of the company's efforts to

increase its North American manufacturing footprint, commenced with the recent opening of the company's **Fromm Packaging Systems Canada** subsidiary in Ajax, Ont. Both newly-acquired companies are full-service manufacturers and distributors of polyester and polypropylene plastic strapping, corded polyester strapping, steel strapping, and strapping machines and tools widely used in protective and transit packaging applications, and Fromm says both will continue to operate as independent entities and report to Fromm Canada's president Kevin McCarty, who has also been named president for both PAC Strapping and U.S. Strapping.



■ Leading global plastic films manufacturer **Sigma Plastics Group** has completed a near US\$3-million expansion of its in-house film recycling capabilities and capacity addition of four new **NGR** high output recycling lines at the company's flexible packaging plants in Pompano Beach, Fla., Spartanburg, SC, Jacksonville, Fla., and Nashville, Tenn. Delivered

last month, the four model **S:GRAN 125** machines (see picture) will reprocess over four million pounds per month of film scrap generated from the in-house film production, repurposing the reprocessed material directly into new film production. With this investment, Sigma Plastics now has 40 **NGR** recycling machines—manufactured by **Next Generation Recyclingmaschinen GmbH** in Austria—operating at its plants in the U.S. and Canada.

■ Wayne, Pa.-based **Tekni-Plex, Inc.** has competed the acquisition of **Commodore Plastics** and **Commodore Technology**, both of Bloomfield, N.Y., under a newly-formed company subsidiary named **Dolco LLC**, which ranks as the largest producer of foam egg carton trays in the U.S. For its part, Commodore Plastics produces a wide range of traditional and custom PS (polystyrene) foam trays, made with the PS foam extrusion systems, dies, thermoformers, trim systems and molds to support its sister company's production requirements. "Tekni-Plex already has significant tray manufacturing capability via its Dolco business unit, and this acquisition will allow us to benefit from Commodore's extruder and thermoforming equipment technology, while increasing our manufacturing footprint," says Tekni-Plex president and chief executive officer Paul Young. "This puts us in a position to provide even more solutions to our customers," says Young, noting the Commodore deal marks Tekni-Plex's eighth

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acquisition in the past four years.

■Covington, Ky.-headquartered packaging equipment group **ProMach, Inc.** has announced the opening of its new **ProMach Atlanta** facility in Statham, Ga., to offer upgraded and expanded multi-brand manufacturing, customer support, aftermarket parts distribution, and Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT) services. According to ProMach, the expanded 157,000-square-foot facility, employing about 100 people, will also serve as the customer service and aftermarket parts distribution centers for **Zalkin** and **Benchmark** customers in the Americas—with both product brands having relocated to ProMach Atlanta from separate facilities in nearby Athens, Ga.—as well as the **Federal** aftermarket service team for the **ProMach Filling Systems** and **ProMach Performance Services** business units. “ProMach Atlanta takes the Zalkin and Benchmark brands into a new era of enhanced productivity and growth,” says Randy Uebler, vice-president and general manager for the Zalkin range of automatic bottle-capping machinery and equipment. “This expansive, modern work environment fosters internal collaboration and will help attract more great employees, while our customers are also very enthusiastic about the capabilities of our on-site Factory Acceptance Testing center.”

■Leading British packaging products and materials group **DS Smith Plc** has reached a definitive agreement to acquire the assets of prominent family-owned U.S. corrugated packaging products manufacturer **Corrugated Container Corporation (CCC)**. Operating four production facilities in Tennessee and North Carolina, along with another two sites in the state of Virginia, CCC employs about 190 people to produce high-end corrugated packaging products, with strong focus on high-quality, sustainable retail-ready and display packaging solutions. Following last year’s acquisition and integration of the U.S.-based **Interstate Resources Inc.**, the CCC acquisition is expected to significantly expand DS Smith’s boxmaking capacity and manufacturing footprint in North America. “This is an exciting and fast-paced environment where we are experiencing strong momentum following the successful integration of Interstate,” says DS Smith chief executive officer Miles Roberts. “The customer response has been excellent and increased demand from local and global customers for sustainable, innovative packaging which gives us the opportunity to keep building capacity. We believe CCC’s strong reputation, and quality machinery assets which will help us accelerate growth in the region—offering world-class products to many more customers.”

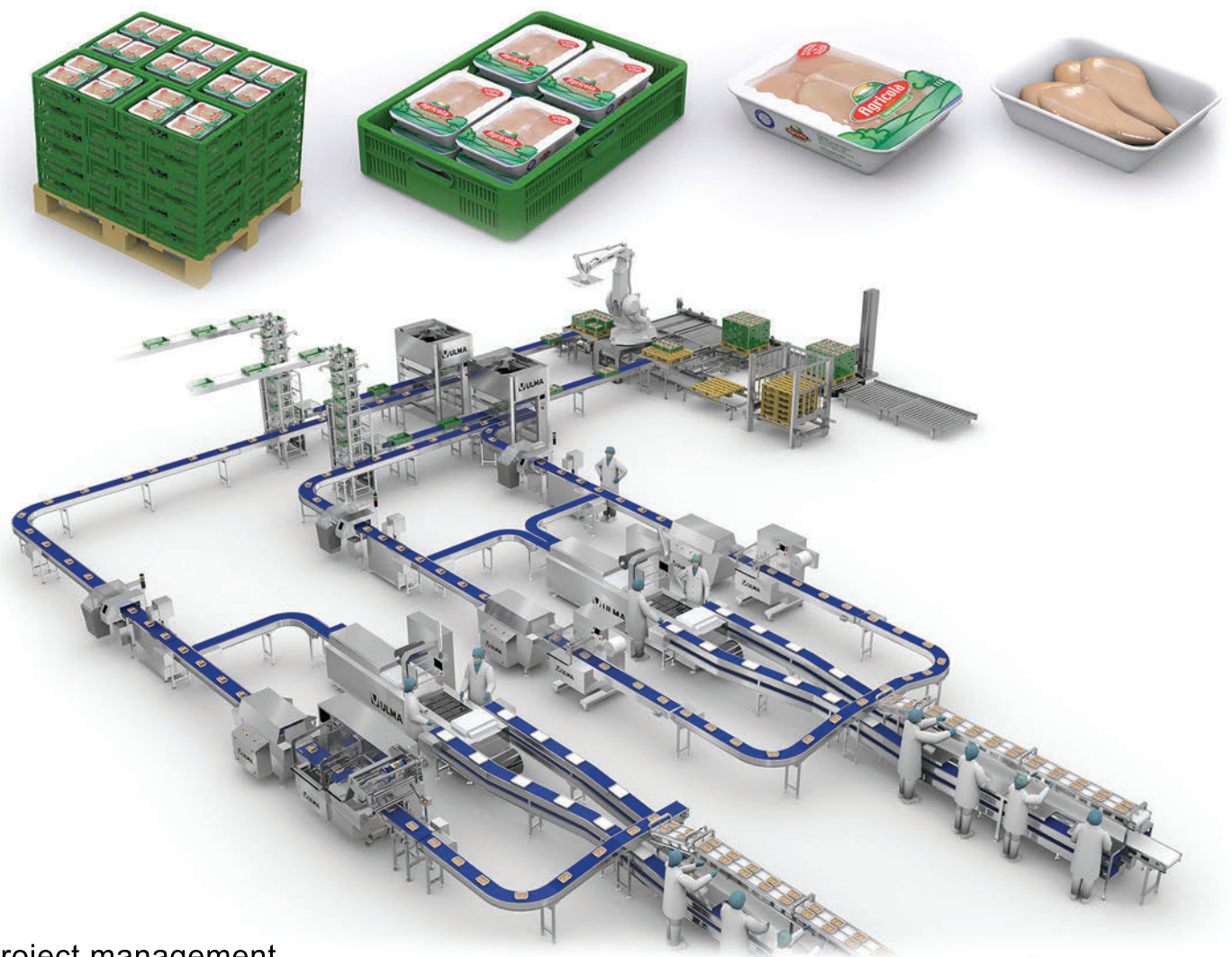
■Leading German beverage processing and packaging line equipment manufacturer **Krones AG** has completed the purchase of remaining 49 per cent shares it did not already own in **Till GmbH**, a leading provider of digital bottle decorating technologies based in Kelkheim near Frankfurt, Germany. A majority owner of Till since 2014, Krones says it will integrate its own digital decorating portfolio with those of Till under the corporate name **Dekron GmbH**, which was chosen to reflect Krones’ growing use and further development of digital decoration technology—including the jointly-developed **DecoType**

machine portfolio launched at last year’s **drinktec 2017** global beverage industry fair in Munich. According to Krones, Dekron will continue to operate its headquarters at the Kelkheim plant, although the company does plan to inaugurate a second Dekron production facility close to Krones’ global headquarters in Neutraubling. “We have in recent years invested massively in developing a product portfolio for digital decoration,” says Krones’ head of bottling technology Christian Compera. “Now we are optimally equipped to join with our clients in successfully progressing the marketing of digitally decorated containers.”



Dekron’s top management team is composed of Sven Kerpe (right) and Friederike Kalusche.

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MAKING THE ROUNDS



The latest generation of Festo's popular **CRDSNU** round stainless-steel pneumatic cylinders boasts new variants and options for extended and contaminant-free operation in harsh environments requiring frequent and rigorous cleaning, including an extremely long-life dry-running seal and self-adjusting end-position cushioning. Intended for heavy-duty applications in food processing and packaging applications, along with chemicals processing and medical technology, the **CRDSNU** cylinders are manufactured for strict conformance with the 'Clean Design' criteria with features such as threadless front mounting—to reduce the risk of contamination—and Festo's proprietary self-adjusting cushioning to eliminate the need for the adjusting screw. According to Festo, the line now includes versions and mounting options suitable for almost every application, including low-temperature and heat-resistant versions and various piston rod set-ups: through piston rod, extended piston rod thread, or piston rods with female or special thread.

Festo, Inc.

GOING SOLO

Featuring a new system host board



(SHB) for improved image acquisition capabilities, the updated **Supersight Solo** high-performance computing platform from **Matrox Imaging** allows users of industrial PCs to use multiple Matrox frame grabbers within a single validated platform for simplified integration in various machine vision, image analysis, and medical imaging applications, according to the company. Boasting a new chassis to optimize computing density—with space for up to 13 full-length, full-height PCIe 2.0 boards to suit a wide range of image-acquisition requirements—Matrox **Supersight Solo** is fully supported by **Matrox Imaging Library (MIL)**, a vast collection of software tools for developing industrial imaging applications to help developers deliver a complete OEM or integration solution in a timely manner.

Matrox Imaging

SWITHING GEARS



Designed as a modular motion system to make the designing and

using of individual automation solutions easier and more cost-effective, the new robolink **Apiro** from **igus** incorporates a decoupled gearbox with standard, linear and inverted motion capabilities and new worm gears—available in four sizes—that can be combined to control up to six axes, such as in an articulated robot. According to the company, the gear joints are combined by a multifunctional profile, made of aluminum, that makes it possible to insert drive shafts through a hollow space in the middle of the unit, while the gearbox allows the aluminum piece to rotate—making it applicable for use in various robotics and rotating applications. Utilizing corrosion-free, chemical-resistant, high-performance tribo-polymers in construction of the worm gears to ensure high degree of stability, low weight, long service life and maintenance-free operation, the robolink **Apiro** offers virtually limitless design possibilities for designers of transport and handling systems, as well as humanoid and animatronic robots that can perform movements similar to those of a spider, according to igus.

igus, inc.

MEAT AND GREET



Developed for high-throughput packaging of beef, chicken, pork and seafood inside trays, cups and

round-shaped containers and vacuum skin-packs, the new model **TS-72** sealing/lidding machine from the **Ossid** division of **ProMach, Inc.** can operate at up to 15 cycles per minute, with the flexibility to run different-depth trays at the same time. Boasting a stainless-steel frame and exceptionally quick product changeover capabilities, the dual-lane **TS-72** system can work with pre-printed films and offers a broad range of options, including inside-cut and gas-flushing capabilities for fast-paced production of sturdy MAP (modified atmosphere packaging) meat packs.

Ossid (Div. of ProMach, Inc.)

TOUCH AND FEEL



Designed as a flexible and convenient solution for remote control of laser-based coders, the new **Videojet Touch Control Software+** from **Videojet Technologies Inc.** can control most Videojet lasers remotely through either the new Videojet **TU430** laser touch controller or from virtually any browser-based device, according to the company. Designed with a focus on user-friendliness, the highly responsive software offers multiple laser support via a browser-based device with no need to download extra software, according to the company, while its browser functionality can connect to several devices at any time for increased visibility of laser marking status. Boasting a color touchscreen interface, the new **TU430** offers a simple wizard tool for fast integration, along with an easy-to-use, free-form template editor to help create and manage content, and an event logging feature to track system changes, further enhanced with automated messages and simple code entry to reduce the risk of product rework and recalls.

Videojet Technologies Inc.

