

Alufoil and closures lead the way in drink packs

— More and more alcoholic drinks companies are finding alufoil based packs can add impact to their products – helping to reach new markets



Not so long ago consumers would take for granted that alcoholic drinks and mixers would only come in glass bottles or cans. Today, more and more packs featuring alufoil are achieving high levels of consumer acceptance. Cartons and pouches are now seen as viable alternatives for wine, beer, cider and spirits. For younger consumers pouches with cocktails are seen as convenient and ultra 'cool'!

It is not only fashion which is driving these changes in attitude. There are some real cost and environmental benefits compared with traditional packs and, with advances in both laminate and printing technologies, the manufacturers can offer extended shelf life and high impact designs in a variety of handy shapes and sizes.

Current research by Mintel has discovered that, for UK wine consumers, almost 3 out of 4 see no difference to the quality of wine delivered in boxes, cartons or pouches, rather than bottles – a staggering level of acceptance in a very short period. In addition the rise in both use and popularity of aluminium closures on bottled wines has added to the growing acceptance of new packaging formats in the alcoholic drinks sector.

According to Chris Wisson, senior drinks analyst at Mintel, "Recent years have seen many wine drinkers reappraising their perceptions and use of wine in differing formats and packaging styles ... keeping the wine for a longer period of time than in a bottle, facilitating more flexible usage and encouraging moderate drinking."

But the potential is not just in the wine sector and not restricted to Western markets. Indeed the emerging economies such as Asia, India and Brazil, as well as mature markets like Japan, are very enthusiastic about new styles of packaging for alcoholic drinks.

User and eco friendly

The lighter weight and ease of recycling alufoil, as well as other materials used in these styles of pack, are adding to their popularity with both consumers and retailers. Pouches and cartons are also less fragile and can reduce the potential for damage during transport. The greatly reduced weight means savings in both fuel and the number of vehicles required. For marketers the visual impact of these packs can be a major factor. The ability of

modern alufoil laminates to accept the highest quality printing methods enables them to create striking images on both pouches. In addition the silvery sheen of alufoil creates a high quality impression for pouched alcoholic drinks. While the brick style of carton allows four sided branding at less cost than the application of multiple labels on bottles. As we shall see, thanks to recent developments in secure spout technology, concerns about tampering with the contents have been largely allayed.

In fact more and more alufoil-based packs are gaining acceptance in the alcoholic drinks sector, making the future for market development very exciting. ///

Open for entries



Don't miss your chance to enter the Alufoil Trophy 2014 which awards European aluminium foil packaging solutions that provide excellence in innovation, convenience, environmental responsibility, product protection and marketing and design.

Deadline for entries: 29th November 2013. /// For more information and to enter go to: www.alufoil.org

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Alcoholic beverages and mixers



Draft beer in expanding pack

The CarboPouch™ development from PPI Technologies is an economical system which enables craft draft beer brewers to fill, on-site, ready-to-go Single25™ or Multi64™ pouches made with a plastic/nylon/alufoil laminate incorporating a spout and cap. It is ideal for the distribution of these beers for use at home, or at sports functions and outside events where glass or metal containers are not allowed.

The three sided seal pouches comprise a patented film laminate using PET/AL/NY/LLDPE. The company says the special attributes of the nylon allow the pouch to stretch after filling with a carbonated product, while the alufoil protects the contents of the pouch. The organoleptic film structure ensures no loss of flavour or ingress of taint.



A shelf life of up to two weeks can be achieved when the beer is kept refrigerated, which is longer than normally achieved for this type of product. Low-carbonated water and shelf-stable energy drinks can also be filled into the CarboPouch. The company also makes the Turbo Tap filling system for the pouches which are transported flat to the filling/sales point.

The Single25™ pouch has a smooth side and a scalloped edge feature for comfort grip. The fitment has been designed to accommodate the carbonation cap that includes an oxygen scavenger to eliminate the oxygen that is left in the headspace after filling. The capacity of the Single25™ is 240ml (8oz) and the stand-up Multi64™ has a 1.8 litre capacity. ///

Pouches power ahead ...

— The use of alufoil-based pouches for alcoholic drinks, cocktails and mixers is powering ahead and has been adopted by major drinks brands

According to a recent survey by Nielsen sales in the USA of alcoholic beverages packaged in a pouch approached \$200 million in annual sales by Q3 of 2012. Pouch retail sales were only \$12 million in a similar twelve-month period to August 2010.

This trend shows no signs of slowing with 12% of US alcoholic-beverage buyers purchasing a pouch product in the last twelve months, which is twice the number of people who tried it the previous year. The growth in popularity is attracting new product entries, flavours and brands, including many of the biggest supplier names in the alcoholic beverage business.