Videojet Technologies Inc.

PRIVATE PREVIEW

Modular conveying systems manufacturer **Dorner Mfg. Corp.** has developed a new online tool to enable customers to receive real-time updates as they design and modify conveyor systems for their specific application needs and requirements. Called **3D Preview**, it provides a fully-interactive live simulation with a 3D CAD (computer-aided design) model when used in Dorner's **DTools** online conveyor configurator. First to be deployed for Dorner's popular **2200 Series Precision Move Pallet System**—capable of carrying pallet loads up to 70 pounds around 90° or 180° corners—the **3D Preview** will be available for Dorner's other conveyor product lines in the coming months, according to the company.

Dorner Mfg. Corp.


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MAKE THE SWITCH



Designed as a reliable solution for switching off functional processes via manual action to provide maximum workplace safety with an instant E-STOP action at any point along the rope, the new **PSENrope** safe rope pull switch from **Pilz GmbH & Co. KG** offers a choice of rugged metal or plastic housing to make it suitable for both indoor and outdoor use, while providing a high level of safety by physically separating the wiring space from mechanical machinery. According to the company, the operating range of the rope pull switch is limited only by the length of the rope—enabling even large plants to be safeguarded using the simple-to-install **PSENrope** pull switch.

Pilz Canada

FULL VIABILITY



Designed for high-speed, high-precision permanent marking of all common sizes of medical vials outfitted with aluminum crimps with product codes and time stamps at speeds of over 150 vials per minute, the new **VCV Fiber Laser Vial Coder** from the **Weiler Labeling Systems (WLS)** division of **ProMach, Inc.** was developed to help product manufacturers and contract packers positively identify unlabeled products in storage and throughout the supply chain for improved traceability, while maximizing production efficiencies. According to the company, the rotary system attains optimal print location accuracy when marking the crimp area by the **Coder** by achieving extreme positional accuracy with innovative vacuum pockets that securely hold vials in the star-wheel, while minimizing vibration. A built-in camera identifies the exact location of each vial's crimp area and a servomotor-driven slide-mounted laser adjusts to each vial's height for marking. After being marked, a slide-mounted camera inspects the code for readability and accuracy, and any improperly coded vials are automatically tracked and rejected.

Weiler Labeling Systems
(Div. of ProMach, Inc.)

CLOSING THINGS UP

With manufacturers continuing to demand faster and more flexible cartoning systems, **ESS Technologies** has enhanced the design of its line of automatic horizontal and vertical cartoners, engineered to meet the needs of pharmaceutical, cosmetics, and medical device manufacturers. Offering reliable performance and fast changeover, the **ESS SC Series** horizontal cartoners now fea-

ture a servo-controlled rotary carton feeder that increases both speed and reliability—enabling the **Model SC60** to use intermittent motion and servo controls to erect, load and close 60 cartons per minute. For higher speeds, the **Model SC100** and **Model SC150** uses continuous motion to achieve packaging speeds of up to 100 and 150 cartons per minute respectively. The smooth-operating machines employ **Allen-Bradley Kinetix 5500** servo drives to control the rotary carton infeed—allowing the vacuum arms to reliably pick, form, and place horizontal cartons in the rugged carton transport conveyor.

Using standard flap closing and offering an option for hot-melt glue closure, the **SC Series** units also offer options for automatic leaflet feeding, tamper-evident labeling, and carton coding. For top-load cartoning applications, ESS

re-engineered the **VC30** intermittent-motion vertical cartoner to expand the types of cartons handled by the system. Originally designed to handle auto-bottom cartons with top tuck-flap top closure, ESS expanded the **VC30's** carton erector's capabilities to also erect top-loading cartons with bottom-tuck or hot-melt glue closures. The integrated robotic loading system uses a **FANUC** multi-axis robot and ESS-designed end-of-arm tooling to load bottles with or without topserts, cartons, sachets, and blister packs at a rate of up to 30 cartons per minute.

ESS Technologies, Inc.



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We do more.



PAC Packaging Consortium is proud to announce the release of their 'Sustainability Checklist for Structural Package Designers.'

The checklist was developed by PAC NEXT, PAC's sustainability initiative with a vision of A World Without Packaging Waste. The checklist is the result of collective input from PAC NEXT's Packaging Innovation Gateway project team consisting of over 40 members throughout the packaging value chain.

The purpose of the checklist is to provide a quick reference guide for structural package designers with little to no knowledge of sustainability in order to help them make more informed decisions for packaging. Rachel Morier, Director of Sustainability, states, "We hope the checklist acts as a starting point for a much larger collaborative discussion as more companies and their suppliers strive to meet the demands for a true circular economy."

Download the 'Sustainability Checklist for Structural Package Designers' for free at www.pacnext.com. The checklist was designed for an 11 x 17 format, printed on two sides for optimal viewing.

If interested in learning more about PAC NEXT's Packaging Innovation Gateway project work, upcoming events, and how to join, please email Rachel Morier at rmorier@pac.ca.

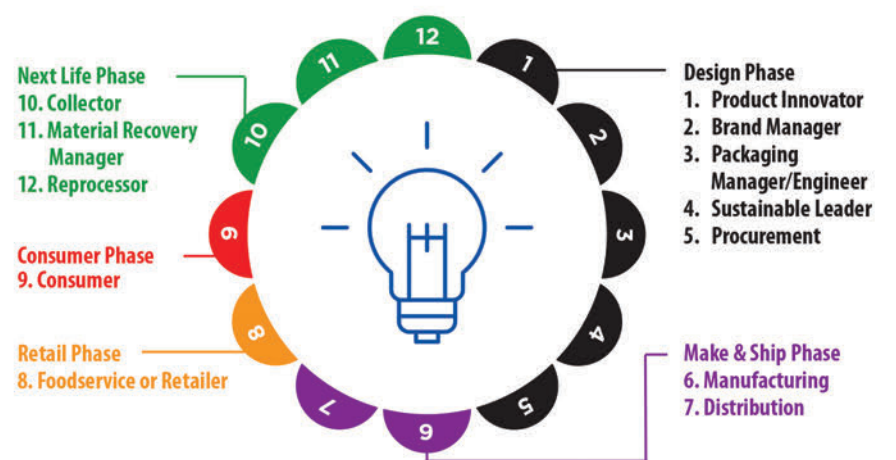
The Design Concept

PAC SEESCAPE DESIGN incorporates the three pillars of sustainability - Social, Environment and Economic. The objective is to keep packaging as a raw material in a continuous circle of life rather than have it disposed in landfill, become litter or marine debris. This flashcard checklist provides a light and easy guide to assist designers to make better packaging decisions.

The Visual Model

The **PAC SEESCAPE** model is symbolically based on the face of an hour clock and King Arthur's famed round table. It has 12 hour hands that represent the collaborative team and it runs continuously clockwise. King Arthur's round table had no head, implying that everyone who sits there has equal status. Transparent communication, discussion and collaboration results in success.

The Collaborative Team



The Design Process

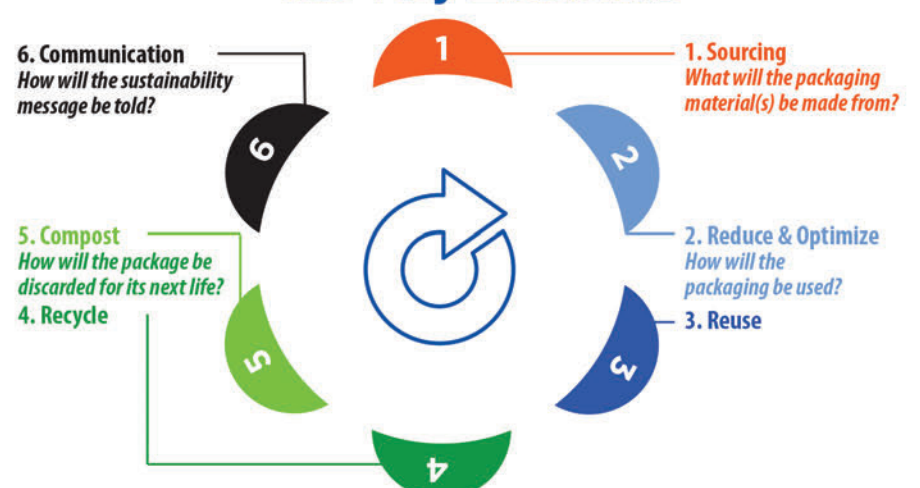
The **Circular Economy** is restorative and regenerative by design. This approach is reshaping the traditional model of "take-make-dispose" in order to design waste out and especially applies to packaging.

The Checklist

This checklist provides a quick reference guide to help you make better packaging sustainability decisions. The checklist follows the priority order of the hierarchy of waste management. Before you begin, ask yourself:

- **What are the sustainability goals and innovation goals of my company and customer? How can the packaging contribute to these goals?**
- **Do I have all the information I need to make the right choices?**

The Key Elements



PEOPLE

■ Dutch-based packaging automation systems and equipment group **BluePrint Automation (BPA)** has appointed Andre Boom as chief operating officer for the company's **BPA Americas** subsidiary in South Chesterfield, Va.



Boom

■ **Toray Plastics (America), Inc.**, North Kingstown, R.I.-based manufacturer of polyester, polypropylene, bio-based, and metallized films for flexible and rigid packaging applications, has appointed Mark Turano as the director of sales and Justin Larson as sales manager for the company's **Lumirror** polyester film division.

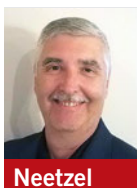
■ **Highcon Systems Ltd.**, Israeli-based manufacturer of digital cutting, creasing and other converting systems for the folding-carton and corrugated packaging industries, has appointed Matt Bennett as vice-president of sales and general manager of the company's **Highcon Americas** subsidiary, responsible for sales operations in both the Canadian and U.S. markets.

■ Australian food processing and packaging equipment group **tna solutions Pty Ltd.** has appointed Tom McPhee as group technical support manager at the company's North American operations in Dallas, Tex.



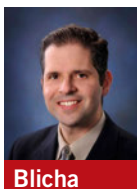
McPhee

■ **KBA North America**, Dallas, Tex.-based manufacturer of printing press technologies, has appointed Preston Neetzel as technical sales manager for the company's **KBA-Flexotecnica** flexographic printing division.



Neetzel

■ **Eriez**, Erie, Pa.-headquartered manufacturer of industrial metal detection systems and other advanced separation technologies for a diverse range of packaging, fluid filtration, screening, materials feeding and conveying applications, has appointed John Blichka as director of global marketing and communications.



Blichka

EVENTS

June 19-22

Munich, Germany: **Automatica 2018**, industrial automation and robotics exhibition by Messe München GmbH. At Messe München. To register, go to: www.automatica-munich.com

June 21-22

Guelph, Ont.: **Resource Recovery Partnership Conference 2018**, a forum on circular economy by the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy (WISE) of the University of Waterloo. At Federation Hall at the University of Waterloo Main Campus. To register, go to: www.wise.waterloo.ca

July 29-31

Las Vegas, Nev.: **Cosmoprof North America**, beauty products and cosmetics exhibition. At Mandalay Bay Convention Center. To register, go to: www.cosmoprofnorthamerica.com

Sept. 5-6

New York City: **ADF (Aerosol & Dispensing Forum) & PCD (Packaging of Perfume Cosmetics & Design) New York 2018**. Both by Easyfairs Group. At Metropolitan Pavilion. To register, go to: www.adf-pcd.com

Sept. 10-11

Amsterdam, The Netherlands: **AWA IMLCON (International In-Mold Labeling Conference & Exhibition) 2018**, by AWA (Alexander Watson Associates). At Novotel Amsterdam City. To register, go to: www.awa-bv.com/events

Sept. 11-12

Pittsburgh, Pa.: **Polymer Testing & Analysis 2018**, conference and tabletop exhibition by Applied Market Information, LLC (AMI). At the Pittsburgh Marriott City Center. To register, go to: www.ami.international/events

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EARLY GLIMPSE OF POSSIBLE PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE

BY ROBERT GLASS

While there's been extensive talk about the environmental considerations of food manufacturing and packaging in the past 20 years, these conversations often focused on the carbon emissions and energy usage of food plants. However, since 2016 the world has grown to realize the environmental impact of plastics.

Recently, Dutch supermarket chain **Ekoplaza** sent ripples through the food packaging industry by opening the world's first plastic-free aisle at one of its stores in Amsterdam.

Some leading environmental campaign groups immediately called for more supermarkets to follow the lead, with Sian Sutherland, co-founder of the **A Plastic Planet** group, proclaiming: "For decades shoppers have been sold the lie that we can't live without plastic in food and drink. A plastic-free aisle dispels all that!"

With the gauntlet thus thrown, it seems inevitable that more supermarkets will likely follow the plastic-free trend in the coming months and years. Consequently, food manufacturers will increasingly need to rethink their food packaging materials to maximize their product's market penetration in the years to come.

Luckily for them, this does not require them to change their existing processes too significantly or radically, since it's just the packaging material that will need changing. After all, a nut processing plant that swaps out plastic packaging for biopolymer alternatives won't suddenly find its packing and palletizing robot stop handling the product because the material has changed.

However, making the change to sustainable packaging isn't quite as simple as it sounds. The problem with plastics is not a recent sudden revelation to companies in the materials industry that has been busy developing some very interesting biodegradable alternatives to plastic: from chicken feather plastics to liquid wood.



But even more interesting, perhaps, is the opportunity that this trend presents for producers of some traditional packaging materials that have lost some of their earlier shine and market dominance they enjoyed for most of the 20th Century.

GLASS

Glass has been a staple of the bottling industry for an eternity, it seems, but plastic bottles have risen dramatically in popularity in the past few decades. While the price difference was initially the main driver for many manufacturers considering switching to plastics, it's likely we'll see the industry shift back to glass in the coming years.

Glass is advantageous because it is endlessly recyclable—meaning that it can be used, recycled and recovered repeatedly without a loss in quality or purity. This is in stark contrast to plastics, where the material fibers shorten with repeated recycling, ultimately becoming ineffective and unusable.

With glass bottles, there's also an element of consumer appeal. When the global beverage brand **Coca-Cola** brought back its glass bottles in 2014, it enjoyed an immediate increase in sales.

ALUMINUM

According to a major recent labor force survey, about one-third of European households today only have a single occupant.

This trend is not confined to Europe: the U.S. has experienced a constant increase in single-person households since the 1920s. That's why single-serve portions and ready meals have grown so rapidly in popularity with consumers—setting stage for rapid growth in microwavable plastic packaging.

To replace these plastic trays, food manufacturers should have another close look at aluminum and all its attributes. Like glass, aluminum is endlessly recyclable—a significant sustainability feature that means a low cost of legislative compliance.

With that cost factored in, swapping to aluminum can allow food manufacturers to remain as competitive as they were with plastics, for the most part.

In addition, aluminum is also quite suitable for use with most modern microwave ovens. While there were some issues with models designed prior to 1980, modern appliances can safely heat products in aluminum containers, as long as the consumers handle the food sensibly.

BIOPOLYMERS

While aluminum and glass are effective alternatives, some manufacturers will still require the malleability of plastics for their packaging. That's why materials scientists have been actively developing biopolymer alternatives to serve as sustainable and safe biodegradable plastics.

Most of these originate in the byproducts of other industries. For example, liquid wood is derived from lignin—a waste product created in paper processing—while other bioplastics are known to use casein from dairy production, or keratin derived from chicken feathers from poultry farms.

But by far the most popular biopolymers are plant-based polymers—typically derived from sugar cane or potato starch. The latter produces a material known as polylactic acid (PLA), which has many of the same properties as plastic but degrades far faster when exposed to nature—sometimes in as little as six months.

By having starch replace petroleum in its composition, PLA plastic releases far fewer harmful chemicals during the degradation process.

To remain competitive in the future, food and beverage manufacturers should be well advised to adopt the same new way of thinking.

*Robert Glass is the global food and beverage communications manager for **ABB**, a technology leader in electrification products, robotics and motion, and industrial automation serving a diverse global customer base in utilities, manufacturing and transport industries.*



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West Coast Canning chief operating officer Mitch Evanecz examines his company's newly-arrived Videojet model 1860 continuous inkjet printer that will be incorporated in one of the company's four mobile canning systems in B.C. that are taken to a craft brewing facility to apply clean and highly legible lot code data during canning operations.

OH YES WE CAN!

BC mobile canning company provides the true craft experience for small Canadian brewers along with superb sleeving and branding capabilities for cans

ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR;
PHOTOS BY DAVID BUZZARD

Sometimes being the first to try something new is a recipe for disaster. Conversely, it can help establish a tremendous early lead in a hitherto undiscovered market.

Such is the case for **West Coast Canning Inc.**, Canada's first mobile canning company that provides a cost-effective, full-service packaging solution for craft brewers, cideries and wineries in British Columbia and Alberta.

Operating in a 24,000-square-foot facility in South Vancouver, with a satellite operation in Calgary, West Coast Canning offers a hearty mix of both goods and services to the market, providing shrinksleeve application, printed cans, and blank cans, as well as a mobile canning service.

"We were indeed the first in Canada to offer a mobile canning service," West Coast Canning chief operating officer Mitch Evanecz told *Canadian Packaging* in a recent interview. "It was actually the brainchild of Kevin Pederson, who after observing the U.S. market noted just how a few companies had started doing mobile canning."

Evanecz and Pederson, along with Jeff Rogowsky and Matt Leslie are the owners of West Coast Canning.

"Matt and Kevin quickly identified a demand in the B.C. market and purchased a truck and a canning line," recalls Evanecz. "Soon after, we purchased a used shrink-sleeve line, and from there it was simple—plan, execute, and repeat."

As Evanecz explains, his company also provides custom stacking and wrapping of pallets to suit customer equipment and facility capabilities or restrictions, to make receiving of the product as simple as possible.



The new Videojet 1860 coder purchased by West Coast Canning features a large one-liter Smart Cartridge that includes an embedded microchip to ensure that only compatible fluids are used, helping prevent possible operator error.



A sample of high-quality coding that can be applied to the aluminum cans with the new Videojet 1860 coders with applied date and lot code data shown here printed to the bottom of a can. The Videojet printhead can be adjusted to apply marking anywhere on the package.



The mobile canning operations of West Coast Canning, here performing its services for Strange Fellows Brewing Company in East Vancouver. Depalletized pre-printed aluminum cans of beer move down the line to a Wild Goose filler and seamer, where a Videojet coder applies the brewery-specific data onto the cans before being hand-packed into corrugated trays.

“And, we have also begun to offer design services for shrinksleeved and printed cans customers,” reveals Evanecz.

West Coast Canning typically runs two-person crews, with six mobile canning lines—four in B.C., and two in Alberta.

The company employs four model **WGC-250** canning lines with four-head fillers, manufactured by **Wild Goose Canning Systems** (WGC) running at speeds of 30 to 40 cans per minute.

“When we are filling 355-ml cans, we run at approximately 2,300 cans at 800 liters per hour, which is 100 flats,” explains Evanecz. “While for the larger 473-ml cans, it’s around 2,000 cans at 900 liters per hour, which is enough to create 85 flats.”

The semi-automatic **WGC-250** fillers use a **WGC Lid Placement Station** that tracks lids through the chute to ensure accurate dispensing, seating and retention of lids to aid low dissolved oxygen levels. The system’s patented **Seaming Station** also provides a precise and airtight seal, ensuring customer products remain fresh in the can until opened.

“We also run an industry-standard clean-in-place operation prior to canning at the facility we are working at, and again immediately after canning is finished,” Evanecz relates.

The clean-in-place process begins with the running of a cleaning agent through the product hose and fill lines, which West Coast Canning then rinses with water.

Next, a special ATP (Adenosine Tri-Phosphate) swabbing device is used to detect the presence of any organic matter.

“The swabbing device is a small but essential process within our mobile canning service,” Evanecz states. “The results we receive from it determine whether the surface is a pass or fail, and we will run the clean-in-place again to ensure everything is clean before we show the results to the customer.”

“Once that is done, we run a sanitizer through the lines before we begin the actual canning process,” says Evanecz.

Evanecz says that West Coast Canning’s quality assurance process is very rigorous

and thorough in its own quality control, as the company has purchased the necessary equipment to assure it is doing everything possible to provide the best mobile canning service.

“We have carbonation (CO₂) and oxygen (O₂) testing devices that probe the product’s CO₂ and O₂ levels in the tank prior to canning, and to also determine what levels are in the can after filling.

“This before/after test allows us to ensure the canning process is optimized, allowing us to obtain the very best results for the canned product,” explains Evanecz.

West Coast Canning also utilizes a special can seam breakdown device that cuts into the seam of the can to not only take a picture, but to measure the components of the seam, ensuring each can is properly seamed for optimal product shelf-life.

The machine records and saves these readings from each canning line, so that West Coast Canning can track each canning line’s history and monitor the quality of the seam.

When dealing with craft breweries, cideries, *et al*, Evanecz says the process begins with the customer deciding on what can size to use, and whether it be a printed can, shrinksleeved can, or a blank can known as a silver bullet.

“If it is a shrinksleeved can, the customer orders labels from one of our suppliers, and the labels are produced, shipped and stored at our facility,” explains Evanecz. “Once we have the labels, we can then book a canning day and put the labels into production.”

The labels are applied using an **Aesus Packaging Systems Premier Shrink** sleeve application system that moves the label over the top of a can before passing through a hybrid heat tunnel.

The hybrid tunnel uses a combination of dry heat and steam to shrink the label onto the can consistently and efficiently at a rate of 180 to 230 cans per minute, according to Evanecz.

At the West Coast Canning facility, it also runs a second sleeve—an Aesus **Eco Shrink**—that it typically runs at 60 to 80 cans per minute, usually for specialty products and short runs.



West Coast Canning currently utilizes five Videojet model 1550 small-character continuous inkjet coders on its mobile canning operations in B.C. and Alberta.



Cans of Cowboy Crusher Stampede Session Ale, brewed by Parallel 49 Brewing Company, enter an Aesus Packaging System hybrid tunnel that uses a combination of dry heat and steam to shrink the plastic film labels tightly onto the cans.



At Strange Fellows Brewing Company, a worker hand-applies the plastic model 202 QuadPak can carriers manufactured by PakTech that are not only efficient, but are environmentally responsible, too—made from post-consumer recycled #2 high-density polyethylene.



PRODUCT ID NOW



Evanecz says that the company's label suppliers provide them with the customer's designated labels on rolls of 4,000 to 5,500 labels per roll.

"We place the labels into the Aesus sleeve, and it is fed through a system of rollers designed to keep the labels as straight as possible before they go over the mandrel."

Evanecz explains that the mandrel takes the flattened label and expands it into a cylindrical form for the machine to cut and form individual labels before placing them onto cans.

"We can either ship the labeled cans to customers with their own canning lines or we can bring the cans, lids, trays and/or rings, if needed, to the brewery for the day of canning," he explains.

Upon the agreed-upon date, and with the customer ensuring that their product is 'package ready' to the desired carbonation level and necessary temperature for canning, the West Coast Canning two-man crew arrives early in the morning to begin setting up the equipment.

"Upon arrival, we test the product in the tanks with our Penair Hoffman Gehaltmeter, ensuring the carbonation and oxygen levels are at optimal level to prevent product loss or production downtime," Evanecz relates.

The crew then sets up the mobile canning line, the depalletizer and coding equipment, prepares the cans, and runs the cleaning cycle before connecting the product hose to the customer's bright tank prompting the liquid to pass through the canning line for packaging.

"Our operators monitor fills, make sure the canning line is running smoothly, and carry out routine quality control checks," he relates. "Then we have at least two of the customer's employees help repack the final packaged cans to the desired format of four-packs, six-packs, or as singles."

The customer's workers will then stack the filled finished product onto pallets, to be distributed at their schedule.

Once finished, Evanecz says his crew will run a post-run cleaning process, pack up the equipment and any leftover goods into their truck, and vacate the brewery.

For product coding, the West Coast Canning lines make optimal use of continuous inkjet coders manufactured by **Videojet Technologies, Inc.**

According to Evanecz, the company has five **Videojet** model **1550** and one model **1860** coding units for the mobile canning lines, with two **1550**'s in Alberta and the rest in B.C. It began with a **1550** purchased when the company started out, with others added as the company expanded its operations, with the **1860** arriving in May of this year.

The **Videojet 1550** industrial inkjet printer is a small-character coder designed for medium-duty applications according to Denny Gooch, **Videojet**'s sales engineer for western Canada.

"It's a highly flexible printer designed for a wide range of packaging applications," notes Gooch. "It has been engineered to provide a high uptime, and meets the range of medium-duty coding applications with advanced features that help reduce errors and rework—helping ensure improved productivity."

The coder features **Code Assurance** functionality that eliminates common coding errors by guiding operators to put the right code on the right product time after time.

Moreover, the operator can review data to discover technical and operational causes of unplanned downtime, presented in a logical way via field prompts, drop-down menus, calendar displays, and pre-defined formats to help ensure correct entries.

"It helps operators examine and explain the root cause of any downtime, allowing them to take timely corrective action and boost productivity," says Gooch.

Offering a maximum line speed of 914 feet (279 meters) per minute, the core life of the coders is up to 12,000 hours,

The coders incorporate plug-and-play printhead modules for ease-of-use, and provide ample message storage capacity, allowing users to store 250 different customer-specific codes.

As well, the operator interface utilizes the **CLARiTY** 10.4-inch color touchscreen, that provides operators with a true ease of use, showing real-time fluid levels, maintenance alerts, print jobs and other operational information.

"The CleanFlow technology in these machines helps reduce ink build up in the nozzles, while an internal pump minimizes opportunities for potential contaminants to enter the ink stream," Gooch says.