Big global brands which are adopting the pouch include Diageo (Smirnoff), Pernod Ricard (Malibu) and Constellation (Arbor Mist). The alcoholic contents of the pouches vary and include malt, wine and spirits, as well as cocktails and mixers, depending on the brand. They all have convenience appeal! Many are marketed as a frozen cocktail with no need for a blender – just freeze, squeeze and serve! Others claim quicker chilling, easy pouring and packaging with environmental benefits.

Sales of alcohol pouches in the USA jumped 153% to more than \$150 million in 2012. Pouches are generally single serve 10oz, retailing at less than \$2 and offer no mess, fancy bar drinking at home.

Meanwhile Daily's cocktails are an established fea-

ture of the fun alcoholic beverage scene. They come in a myriad of flavours, with an enticing and attractive pouch which is as bright and breezy as the drinks themselves. The material uses 9 micron alufoil in a four layer lamination process that substantially reduces fold or stress fractures, while producing consistent barrier and excellent shelf life. Daily's come in a range of standard and low calorie formats and are recognised for their convenience and ease of use.



Another winning pouch format is Bob & Stacy's Ultra Premium Vodka. The product is filled into a 200ml stand-up pouch dubbed the FlexPouch which has a reclosable, tamper-evident plastic spout. Made from a four-layer laminate of polyethylene and alufoil the foil's silver effect is used as a fourth colour in the pouch, complementing white, blue and black ink.

The pouch-making machine attaches the spout to the pouch and seals all seams, then the filling occurs through the plastic spout. In addition to its merchandising impact and portability, the vodka pouch provides environmental advantages. Makers Good Time Beverages estimates the flexible package has an 80% smaller carbon footprint than conventional beverage packages and generates 90% less landfill waste. ///

Modern drinks in modern packs

With more and more consumers turning to pre-mixed drinks or more convenient 'on-the-go' styles of pack the pre-made or reel-fed pouches from Amcor Flexibles not only look good but also cater

for the modern taste in alcoholic refreshments and mixers, including juices, which are an increasingly popular component of cocktail drinks.

Pouches have many benefits including high barrier properties – as you would expect with alufoil based laminates. They are suitable for hot fill, pasteurisation, aseptic filling, retorting and offer a number of multiple filling options. Closure options available enable laser for easy opening and resealable spout. Amcor says the pouches have high standards in food safety as well as optimal machine performance. The company has developed specific sealant films to match each application for the material structures of pet/alu/sealant film; pet/alu/opa/sealant film; and pet/met pet/sealant film. ///



Alcoholic beverages and mixers

Tropical drinks in perfect condition



UHT processing followed by filling in aseptic carton packs supplied by SIG Combibloc is the perfect combination to ensure that nutritious coconut water, which is easily impaired by processing, is treated and packaged gently.

Tipco, one of South-East Asia's leading food and beverage manufacturers, has opted to offer coconut water in these aseptic carton packs. Coconut water is highly valued in Thailand as one of the healthiest beverages around. It is fat-free, and has been widely enjoyed as a natural source of valuable nutrients that are good for health and well-being, and an aid to beauty.

Filling the sterile products in protective carton packs will facilitate exports to countries such as the United States, Canada and Brazil, says Tipco. The company is confident that the healthy, traditional tropical drink will catch on as a trend beverage in other parts of the world as well. So it may not be alcoholic but it is certainly a fun drink and, thanks to aseptic technologies using alufoil it will soon be more widely available. ///

Spirited performance

While all the talk these days is about aluminium closures for wine it is easy to forget that the first application, and one which is still universal, is on bottles of spirits – such as whiskey, gin and vodka.



These closures meet all the needs of both the fillers and consumers: there is no degradation of the cork, so the contents is safe for years; no taint, keeping the taste preserved exactly as it should be; its easy to open and reclose for ultimate convenience and storage; and tamper evidence and anti-counterfeiting measures can be incorporated.

Currently major brands face annual loss of revenue estimated to be in excess of \$300 million, as well as potential damage to their reputation, due to counterfeit products. So any help the closure can offer to overcome this serious problem is a major benefit.

Guala Closures Group has been serving the sector for 50 years and in that time has developed a number of measures, from the simplest tamper evidence features, through customised closures, to highly sophisticated valve systems to prevent refilling.

And all this with a keen eye for design to reflect the image of the precious liquids inside! ///



Closure with a history of excellence

Stelvin®, the original wine screw cap from Amcor Flexibles Capsules, has a pedigree stretching back more than 40 years and, with its proven technology, still enjoys a leading position among the different methods of wine closure.