"Plus there's an automatic cleaning printhead that provides fast startups, even after an extended shutdown."

Gooch adds that the **Smart Cartridge** fluid delivery system eliminates spills and helps ensure that the correct fluids are being used, while ensuring all of the fluids contained within are used up completely.

"Along with our 'Green Ink' fluid options, all of our cartridges are 100-percent recyclable," Gooch notes.

The new **Videojet 1860** continuous inkjet printer, according to Gooch, integrates leading on-board intelligence and communication abilities with revolutionary techni-

cal elements.

Exiting the Aesus hybrid shrink tunnel, the cans are checked by West Coast Canning staff to ensure quality before they are palletized and either shipped to craft beverage customers with their own canning lines or are brought by West Coast on the day of filling by its mobile canning line crew.

cal elements.

"The **1860** is designed to help improve productivity with a linear speed of 960 feet per minute, while lowering costs over the life of the coder," states Gooch.

"The **1860** uses the **SIMPLICiTY** interface, an intuitive, tablet-inspired 10-inch color touchscreen that reduces operator printer interactions to help eliminate potential user error," states Gooch. "In fact, you can even customize your interface to ensure your operators only see the options they need."

The **1860** also uses breakthrough predictive capabilities with enhanced sensing and data processing, enabling it to alert users of any potential unplanned downtime.

"With the advance notice, crews can take corrective measures to help ensure maximum line efficiency," Gooch offers.

Adds Evanecz: "We like that the **Videojet** coders provide us with robust performance—a very important factor considering we are constantly moving and transporting it from site to site.

"As well, it provides a nice, clean code on the cans ensuring we can provide our customers with the much-desired quality assurance," Evanecz notes.

The **1860** coder uses a unique nozzle system, featuring a new coaxial charge electrode specifically developed to help improve print quality. The system's **Dynamic Calibration** provides independent viscosity monitoring and control, thereby removing the need for the system to get up to temperature before beginning a print job.

The printhead utilizes a 45-degree slanted design that Gooch says delivers better line integration, as well as more mounting options.

"The printhead can be placed as close as two millimeters to the product packaging, ensuring crisper, better-quality codes," says Gooch. "Plus, along with improving print quality, it has the added bonus of reducing ink waste."

Evanecz says he is happy with the equipment performance and technical support he has received from **Videojet**.

"We purchased the **Videojet** coders because of the high quality, dependability, easy-to-use operating system, and the customer service," mentions Evanecz. "Their customer representative came to our location, saw and understood the business, and recommended their **1550** model to us," says Evanecz.

"This was a huge deal for us, considering we didn't know exactly what we needed."

The customer base of West Coast Canning currently consists mainly of craft brewers, but Evanecz says he is seeing an uptick in cideries and pre-mixed RTDs (ready-to-drink) beverage manufacturers using the company's services.

"The value-added bonus of West Coast Canning's services," sums up Evanecz, "is that we provide all the equipment, experience, knowledge of cans and canning that allows smaller facilities to utilize our existing until they have sufficient production that makes sense for them to make a more substantial capital investment.

"Because we are invested in helping our customers succeed, we also know that we need to continue to increase our availability to the customer," he concludes.

"That's why we got into providing canning and sleeving options for customers in the first place.

"It's just one of the ways of ensuring our continued success in the craft beverage marketplace." 🍁

SUPPLIERS

Wild Goose Canning Systems

Aesus Packaging Systems, Inc.

Videojet Technologies Canada Ltd.

PakTech

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ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR
PHOTOS BY DAVID BUZZARD

While the time-tested real estate mantra of “location, location, location”, holds true in many industries, one British Columbia brewery has taken things to a whole new other level of validity.

Located about 40 minutes east of Vancouver in Port Moody, **The Parkside Brewery** craft beer producer is located in a small, but thriving community surrounded by good ol’ Mother Nature.

“The Parkside Brewery’s name is very literal,” The Parkside Brewery co-executive super president Sam Payne told *Canadian Packaging*.

“We are, in fact, located right beside a park,” states Payne. “This gives the brewery an incredible sense of place, and a specific place at that. We are proud to be located in Port Moody across from Rocky Point Spray Park, where we have deep roots.

“Our connection to this location and the community around it is so important to our identity,” Payne proclaims.

Founded in June of 2016, Payne says that the success achieved by The Parkside Brewery has been formulated by the high-quality beer it brews.

“We believe in making beers of all styles, from approachable to specialty, while only using the best ingredients,” he explains. “Our beers are a celebration of where we live—the Pacific Northwest.”

The Parkside Brewery’s **Dawn Pilsner**, **Dusk Pale Ale**, **DimWit** Belgian witbier, and **HUMANS – An IPA For The People**, are currently top-selling products, according to Payne.



From Left: Weber Marking Systems account manager for Western Canada Jay Allen, The Parkside Brewery co-owner and brewmaster Vern Lambourne, and co-executive super president Sam Payne share a toast at the trendy Port Moody, B.C.-based brewery showing off some of their key core brands Dusk Pale Ale, Graffiti IPA, and Dawn Pilsner.

Along with the six core brands, including **Graffiti IPA** (Westcoast India Pale Ale) and **Dreamboat** (Hazy IPA), it also produces approximately 10 one-off SKUs per year, including the 2018 specialty beers: five hop **Motel Pale Ale** (IPA) and **The Murray Mild** English brew.

“We produce beers that range in style from what we describe as being ‘highly creative’ to the ‘easily drinkable,’” relates Payne.

“We have created a line-up of full-time beers, as well as a variety of limited-edition beer releases, that reflect the ever-changing boundaries of the craft beer movement—including our DimWit beer that recently became part of our regular line-up,” he says.

The Parkside Brewery beers are currently available

throughout B.C. in six-packs of 355-ml cans and four-packs of 473-ml Tall Boy cans, as well as in the 30-liter and 50-liter kegs for restaurants and pubs.

The company also operates an on-site tasting room, where 64-ounce growler fills are always the norm.

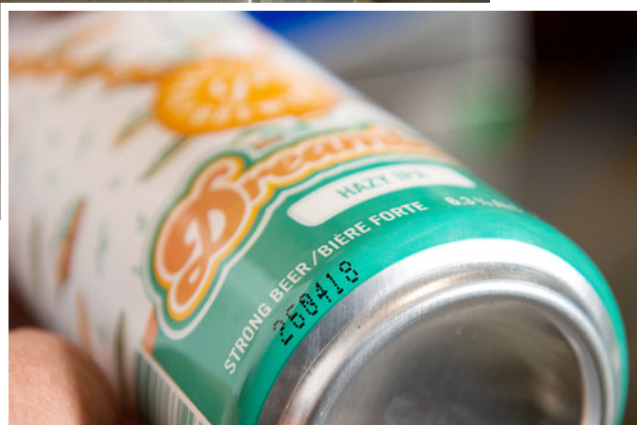
Payne calls the B.C. craft beer community a “unified and supportive” group.

“The business end of what we do is fun and always challenging,” he reveals, “but we don’t believe we are competing with the craft beer community, as much as we are working alongside our friends in the craft beer community.

“I believe that the more supportive we are of each other, the better the options are for consumers in their



Supplied by Weber Marking Systems, the BestCode model 82 inkjet coder is used by The Parkside Brewery to apply lot code data on the lower lip (see inset at right) of its canned beer brands to track product as part of the brewery's beverage safety program. The aluminum cans are supplied by Cask Brewing Systems, an official supplier of printed aluminum cans manufactured by Ball Corporation.



Weber Marking Systems account manager for Western Canada Jay Allen (right) and The Parkside Brewery brewmaster and business partner Vern Lambourne examine the sharp coding applied to the lower lip of a can of Dreamboat beer via a BestCode model 82 inkjet coding system installed at the Port Moody facility.

day-to-day beer choices.”

Payne points out that along with The Parkside Brewery, there are three other breweries that he considers to be family—**Yellow Dog Brewing Co.**, **Moody Ales** and **Twin Sails Brewing**—and all contained within a city block of its own operation.

“Port Moody has become a world-class beer destination known as Brewers Row,” he says.

According to data compiled by the B.C. government, the province's craft beer industry has grown from 54 breweries in 2010 to 125 in January of 2017, with up to 20 additional breweries awaiting the regulatory go-ahead.

Notably, craft beer sales in the province nearly tripled between 2012 and 2017.

Whereas in 2013, craft brewers in B.C. produced 654,000 hectoliters, the combined output reached almost 942,000 hectoliters in 2015, an increase of 44 per cent in just three years.

Perhaps it's a left coast bias, but Payne believes there is a different attitude to the craft-beer drinker in B.C. than in other parts of Canada.

“Parkside represents the connection that our customers have to all the communities,” he says. “It could be any park, in any place, to anyone. And people enjoy having a beer and relaxing within our community.”

Payne says the emotional connection and mantra of his business speaks not only to “our specific place,” but also to any park and gathering place, and all that is connected to that.

Payne says that The Parkside Brewery celebrates the social aspects of life and connecting with others and consumer's within the community—whether it's gathering with loved ones for a BBQ, playing that pick-up game with friends, a game of shuffleboard in the basement, relaxing on a warm summer evening in a lawn chair, or just hanging out parkside.

While the traditional summer and the Christmas season are still peak times for beer consumption, Payne acknowledges that the mild climate of British Columbia allows for an extended beer production season.

“We begin to ramp up our beer production in March in anticipation of the summer crush,” explains Payne, saying that the brewery has been brewing to its capacity virtually from the day the brewery opened.

“It's an energetic and busy place nearly every day of the week.”

Payne says that having a brewmaster—and business partner—as talented and experienced as Vern Lambourne has been a terrific boon for the brewery.

“Vern has helped assemble a top-notch team that is creative, motivated and fun, and is a major reason in our success to date,” exclaims Payne.

“His reputation and track record of producing award-winning beers has allowed us to have a B.C.-wide distribution from Day One of operation two years ago, which is quite rare in our industry.”

After purchasing the brewhouse and all the requisite tanks, vessels, mixers, fermenters and other essential pieces of brewing equipment in the autumn of 2016, The Parkside Brewery invested in a brand new inkjet coder, a **BestCode** model 82 printer from industry specialists **Weber Marking Systems Canada**, installed in October.

Payne says the inkjet coding system was a necessity to track product for date of production and quality control purposes as an essential part of food and beverage



Featuring a CleanStart industrial stainless-steel printhead, the model 82 coder manufactured by BestCode and purchased by The Parkside Brewery through Weber Marking Systems, throws ink onto cans of beer for non-contact application at a rate of 196 meters per minute.



Along with the BestCode model 82 coding system from Weber Marking Systems, The Parkside Brewery also uses a micro-canning system designed and built by Calgary-based Cask Brewing Systems, which manufactures economical canning solutions designed for the need of small and mid-sized craft brewers.

age industries safety initiatives.

“We apply date coding onto all our canned products,” says Payne.

According to Weber Marking Systems account manager for Western Canada Jay Allen: “They chose to purchase from Weber because of our years of experience—we’ve been around for 85-plus years. Our longevity provided Parkside with the confidence that we are here to support them.

“One of the reasons they chose the BestCode unit was because of the clarity and size of its 10.4-inch touchscreen display. The employees found it very easy to navigate, enabling them to make changes on the fly without any issues,” continues Allen.

Distributed by Weber throughout Canada, the BestCode model 82 industrial marking and coding system is a small-character printing system that provides high print speed, combined with reliable marking capabilities on the aluminum surface and a wide range of substrates such as plastic, glass, paper and more, according to Weber.

While the **Series 8** from BestCode comes in six models: the **81**, **82**, **86**, **87**, **88**, and **88S**—the model 82 purchased by The Parkside Brewery provides:

- Extended operation time thanks to its robust design, capable of operating at speeds up to 600 feet (196 meters) per minute;
- Automated end-of-day routine which eliminates the typical manual routine;
- New levels of user simplicity;
- Abilities to print both small- and large-character information, as required by the customer;
- Capability for true non-contact printing that extends the ink throw distance;
- Increasing print speeds to ultra-high speed specifications, as required;

- **CleanStart** industrial stainless-steel printheads ready to use in one minute, shortening downtime. The **CleanStart** printheads feature a special system that eliminates annoying clogged nozzles;
- An interactive **EZTouch** 10.4-inch touchscreen display with intuitive icon buttons for easy use and a clear visual display of all operating information;
- The **SmartFill** ink system, allowing fluid addition on-the-fly without opening enclosure;
- The **EcoTec** fluid management system to reduce fluid consumption, contributing to a reduction in the overall cost-of-ownership.

The BestCode inkjet systems are designed and manufac-

tured by Weber’s partners in Forth Worth, Tex., and include a complete range of marking and coding solutions from entry level options all the way to specialized applications that require high-speed solutions.

The BestCode model 82 owned by The Parkside Brewery is designed, according to Weber, for basic applications.

It is best utilized for target applications printing one or two lines of text, with one to two production line work shifts per day, five-days-per-week equating to upwards of 4,000 hours of annual operation.

Payne says the brewery uses the BestCode model 82 inkjet printer to apply a clean, black marking of lot code data to the lower lip of its can packages, although the adjustable print-



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Located in Port Moody, B.C., The Parkside Brewery moniker is akin to its location, situated beside a park, providing it with a special affinity with the local community.

head can be positioned to print anywhere on the package.

“We currently run the BestCode model 82 at a speed of about 30 cans per minute,” says Payne, noting that the inkjet coder can operate faster should the need change.

“As well, the Best Code 82 provides us with low ink usage and reliability, so there’s no downtime on our filling and packing production line.

“We are very happy with the products we purchased from Weber Marking Systems,” he relates. “They provide us with consistent and friendly service.”

Keeping in line with its Canadian roots, The Parkside Brewery utilizes the micro-canning system from **Cask Brewing Systems Inc.**

Headquartered in Calgary, Cask has nearly 900 installations in 46 different countries, providing its affordable canning systems to the small and mid-sized innovative creators

of craft beer, cider, wine, cold brewed coffee, kombucha (fermented tea), and other beverages.

In addition, Cask is an official supplier of printed aluminum cans for **Ball Corporation**, considered to be the world’s largest aluminum can producer.

Notes Payne: “We try to use as many local and Canadian suppliers as possible, including and not limited to Specific Mechanical, Weber supplies, Summit labels, Hops Connect, and Country Malt Group.”

While certainly not the domain of the hippie/hipster attitudes of the West Coast, running a business as green as possible is certainly part of the DNA of The Parkside Brewery.

“Our brewery has soft plastic recycling, green waste disposal, glass, metal and plastic waste retrieval,” notes Payne. “We also reclaim heat from our heat exchanger that actually heats our hot liquor tanks, helping us reduce water usage.

The Parkside Brewery utilizes the PakTech special model 202 QuadPak can carriers made from post-consumer recycled #2 HDPE (high-density polyethylene) plastic that are 100-percent recyclable.

“Plus, we also send all of the spent grains from our beer production out to local farms to be used as a food supply for livestock.”

He adds that the brewery’s choice of can also presents it with a sustainability angle.

Rather than use a more traditional soft plastic six-pack ring to hold the beer cans, The Parkside Brewery has opted for special holders manufactured by **PakTech**.

The model **202** can holders are made from post-consumer recycled #2 HDPE (high-density polyethylene), and are 100-percent recyclable.

Thanks to the self-nesting design, cans using the PakTech holders can be easily stacked to build a transportation pallet without having to resort to trays.

Headquartered in Eugene, Ore., the family-owned PakTech is a leader in the 100-percent recycled and recyclable injection molded packaging handles for the beverage industry.

“Our award-winning DimWit beer uses six-pack paperboard boxes to avoid using plastic altogether,” Payne relates.

“We really like the sustainability of these items, which includes limiting wildlife impact, higher recycling rates and, of equal importance, in keeping the top of our cans clean.”

Along with an eye out for the protection of the environment, Payne says that The Parkside Brewery also cares about its community, consistently sponsoring prize donations for various community events.

For example, this June the brewery and its friends from **CRAFT Beer Market** are releasing a **Pineapple Milkshake IPA** (yes, it’s a beer) in support of the **Make A Wish Foundation** of B.C. and the Yukon.

“Being in a position to give back to the community is part of our core philosophy,” Payne concludes, “and part of the reason we like to brew beer, in general.” 🍁



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PHOTOS COURTESY OF B.A. RICHARD LTD.

B.A. Richard Ltd., a family-owned New Brunswick lobster processor and wholesaler specializing in bulk raw lobster tails and cooked lobster meat, utilizes a VC999 model K7 vacuum-sealing machine to create high-quality, airtight seals for the bags of frozen lobster meat shipped inside high-strength preprinted corrugated containers used by the company to ship its premium product to U.S. markets for customers like the popular Red Lobster restaurant chain and leading foodservice distributor Sysco Corporation.

SHELLING OUT

Lobster meat processor leverages high-quality vacuum-packing technology to bring its tasty premium product to market in timely manner

BY GEORGE GUIDONI, EDITOR

It's a long way from the ocean's floor to the dinner table. But thanks to companies like the privately-owned lobster processor **B.A. Richard Ltd.**, seafood lovers in Canada and across the U.S. can enjoy the authentic succulent sweet taste of Atlantic Lobster meat year-round in a broad variety of delicious recipes served up by their local restaurants and foodservice vendors.

Based in the settlement of St-Anne-de-Kent on New Brunswick's east coast, the company is one of the region's dozens of enterprises, large and small, making their daily bread and butter from harvesting and processing hard-shelled Atlantic Lobster (*Homarus americanus*) populating the Maritime waters.

"We are probably somewhere in the middle of the pack in terms of size,"

says company owner Marcel Richard, a fourth-generation Richard heading the company established under its current corporate banner back in 1962.

Employing up to 300 people during the peak lobster seasons, staggered throughout the year to ensure sustainable supply, the company is a wholesaler specializing in bulk shipments of raw tails and cooked lobster meat sold to popular restaurant chains like **Red Lobster** and leading food distributors such as **Sysco Corporation**.

"The bulk our sales are to the U.S. market," says Richard, who has headed the company for the past 25 years.

"We do ship some of our product in Canada about as far west as Toronto," Richard told *Canadian Packaging*, "but the U.S. is by far our biggest and most important market."

"Our product is distributed there right across the country, literally from coast



After selected lobster meat chunks are placed into high-barrier clear plastic ‘boilable’ film bags (*left*) manufactured by XtraPlast, they are placed onto the belt of the high-performance VC999 model K7 conveyorized automatic chamber vacuum-packing system (*right*) to create airtight seals to ensure the frozen meat inside retains optimal freshness and its unique sweet taste.

to coast,” says Richard, adding the company’s plant goes through more than 60,000 pounds of lobster per day to make its final product, which is immediately blast-frozen after packaging and shipped to customers within 36 hours at most.

“The meat yield for lobsters is very low—you typically get 13 to 14 per cent meat from an average-sized lobster,” Richard relates.

“It is very challenging work and very labor-intensive; I have not yet seen a machine that can process the lobsters the way you can with human hands.”

As Richard relates, the cooked lobster meat is vacuum-packed in airtight, high-barrier clear plastic film bags on one of the five high-performance vacuum-packaging machines supplied to the company by **VC999 Canada Ltd.**, Canadian subsidiary

of leading Swiss food packaging equipment manufacturer **VC999 Packaging Systems**.

“We have about 20 different meat mixes that we bag to suit our different customers’ specific requests for how much tail meat, claw meat, leg meat or body meat they want in their packs,” says Richard, adding the vast majority of the meat is shipped to customers in two-, four- and eight-pound “boilable” bags.

The VC999 equipment currently operated by the B.A. Richard plant comprises:

- Two model **K7** conveyorized automatic chamber vacuum belt machines;
- Two model **K12** double-chamber machines;
- One model **K6** single-chamber machine, purchased a few months ago to pack eight-pound bags of minced lobster meat.

Richard says he was sold on VC999 technology ever since purchasing his first **K7** machine some years ago.

“I have had some bad experiences in the past with machines bought elsewhere,” he admits, “but since installing my first VC999, there has really been only one choice for future machine purchases.

“They have very fast cycle-times, which is hugely important for our business, and they are virtually problem-free.

“Although I know that VC999 provides very good customer service, they really only need to come in once a year to do the basic servicing and basic maintenance.

“They are very reliable machines, running 10 to 12 hours a day without stopping, and usually require just one person to operate,” says Richard.

Critically, the VC999 vacuum-packers produce perfect high-quality seals to keep the premium-priced product safely wrapped with no exposure to oxygen using high-quality plastic bags produced by VC999’s sister company **XtraPlast**, which is supplied to the plant by Moncton, N.B.-based distributor **Al-Pack Enterprise Ltd.**

“Marcel has been purchasing his vacuum bags and plastic supplies exclusively from us for several years now,” says Remi Boudot, vice-president at VC999 Canada in Saint-Germain-de-Grantham, Que.

“We customize the high-quality four-mil vacuum pouches by printing all the required product information required by his customers,” says Boudot, “and the bags’ blue-tinted color makes them very popular for the lobster and seafood industries in general.”

Boudot adds that XtraPlast offers all its customers an attractive loyalty point program for their online purchases, which they can later trade for machine parts, service tech visits and maintenance services.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to get high-quality supplies at attractive pricing and to cover the preventive equipment maintenance program at the same time,” Boudot states.

“We have been told by our customers many times that this helps make their operating costs much more competitive.”

As for the VC999 machines at the B.A. Richard plant, Boudot says he is very satisfied but not sur-



B.A. Richard Ltd. owner Marcel Richard (*left*) and plant manager Maurice Allain agree that the two K7, two K12 and one model K6 vacuum chamber machines purchased from VC999 Canada are highly reliable and efficient workhorses that have helped the lobster processor and wholesaler become much more competitive in the seafood processing industry.



PAKAGING FOR FRESHNESS

prised by Richard's ringing endorsement and positive feedback about the vacuum-packers' performance.

"The VC999 machine gives B.A. Richard a peace-of-mind for packaging they never had before," says Boudot.

"They know they can count on the machine and whenever they push the start button the machine will run for the whole day."

According to Boudot, the machines' vacuum controls are arranged to provide "A perfected regulation system that combines vacuum pressure, moisture pressure and evaporation point of product humidity in the chamber."

"This system bring the perfect level of vacuum for each product at each cycle and self-reset every time," he says.

"For customers dealing with high-moisture products, like B.A. Richard, this is simply the best system available on the market."

Says Boudot: "The overall efficiency of the machines has greatly improved the speed of the operation, while delivering perfect packages all the time, year after year."

"Combine that with minimal operating costs, virtually no repacking, and extremely low waste of materials or time, and you have a very good combination of value and efficiency."

Boasting superior heavy-duty construction and hygienic washdown-compatible design, the VC999 vacuum-packers are engineered to ensure perfect seals regardless of bag thickness with an advanced regulating system for controlling time, pressure temperature and cooling, according to Boudot.

"This tremendously reduces the amount of bad seals, rejects and product returns," he says, "as well as repacking time."

For his part, Richard says he proud of his company's role in supporting one of Canada's most successful and lucrative export industries, which accounts for over half of the world's supply of American lobster and ships the product to more than 50 countries worldwide.

Perhaps even more importantly, he takes great pride in producing an all-natural safe meat product with minimal processing and a full gamut of nutritional benefits.

"Lobster meat is the least processed ready-to-eat meat out there," Richard proclaims. "It is 100-percent natural protein, with absolutely no preservatives or additives of any kind."

"The only seasoning we ever use is a little bit of salt, if requested by customers, so it is as pure a product as you can find, in addition to being so delicious."

According to the **Canadian Lobster Council**, "lobster represents one of the most beneficial sources of protein."

Compared to turkey, chicken, extra-lean ground beef, Atlantic salmon, pork loin and top sirloin beef, a 100-gram serving of lobster provides the highest amount of protein and fewest calories and fat.

Notably, a serving of that size contains only 0.1-gram of saturated fats—one-tenth that of light turkey meat—with cholesterol levels only a little higher than those for Atlantic salmon and light-meat turkey.

Moreover, the Atlantic lobster meat is rich in *Omega-3* fatty acids, widely considered to be highly beneficial for reducing the risk of heart attacks, along with *Vitamin B12*, copper, selenium and phosphorus, according to the Canadian Lobster Council.

As Richard sums up, "Whatever the current market price,

there is always demand for lobster out there, so I am very happy to be in this business.

"I have seen my company grow at least five-fold in my 25 years of running it, and I am very positive about what the future will bring in the years ahead." 🍁

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WHEN COOKIES MAKE DOUGH

Ontario cookie manufacturer transforms from niche market supplier into a key player in the Canadian co-packing and third-party cookie manufacturing markets

ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR
PHOTOS BY NAOMI HILTZ



After taking over the bakery six years ago, Terra Cotta Food Ltd. president and owner Jason Brass has transformed the Georgetown, Ont.-based company from only being a supplier of cookie products to schools and clubs for fundraising, to a legitimate bakery concern heavily involved in the world of Canadian baked goods manufacturing.

Everybody loves cookies. And some, like Jason Brass, president and owner of **Terra Cotta Food Ltd.** in Georgetown, Ont., seem to love cookies so much that he had to buy a company.

Founded in 1984 by Pat Coe as **Terra Cotta Cookies**, the company used to simply bake and sell cookies to schools to raise funds.

It was a profitable business that grew from one school customer to a couple of thousand, but by 2012 Coe wanted to retire.

Since purchasing the business, Brass says he is proud he has been able to grow the employee base from 12 to 42 local-area people, as well as outgrowing the original facility and soon to undergo its third expansion in just six years.

"It meant we were doing things right," Brass told *Canadian Packaging* magazine during a recent interview. "After about one-and-a-half years, we grew out of the 5,000-square-foot facility just down the street that I inherited from Pat Coe."