With the tremendous success of the wine screw cap market Stelvin® has continued to enjoy growth for all kinds of quality wines whether red, white or rosé. With the market predicted to continue growing the company believe the product is well placed to meet the requirements of both existing and new customers.

Thanks to its long history Amcor says Stelvin® screw cap technology is now recognized worldwide as a packaging solution which offers many benefits and long-term sustainable solutions for wine makers and wine lovers alike.

These benefits include the product being TCA-free: no consumer disappointment and no environmental waste associated with cork taint; consistent taste from bottle to bottle; the preservation of flavour, taste and freshness; a steady rate of in-bottle ageing; and, highly important for today's consumers, easy bottle opening and resealing, plus horizontal or vertical storage once re-closed.

Further, the wide range of caps offered can be decorated to a very high standard to meet the brand requirements and up-to-the-minute market trends. ///



Sustainability

Style with sustainability as closure recycling rates rise

— As recycling rates for aluminium closures reach 40% across Europe winemakers have even more reason to make the switch

Average recycling rates across Europe for aluminium closures has now reached 40% according to recent figures gathered by EAFA. Depending on the collection and sorting infrastructure in place, recycling rates for closures vary and can range from over 80% in Germany to about 40-50% in countries like the UK and Italy. Even countries, where collection systems are not yet fully developed, might already recycle 20-30% of all aluminium closures.

Aluminium closures are already used extensively for spirits, water, olive oil and many other products such as juices and pharmaceuticals. The size and style of closure can vary considerably so the recycling chain is by no means straightforward. Increasingly wine-makers are turning to aluminium closures as a convenient, sustainable and high performance alternative to cork – making an even stronger case for effective collection and recycling

“Every additional increase in the recycling rate makes aluminium closures more and more attractive for winemakers and marketers – from the environmental viewpoint as well”, says EAFA’s Executive Director Stefan Glimm, referring to the increasingly robust position of aluminium closures in the sustainability debate.

“Once again we can demonstrate that aluminium is a material with a high functionality in product



Greater awareness of the benefits and sustainability credentials of aluminium closures is being achieved through the ‘Aluminium Closures – Turn 360°’ information campaign. Launched by leading European manufacturers of aluminium closures and organised by EAFA in late 2012, the campaign provides details of the advantages of this modern closure method and is aimed particularly at the wine making industry’s decision makers, providing “food for thought” about resource efficiency, sustainability and the recycling issues.



TURN 360°
aluminium-closures.org

preservation and with impressive recycling and sustainability credentials. It can be recycled endlessly and the recycling saves up to 95% energy use compared to its primary production, with the corresponding savings in greenhouse gas emissions,” he added.

Considering their small size and the fact they are often still attached to the empty bottle, aluminium closures could be regarded as a challenging in the recycling chain. Thanks to modern technologies, they can be collected either with the mixed packaging fraction or together with the glass collection stream. Aluminium closures collected together with the mixed packaging fraction are easily separated with eddy-current systems. Similar systems are also used to separate the closures in the glass packaging fraction.

As aluminium can be recycled to make other valuable products and uses far less energy than for primary production, it retains a very high value as a reusable material, making the economics of the recycling process viable for both material routes.

The recycling rates are calculated on the basis of publicly available national aluminium recycling rates and market data from EAFA member companies. This data also shows the considerable extent to which consumption volumes and recycling rates vary from one country to another. ///

A perfect barbeque partnership heats up

Following the successful sponsorship of the World Grill & BBQ Championship in Gronau, Germany, EAFA, in partnership with EAA, has announced its continuing support as a regular sponsor of such championships. The 2011 Championship saw 73 professional barbecue teams from all over the world competed



to an audience of more than 100,000 visitors. The next event will take place 24-25 August 2013 in Oostende, Belgium and is open for 40 Belgium and European BBQ teams.

Novelis Ohler Packaging will supply the foil containers for all teams, serving an anticipated 30,000 visitors at the championship in Oostende. Also backing the initiative, leading household foil



supplier ITS, has launched an 18 micron BBQ & Grill Foil featuring the Aluminium BBQ logo issued by EAFA and EAA. ///



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2 x PLUS SOLIDE – QUALITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE | 30 MÈTRES

alufoil
European Aluminium Foil Association e.V.

The international body representing foil rollers and manufactures of aluminium closures, containers, household foil and all kinds of flexible packaging.



— Find out more about alufoil!

Visit www.alufoil.org where you can find out all about every EAFA member, make business enquiries and see the latest news about alufoil applications and the industry.

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