After outgrowing the new location as well, the company moved into its current 24,000-square-foot digs in the autumn of 2015.

"And we are currently in the process of expanding

our footprint even further, as we look to take over the unit next door," Brass says.

With the new unit the company plans to use the newly gained space for more production and packing operations.

Terra Cotta has enjoyed 32 per cent annual growth over the past six years, "And this year it could be 100 percent, thanks to a significant product launch for a major Canadian retailer," he states.

Before he purchased the bakery, the company's exclusive reliance on schools for customers forced Terra Cotta to close its doors for March Break, and during school summer vacation.

"I initially thought about growing our brand by moving into the retail segment," Brass recalls, adding that he spent the first year further examining the company's foundation.

While the company did produce gluten-free products, it lacked the proper certification, so Brass went through all the required hoops to gain both the *HACCP* (*Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points*)- and *SQF* (*Safe Quality Food Institute*)-certified status, as well as gluten-free and Kosher-certified credentials.

It was only then that he tried his hand at taking the Terra Cotta brand to retailers.

"After I began to pitch the brand to smaller retailers, they would instead ask me if I could make cookies for them in their name," he recalls.

"That's when I realized there was a significant demand for the private-label market.

"So I set out to diversify the way we packaged and sold our product in a manner that ensured that if one sector suffered trouble, the others could compensate," he explains.

Soon enough, Terra Cotta Cookies became increasingly involved in the private-label segment of the industry, as well as in co-packing.

Brass says that approximately 30 percent of Terra Cotta's business is now derived from the sale of its tasty gluten-free cookies.

"We offer our products coast-to-coast," says Brass noting that Terra Cotta decided early on to focus on the domestic market exclusively.

"However we are now getting to the point in our growth where we are looking to grow our market across the borders."

Brass explains that for companies like his, one has to have the right suppliers and production line equipment in place.

Commenting on **Beneco Packaging** of Mississau-



PACKAGING FOR FRESHNESS



A VerTek Junior vertical form-fill-seal bagging system built by WeighPack Systems, a division of Paxiom Group, delicately packs bags of shortbread cookies at a rate of 45 packs per minute at Terra Cotta Food.



Part of the WeighPack Systems solution, shortbread cookies move up a stainless-steel, sanitary-designed vertical conveyor to deposit the baked goodness gently onto a Weigh-Pack PrimoCombi multihead weigher.



An array of paperboard packaging printed by the Mississauga.-based Beneco Packaging, whom Terra Cotta president Jason Brass calls his best supplier for their ability to accommodate the bakery's schedule.

ga, Ont., who supply the bakery with its retail paperboard boxes, Brass was effusive in his praise.

“Beneco Packaging is my single-best supplier because they bend over backwards to get things for us on time.

“They will even store the packaging for us until we need it,” he says.

Brass also notes that having excellent equipment allows Terra Cotta to gain more customers.

Up until 2015, Terra Cotta only utilized a single flowwrapper to individually wrap its cookies, followed by a lot of labor-intensive manual hand-packing.

“Terra Cotta now has a wide range of packaging options for our private label and co-pack customers, such as frozen foodservice dough in cases; bulk cookies; frozen clamshell packed cookies for the bakery

sections; flowwrapped individual cookies; bag-in-box; and some flexible packaging as well for the more shelf-stable cookies,” he relates.

Brass says he changed the name of the bakery two years ago to Terra Cotta Foods to better reflect the products it produces and markets.

“We do more than just cookies nowadays,” he states. “We also bake loaves, muffins, brownie sheet cakes for foodservice, ice cream sandwiches, and even corn bread.”

Brass says that **WeighPack Systems**, part of the **Paxiom Group**, has been one of its key partners in helping it take things to the next level with private-label and co-packing capabilities via Terra Cotta's new flexible packaging and bag-in-box packaging options.

To that end, the bakery purchased a 10-head **Pri-**

moCombi automatic weigher, a **VerTek Junior** vertical form-fill-seal bagging machine, and an incline infeed conveyor system.

According to Paxiom Group vice-president Nicholas Taraborelli, “The complete automated system to convey, weigh and fill cookies into pouches starts with WeighPack's stainless-steel sanitary-designed incline infeed conveyor, our PrimoCombi multihead weigher, and the VerTek vertical form-fill-seal machine.

“This system is capable of operating at speeds of up to 50 packages per minute and only uses a footprint of less than 100 square feet, including the conveyor.”

As Taraborelli explains, “The process begins with the incline infeed conveyor gently transferring product from ground level to the PrimoCombi for automatic weighing.



A sample of the fine plastic film bagging expertly performed by the WeighPack VerTek Junior bagger before it is hand-packed by Terra Cotta staff into paperboard cartons printed by Beneco Packaging.



Because shortbread cookies crumble easily from over handling, the 10-head PrimoCombi automatic weighing system, designed and manufactured by WeighPack Systems, weighs product to within a single gram of tolerance before gently sliding it down a special-designed angled chute to create a softer landing spot for the cookies in the bagger below.



Terra Cotta Food has been so impressed by the ease-of-use and robustness of its other WeighPack System machines, that it recently purchased a SlekWrapper 40 flowwrapping unit to better help the bakery accommodate its growing production volumes.



The easy-to-operate WeighPack Primo360 operating system provides Terra Cotta with up-to-the-minute reports on productivity, yield analysis and other key process indicators on the PrimoCombi weighing solution.

“The PrimoCombi combination weigher accurately weighs within one gram of tolerance and then dispenses to the VerTek vertical form-fill-seal machine,” Taraborelli continues.

“The VerTek, using flat rollstock film, then forms a pillow pouch, fills and seals the finished pouch with these delicious cookies,” states Taraborelli.

Despite the obvious advantages of automating Terra Cotta’s production line, Brass says choosing a packaging system was a bit of a process.

“The WeighPack purchase was quite the big deal for us, and wasn’t something I was taking lightly,” Brass explains.

“I did my research, went to a few trade shows, met with a few manufacturers, and then took about six months to make a decision.”

Says Brass: “While the WeighPack equipment might have been the most expensive of the three companies I had focused on, I was sold on the fact that with a Canadian system, and with the proper service technicians who understand it, Terra Cotta would not experience production line downtime owing to mechanical breakdown thanks to proximity.”

“We knew that WeighPack Systems equipment had a great reputation in the industry for being robust,” he says.

“The WeighPack option removes the scary downtime scenario, and provides me with a more effective way of recouping my ROI (return-on-investment).”

“I call my WeighPack system my Bentley,” smiles Brass, “but unfortunately I can’t drive it.”

The *PrimoCombi* automatic weigher provides computer-programmed accuracy of product weight.

While it seems like a no-brainer to purchase equipment that can simplify production line efficiencies, Brass did have concerns in respect to product handling.

“Cookies crumble, and shortbread cookies crumble even more, due to jostling,” mentions Brass.

When the cookies enter the weigher and are dispensed in accurate amounts down into the *VerTek Junior* bagger, there could have been considerable damage to the product, says Brass citing basic physics.

Rather than the *PrimoCombi* weigher releasing the cookies—shortbread cookies were used during testing—straight down into the *VerTek Junior* bagger, WeighPack added a chute, positioned at an angle, to create a softer landing for the cookies.

In fact, the *VerTek Junior* is actually placed a fair bit off-center—rather than its usual spot of directly under the *PrimoCombi*—to ensure the product slides, rather than drops into the bag.

“They also added a plastic flap with fingers at the top of the downward slope to slow the descent of the cookie to further prevent damage,” raves Brass.

“As well, the WeighPack Systems’ incline infeed conveyor that takes the product up to the *PrimoCombi* only has to drop it a short distance onto a platform, before it moves down to the weigh filler bucket heads.

“All in all, it’s a very gentle system,” Brass acknowledges. “WeighPack Systems was really great in implementing the modifications for us. We really appreciate it.”

According to Brass, Terra Cotta runs the WeighPack *VerTek Junior* vertical bagging system at a comfortable rate of about 45 bags per minute, although it can go faster when needed.

Moreover the *VerTek Junior* is able to work with bag widths from as small as one inch up to five inches, and it creates a superb seal for laminated films.

“The VerTek Junior and the PrimoCombi units are controlled by a computer that is very user-friendly,” says Brass.

“We can easily program recipes into it for our different clients and, literally, once the scale has loaded the cookies and the film is on the equipment, you just input whatever recipe you wish and the automatic filling and sealing begins.”

The servo-driven *VerTek Junior* provides PLC (programmable logic controller)-based touchscreen controls, offers a large memory storage for recipes, and is made of a robust stainless-steel construction.

“The entire WeighPack automation system has eliminated a labor bottleneck for us,” extols Brass, adding that working with WeighPack and its people made his decision to purchase a second flowwrapper—a WeighPack *SlekWrapper 40*—a much easier decision.

Scheduled to be installed at the facility in June, the *SlekWrapper 40* flowwrapper will individually wrap cookies of various sizes, and will help the company accommodate the growing demand for its cookies.

“The SlekWrapper 40 automatic flowwrapper is



The WeighPack VerTek Junior bagger at Terra Cotta Food is placed off-center from the PrimoCombi weigher with an angled slide to ensure a gentle drop of cookie products.

the most compact high performance flowwrapper on the market today,” says Paxiom Group territory manager Mark McGlogan.

“It’s really rewarding to partner with a company like Terra Cotta Foods, who have a great vision, knowing that as they grow, we will grow with them.”

The feeling is mutual, as Brass has been very impressed by WeighPack’s eye for superior customer service.

“WeighPack has been very good with their service,” Brass states. “Their phone support has been great.”

“For a company like ours, constantly growing, they are on the phone with us for any issue we have, walking us through things step-by-step.

“And, should it be required, they will also come out and see us to resolve any issue we might have,” relates Brass.

A couple of years ago Brass says the company motto was ‘Let’s focus on excellence; let’s focus on Canada, and let’s get this right.’

“And while that mantra is still holding true, it has allowed us to try and spread our wings to grab a piece of the global pie.”

As Brass sums up, “The growth we have achieved has been phenomenal, painful, and exciting, but it’s always been interesting and fun—thanks to the great people and companies we work alongside.” 🍁



To see a video on the WeighPack Systems’ PrimoCombi weigher, VerTek Junior bagger, and conveyor, please go to Canadian Packaging TV at www.canadianpackaging.com

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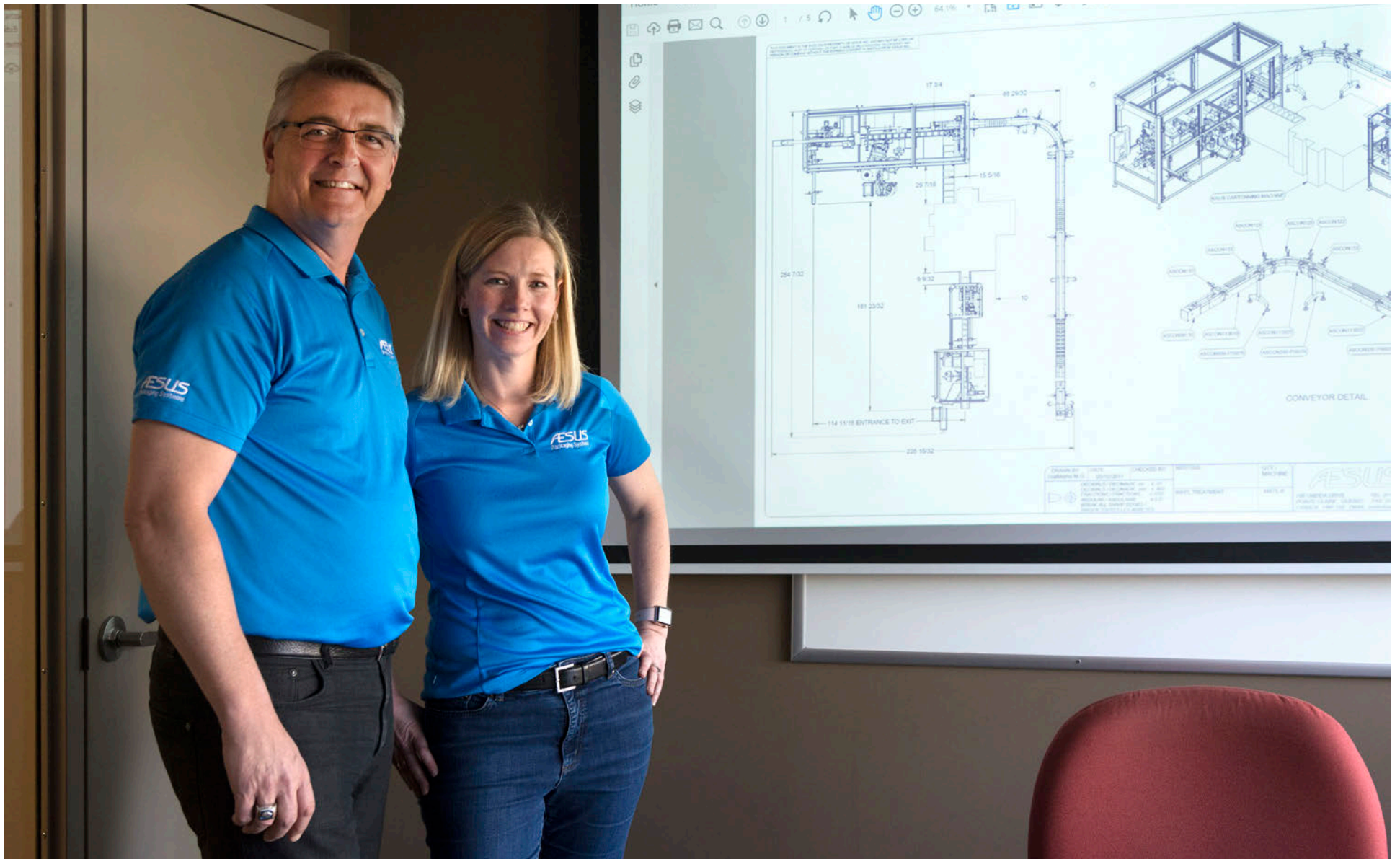
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Aesus Packaging Systems vice-president of sales Stephen Mons (left) and company president and chief executive officer Samantha Lewis strike a pose in front of a CAD (computer-aided design) display of a new packaging machine under development at the company's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Pointe-Claire, Que.

BUILT TO LAST

Superior craftsmanship and engineering help Canadian packaging machinery manufacturer grow from strength to stellar strength

BY GEORGE GUIDONI, EDITOR

PHOTOS BY PIERRE LONGTIN

Fifteen years in business may not seem like a really long time when talking about an industry tracing back well over a century.

But as always, it's what you do with that time that ultimately defines a company's market success, industry impact and, ultimately, its very legacy.

Founded in 2003 through a merger of several packaging machinery suppliers operating primarily in the Montreal region, the privately-owned **Aesus Packaging Systems** is certainly not a rookie or a fledgling upstart hoping to reinvent the wheel in search of instant riches in the global CPG (consumer packaged goods) manufacturing industries.

Boasting many decades, if not hundreds of years of cumulative experience in the machine-building segment of the packaging industry, some of the company's 107 full-time employees can trace their early days in the business back to the day when a Montreal company called **Kalish**, founded in 1956, virtually owned the Canadian market for pharmaceutical packaging equipment.

"At its zenith Kalish was one of the premier pharmaceutical and cosmetic packaging machine manufacturers in North America, employing over 300 people with annual sales over \$60 million," says Aesus Packaging Systems vice-president of sales Stephen Mons, noting that some of the company's key co-founders and principal



Housing Aesus Packaging Systems since 2005, the company's state-of-the-art production facility in Pointe-Claire has already been expanded three times to accommodate growing production volumes, with the company-owned property on the outskirts of Montreal providing plenty of room for any further expansion down the road if required.

investors are former employees or partners of **Kalish**, its one-time rival **D.L. Tech Inc.**, and **NJM-CLI**—the latter founded in 1972 by an ex-Kalish employee.

But with Kalish and NJM-CLI both eventually being acquired by larger U.S.-based machinery builders, it's nowadays up to companies like Aesus Packaging Systems to keep the legacy of packaging machine manufacturing in Canada alive



LABELING



Aesus Packaging Systems technician Maxim Périard is preparing to scribe markings with helpful instructions onto the machine to make the set-up quicker and easier for the end-user.



Since its market introduction just over two months ago, the new cutting-edge high-speed ECO-Starcapper capping machine has already attracted three new customer orders.

and well.

“Most of the Aesus employees who have stemmed from those other companies have considerable experience in packaging, sleeving and labeling machinery,” says Mons, citing this collective wealth of industry expertise and know-how as one of the company’s key competitive advantages.

“Certainly, our combined years of experience in the design and fabrication of our full range of packaging machinery is an important competitive strength,” says Mons.

The comprehensive Aesus equipment portfolio includes:

- Inline pressure-sensitive labeling machines covering the whole gamut from simple wraparound to front-and-back label applications;
- Shrinksleeve labeling systems for high-speed decorating of cans, bottles, cartons and other containers with pre-printed plastic labels passed through a heat tunnel to make the labels adhere to the surface;
- Automatic filling machines for both liquid and granular food and pharmaceutical products;
- Inline and starwheel capping machines and cap retorquers.

The breadth of Aesus’ equipment offerings is aptly matched by its diverse customer base that includes many leading pharmaceutical, cosmetics, personal-care, medical device, fresh produce, pre-packaged food, nutraceutical and, as sign of the times, cannabis producers.

Mons calls this diversification “a good thing” for Aesus.

“Whenever one of these industries happens to be ‘off’ and the sales are down,” Mons says, “we can be sure that one of the others will be doing better than usual.

“They always seem to offset each other and create a good balance and mix for us to maintain our growth.”

One of the relatively new industries that has Mons particularly excited about future growth prospects is the fast-growing North American craft-beer market, where the trend to canned beer provides plenty of opportunities for suppliers of

shrinksleeving and accessory equipment such as shrink tunnels.

“With over 6,500 craft-brewers in the U.S. alone, the trend to package the beers in cans is a huge opportunity for us to supply the market with our shrink labelers and patented heat-tunnels,” says Mons, proudly citing the company’s in-house development of an innovative hybrid heat tunnel that uses dry infrared electric heat and steam, created by an onboard steam generator, to shrinksleeve all types of containers.

“Both of these heat sources provide the perfect combination for achieving perfect results on decorative shrink film that is applied to cans and bottles,” Mons explains, calling the machine a “real winner.

“It has really taken off in the marketplace,” Mons beams.

“In three years we have sold over 85 of these hybrid tunnels, with many more orders still coming in.”

The burgeoning sports nutrition market has also provided fresh new business opportunities for Aesus, according to Mons, with suppliers of vitamins and proteins supplements especially finding Aesus’ labeling solutions a perfect fit for their needs.

“With consumers becoming more conscientious about their health and fitness, this is a market that is showing no signs of letting up any time soon,” Mons reflects.

“People of all ages are eating much better, going to their local gyms and fitness centers, and taking vitamins and protein supplements as part of this healthier lifestyle trend.”

For other similar innovations, Mons point to the major performance enhancements to the company’s “already popular” inline gear-pump filling technology achieved by incorporating direct-drive servomotors to control each pump individually.

“What makes this even more interesting is that these fillers now come as standard with an option called ‘Profile Filling,’ which allows the user to enter the fill nozzle into the bottom of a bottle and start the filling cycle at a very slow rate,”



Expert welder Fred Doucet busy at work welding up one of the many high-strength frames fabricated in-house for the company’s bestselling AF1 liquid fillers shipped and installed throughout the world.



With its keen focus on quality, Aesus Packaging Systems incorporates only the best available standard electrical motor components, such as the Regal Beloit Leeson motor above, across its wide range of packaging machine solutions.



World-renowned Festo pneumatic components and automation devices are a common feature on many packaging machines assembled at the state-of-the-art facility.



Aesus technician Chris Tinkler (*foreground*) and supervisor Gilles Leger finetune a new labeling machine, while service technician Benoit Rheault and supervisor Mario Gauthier (*background*) make final adjustments prior to a Factory Acceptance Test.



A mezzanine view of the Point-Claire plant's Quality Control department reveals a busy line-up of newly-built packaging machines being prepared for the Factory Acceptance Tests before shipment to customers.

Mons explains.

"After reaching about 10 per cent of the fill, you can accelerate to near 100-per cent speed and, as you almost reach the total fill, you can then automatically decelerate the fill."

According to Mons, "This helps to maximize the amount of product in the bottle and, more importantly, significantly decrease foaming should there be surfactants in the liquid being filled," says Mons, saying Aesus has incorporated this technology on the company's bestselling **AF1** range of small automatic fillers for

low-volume producers just starting out.

This spirit of innovation is continually reinforced through the company's firm commitment to a 'vertical manufacturing' model that provide the Aesus plant "complete control of our own production at our impressive, state-of-the-art machine shop," according to Mons.

"Every machine that we offer to the market is 100-percent designed and manufactured at this facility," he states, pointing out the plant ships an average of three to five new finished machines to customers per week on a year-round basis.

As Mons relates, "We have an extensive vertical manufacturing shop that includes six CNC milling machines, a new CNC router, a Trumpf laser cutter and a CNC break press, as well as many other smaller machines to compliment the manufacturing process.

"More than 80 per cent of the machined components that go into our systems are designed and manufactured in-house."

Employing 11 fully-certified engineers across the plant's mechanical design, electrical and project management departments, Aesus thrives on taking on challenging custom projects that many of its competitors tend to pass up due to their complexity, cost or other reasons, according to Mons.

"Many of the OEM (original equipment manufacturer) companies that we compete against will not take on many of the custom labeling applications involving new container or bottle designs," Mons says. "But having a great engineering department and employing many people with decades of experience gives us the confidence to take on challenging projects that we increasingly see in the medical-device and high-end cosmetics industries."

Above all, the company's commitment to quality and superior customer services is second to none, according to Mons: "We fully stand behind our machinery with our staff of highly-trained technicians and engineers that work with our customers to ensure that their machinery runs to their complete satisfaction.

"Our service and spare parts department are always only a phone call away.

"We have a dedicated service department comprised of a service manager, a service coordinator and five factory-trained field service technicians," Mons expands.

"While we do occasionally use a few third-party technicians for troubleshooting situations, but when it comes to installing and training customers on new machinery, we know that the best-trained installers are ones that work at our factory.

"Should a situation arise on any Aesus machine in the field, we have a very high success rate of resolving the issue over the phone," Mons adds.

"For most machines, we can remotely access the PLC (programmable logic controller) to resolve any logic issue inside the machine, and we are also making effective use of today's smartphone technology, including either Facetime or Skype, to assist customers with problem-solving in real time and find a satisfactory resolution as quickly as possible."

"Aesus has already supplied different packaging machinery solutions to many countries around the world," Mons concludes, "and thanks to our experienced technical sales team and broad agency of international representatives, we look forward to delivering many more great solutions to more and more businesses worldwide in the years ahead." 🍁

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AUTOMATE NOW



Located in the Mexican state of Hidalgo, this Cruz Azul plant in Jasso produces eight different types of high-quality tile mortar.

CEMENTING THEIR GROWTH

Major Mexican cement producer covers new ground in production efficiency and product protection with end-of-line packaging automation

Gigantic bridges, towering high-rises, wide tunnels for roads, subways and sewage systems ... some of the biggest construction projects in Latin America are currently being carried out in Mexico.

As the region's second-largest cement market, right after Brazil, the country offers many lucrative opportunities to global construction companies—forcing Mexican producers like **Cooperativa La Cruz Azul** to keep developing more and better high-class materials to defend their domestic market turf.

Founded back in 1881, the Mexico City-headquartered company operates four plants around the country—with their combined output accounting for a 22-percent share of the domestic market.

The firm's annual output includes about eight million tons of Portland cement—widely used around the world as a basic ingredient of concrete, mortar, stucco and non-specialty grout with the company's main plant in Jasso, in the state of Hidalgo, accounting for a large portion of the production.

Located in a very limestone-rich part of the country, the Jasso plant is a revered corporate institution in the community, whose local professional soccer club was in fact founded by the cement plant's employees back in 1927.

And just as the club has achieved a significant level of success on the pitch over the years—currently playing in the top level of the Mexican national league—the cement plant has also grown from strength to strength, helping Cruz Azul to become the country's third-largest cement producer.

Always aiming to be ahead of the curve in terms of product innovation by developing new value-added products, a couple of years ago the company introduced a new line of high-quality tile mortar, available in eight different variations.

“The quality of the building materials, along with supplier reliability, are the decisive factors for remaining competitive in this business,” says Victor Luna, Cruz Azul's managing director in Hidalgo.



The Cruz Azul plant in Jasso required an entire line to bag, palletize and package eight different types of high-quality tile mortar produced there.

“Distributors and end customers always want the products to arrive by the required date and in precise quantities.”

While a small portion of the mortar is sold in giant heavy-duty bulk bags, the lion's share of the product is typically shipped in 20- and 25-kilogram bags—requiring the plant to look for a turnkey, start-to-finish packaging line solution with flexibility to meet some very challenging requirements.

Due to the varying densities and, consequently, the different flow properties of

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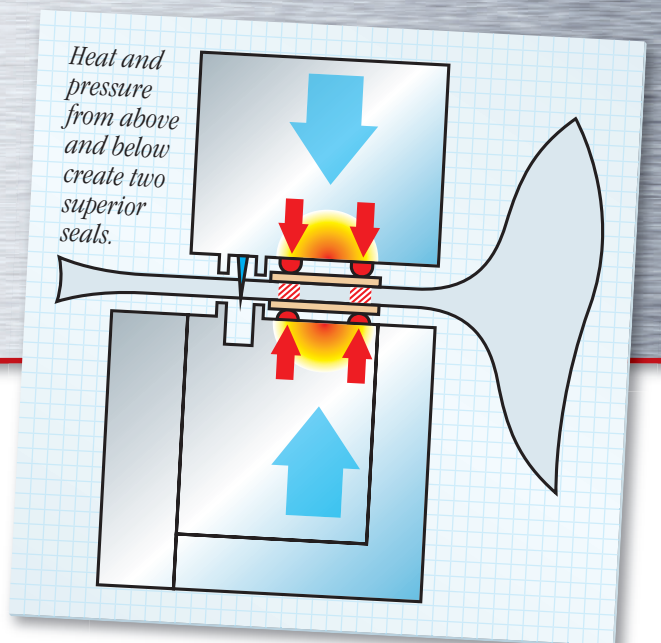


The new Beumer bag placer enabled the plant to further increase the efficiency of the filling system.



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the different variants of the new product line, the filling system would have to be adjustable to accommodate the different materials, as well as the smaller bag sizes, without extensive retrofitting of the machine by the employees.

In addition, the new line would also have to precisely palletize and stabilize the huge stack of bags, with another layer of protective packaging added to protect the palletized stacks against transport damage and environmental hazards while in storage outdoors.

After looking around for a reliable supplier to provide a single-source solution, the plant ultimately reached out to **BEUMER Group**, a leading German manufacturer of heavy-duty intralogistics systems for conveying, loading, palletizing, packaging, sortation and distribution applications.

"We have a long-standing relationship and trust in the Beumer brand," says Luna, citing successful Beumer equipment installation at another Cruz Azul plant in the state of Puebla back in 2008.

In that project, Beumer showed what it could do by supplying and installing five bucket elevators, two palletizers and two packaging lines in only 26 months, with the system still functioning as good as new to this day.

To get the Jasso plant project rolling, Beumer and the Jasso plant engineers settled on using Beumer's fully-automatic **fillpac R** filling system as the future line's centerpiece.

"Changing the required parameters is quick and simple with fillpac R, which fills the different materials into two- to four-ply paper valve bags very efficiently," explains Ralph Buchholz, director general at **BEUMER de México**.

Says Buchholz: "Cruz Azul attaches greatest value to the quality seal of



The BEUMER fillpac R filling system can be easily adjusted to match the changing parameters of the different materials.



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“Those responsible for the project even traveled to our headquarters in Beckum, Germany, to accept the systems in person.”

Soon after Beumer delivered the selected equipment in late 2015, three Beumer employees from Germany and one from Mexico were assigned to the project full-time to oversee the installation.

“We had to integrate the line into the existing building structure and the existing bulk storage technology,” Buchholz recalls.

“My colleagues mastered this challenge because our solutions can be easily adapted to all kinds of technical and structural conditions,” says Buchholz, explaining that the team had to completely rework the suspension system for the *fillpac R* filler to obtain maximum efficiency.

The *fillpac R* system operates with eight rotating filling spouts arranged in accordance to the so-called “impeller filling principle,” whereby it can handle even the fine-grain tile mortar at exceptionally high throughput rates.

“All the bags are continuously weighed during the filling process,” says Buchholz, noting the *fillpac R* is equipped with an electronic calibration-capable weighing unit to ensure that the bags are always filled with the same amount of material.

The system uses special software that enables filling spouts and scales to constantly compare the weight.

Whenever the determined weight is off, the bags are automatically removed, discharged onto a chute and opened.

The collected material is then quickly fed back into the process via a spillage screw conveyor and a bucket elevator.

Buchholz has high praise for the filling system’s modular structure and design.

“We equipped the system with a new Beumer bag placer because the material is so fine and volatile,” says Buchholz, “as well as adding a ream magazine for 700 bags.

“This allows Cruz Azul to further increase the efficiency of the filling system.”

As he explains, the system uses servomotors to drive the application unit and the suction gripper automatically, precisely, and energy-efficiently to position the bags from the stack securely onto the filling spout.

According to Buchholz, the system can pack 1,800 25-kilogram bags or 2,250 20-kilogram bags per hour with exceptionally high precision and repeatability.

“The operator can also adjust the Beumer bag placer to other bag formats,” he notes.

To handle the bags the most efficient way after filling, Beumer installed a fully-automatic *paletpac* layer palletizer capable of stacking 2,200 bags per hour in both eight- and 10-bag patterns, with extremely gentle product handling.

“A special twin-belt turning device brings the bags in the required, dimensionally stable position,” says Buchholz.

As he explains, the positioning accuracy of this device offers a great advantage compared to conventional turning machines, because the



The packaging line operates around the clock to enable the cement producer to reach its projected production goals.

system’s components move the bags without mechanically deforming them.

By moving at different speeds, the two parallel driven belt conveyors automatically turn the bags into the desired position.

The intelligent control of the twin-belt turning device also takes the dimension and weight of the filled bag into consideration to achieve that proper positioning, as specified by the pre-set packing pattern.

“No further adjustment is necessary, even with a product change,” Buchholz points out.

The finished bag stacks are then transported over roller conveyors to the Beumer *stretch hood A* packaging system to pack up 110 pallet stacks per hour using different film hoods, with film thickness ranging from 40 to 100 micrometers.

“It really depends on the type of tile mortar,” Buchholz says.

“The stretch hood packaging protects the product against dust and humidity during storage and on long transport routes,” Buchholz explains, “while ensuring that the bags remain stable on the pallet, without moving around.”

According to Buchholz, “The stretch hood A is extremely energy-efficient.

“It uses a film transport system, which is very gentle



The twin-belt turning device accurately positions the bags in a quick and gentle manner.

on the material, to introduce the previously cut and sealed film hood into the system, whereby the sealing seam already cools down on the way to the crimping and stretching unit.

“This allows for crimping to start without any delay,” he says, “thereby eliminating the need of energy-consuming cooling units and efficiency-reducing cooling times.”

Started up in June of 2016, the Beumer line has delivered on all the productivity and flexibility gains promised from the outset, according to Luna.

“This packaging line was tailor-made for the plant’s needs,” says Luna, adding he is especially impressed by the flexible filling technology.

“It saves a lot of time and brings great peace-of-mind to know that all these different types of mortar are getting to the customers a lot faster,” says Luna, adding he is proud of the fact that the Jasso plant is the site of the very first *fillpac R* installation in Latin America, with many more sure to follow down the road. 🍁

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THE LEGACY OF RINGS AROUND THE COLLARS

If you've ever done an Internet search on the environmental impact of plastic six-pack rings, you would be shocked by the calamities they have caused, with images of heart-wrenching scenes of all sorts of wildlife caught up in the refuse of our obsession with convenient living. But even long before the Internet arrived on the scene, noted environmentalists had decried the use of these heinous plastic rings, which first appeared in the summer of 1960 courtesy of packaging giant **ITW Hi-Cone**. Quickly deemed a packaging success for offering a simple and effective way to group and sell canned beverages, the rings became a ubiquitous feature of the beverage industry, despite coming in for heavy criticism from environmental groups for their horrific impact on marine wildlife by the late 1970s. The greatest shame may be the fact that all consumers have to do to greatly lessen the odds of these rings becoming a critter death trap is just make three simple cuts with scissors before discarding them for good, but it seems to be taking much too long for that message to sink through the critical mass of the consumer population.

Although these days you can still find more than a few companies using the plastic six-pack rings, the relentless pressure from environmental groups and legislators over the years is clearly leading many beverage producers to find novel ways to show they care. Not surprisingly, this eco-sensitivity seems to be more eagerly embraced by the up-and-coming ranks of the nature-touting craft brewers such as the Bracebridge, Ont.-based cottage country suds supremo **Muskoka Brewery**. Based in Bracebridge, the company claims to be the first in Canada to use the paperboard-based **CanCollar** multipack solution—developed by the Atlanta-based containerboard giant **WestRock**—for the colorful six-packs of its mischief-themed **Mad Tom** beer brand. This environmentally-sensible set of laminated paperboard rings is made primarily of renewable and responsibly sourced fibers, it's claimed, which have been tested to withstand the rough and tumble world of the beer supply chain. The **CanCollar** utilizes a special printable clay surface to allow brands to differentiate themselves with an extra touch of creative fare, which Muskoka happily leverages to full effect with some catchy sketch work depicting the relaxed landscapes of local cottage life—the very environment the brewer is so keen to preserve. The company also spruced up the brand's package design with the addition of more cottage scenery to the top portion of their 355-ml and 473-ml cans, doing an outstanding job of marrying the product to the packaging and finding new ways to highlight not only their **Mad Tom** offering, but for their entire core line of craft beers. I, for one, can't wait to try them all this summer.



When Calgary-based **Big Rock Brewery** decided to open shop in Toronto recently with a new brewpub located directly underneath my workplace in the Liberty Village district of Toronto, I made two important discoveries. First, beer does not smell anywhere near as enticing during the brewing process as it does on a hot summer day on a patio: it is not pleasant, full stop.

But getting beyond the stench of the brewing process, I've also discovered that those folks from Alberta sure know how to brew a fine craft beer. Having sampled a number of Big Rock's offerings over time, I ultimately crowned the **Citradelic Single Hop IPA** as my chosen favorite—often prompting me to gleefully run down the stairs after work, like a schoolboy at the ring of the bell, to the beer store portion of the pub and load up. Making my trek home easier is the four-pack can carrier—manufactured by the Eugene, Ore.-based **PakTech**—outfitted with a handy little finger handle to provide an extra secure fit for all the standard 355-ml, 473-ml and 500-ml can sizes, while also making a satisfying audible click whenever you add or remove a can from the bunch. Offered in a generous variety of colors and sizes to outfit four-, six- and 12-packs, the 100-percent recyclable carriers are claimed to be made from 96-percent post-consumer resins. However great that sounds, I am even more impressed with how compact and eminently reusable these carriers are, greatly lessening the risk of finding their way into the environment to bring harm to my wildlife buddies.



I love reusable packaging. Whether it's housing loose screws in an old **Altoids** mint tin or wrapping electronic peripherals in a purple **Crown Royal** rye cloth-bag, I seem to have no trouble finding ways to reuse old packaging. So I was pretty upset when I lost my travel pack of **Band-Aid** brand bandages marketed by the Markham, Ont.-based personal-care stalwart **Johnson & Johnson Inc.** I've been traveling the world with the same travel pack for years until then, refilling the contents when they'd run low, during which time the product label had faded, the plastic had yellowed, but the little contraption continued to work with admirable yeoman's efficiency. Happily good design tends to stick around, so when I found the new-generation eight-piece travel pack in my local drug store, it was a relief to see that little of substance had changed. The slim clamshell design fully retains its original aesthetic appeal, and the pack's ability to protect its important contents for many refills to come is truly beyond reproach.

Sometimes new packaging can make you feel like a sucker, which was my initial reaction upon a happy recent discovery of the 226-gram of the **I Can't Believe It's Not Butter** brand of margarine produced by **Unilever** in Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Thinking of all the years I wasted, like a sucker, opening tubs, removing inner seals, and using a knife to spread margarine on my toast and, even more absurdly, doing the same for my popcorn, I was sold in a minute. Now a simple gentle press of the dispenser cap of the bottle lets me spread the joy and flavor of this famous cheeky-named butter substitute across a whole variety of foods, with brand reinforcement automatically pumped out with every squeeze of this elegant contraption, sporting all the familiar sunny graphics featured on the brand's traditional tubs.



If spray-on butter substitutes are not weird enough for you, try taking a chance on the weird and wild flavors of **Bean Boozled**, the wacky game of risk and reward invented by the Fairfield, Ca.-based **Jelly Belly Candy Company**. The bean-shaped treats first got their 15 minutes of fame in the 1980s, when former U.S. president Ronald Reagan publicly acknowledged having a fancy for them. But what started out with eight simple flavors has come a long way, and maybe even too far, with flavors like **Moldy Cheese** and **Lawn Clippings**. But that's exactly part of the fun you get with the fourth-generation **Bean Boozled** package, which comes with 100 grams of **Jelly Belly** candies and a spinner. As the colorful package explains, players flick the spinner to point to one of the colorful beans contained in the tray next to it. Land on a white-and-yellow speckled bean and you may be rewarded with a **Buttered Popcorn** treat or, if it's not your day, a **Rotten Egg**. According to the candy legend on the underside, there are 20 flavors: 10 tasty ones and 10 along the lines of **Canned Dog Food** or **Stinky Socks**, so it's a 50-50 proposition. Perhaps Forrest Gump was a little premature in likening life to a box of chocolates; the **Jelly Belly** candies seem to be somewhat more true life in this corner, for better or worse.

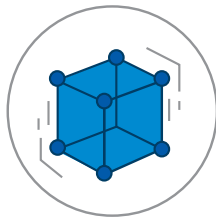
Paul Pethick is a freelance writer and healthcare communications editor based in Toronto.

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