



Romania's secret to bottling and packaging beverages

Keeping natural effervescence

In Romania, history, culture and traditions are perfectly intertwined with the natural beauties of the environment, which represent a precious resource for human health and well-being. With a third of the mineral and thermal waters of Europe, Romania boasts the presence of 70 resorts, where it is possible to treat various illnesses. The merit of this wealth derives from the geological structure of its mountains.



Norbert Varga, CEO of Alconor Company

In the north-western part of the country, the pure water springs of the City of Carei, in the county of Satu Mare, have ensured the development and success of Alconor Company, a leading company in the production of beverages and mineral water. The company has distinguished itself in Romania and abroad thanks to the ability to embrace new challenges, to seize the new opportunities offered by the continuous changes in the market. To achieve and maintain high quality levels, within the production lines of

the Carei and Voluntari (Bucharest) plants, Alconor uses different types of machines supplied by SMI, such as rotary stretch-blow moulders for the production of PET bottles, within fully automatic bottling and packaging lines which also include secondary and tertiary packaging systems and conveyor lines.

The company's headquarters have been located, since its foundation in 1999, in the city of Carei, in the county of Satu Mare (north-western part of Romania), in the region of Transylvania. Initially Alconor only produced soft drinks, but, in 2014, 15 years after the first plant, it decided to expand the business by inaugurating a new production plant in Voluntari-Bucharest, where three modern fully automated bottling lines are currently installed.

Today, Alconor Company is one of the most active and competitive companies in Romania in the production of soft drinks and water and has transformed itself from a family business to

an industrial company appreciated at national level, the production of which is carried out entirely in the two factories in Carei and Bucharest, on an area of 7,000 m² and then stored on a total storage area of 15,000 m². From the initial activity of bottling carbonated soft drinks in PET containers, the product range has expanded to spring water, energy drinks and soft drinks. The Romanian company markets both products with its own registered brands, created and developed in over two decades of activity, and private label products of national and international partners.



SFP 30 Ergon stretch film wrapper

Together with Beverage Drink Srl, the group company specialised in distribution, and the support of reliable partners, Alconor Company perfectly covers 99% of the territory of Romania, easily reaching almost all counties. The company is able to satisfy even very high production requirements, through a daily load capacity of 1,000 t and thanks to five distribution centers in Carei, Chişineu Criş, Târnăveni, Timișoara and Bucharest.

In 2019, the Romanian company exceeded 200 million litres of water and soft drinks produced, the equivalent of 10,000 trucks. From that date, the annual production of Alconor is around 250 million litres, an objective achieved thanks to the continual investments in new technologies that allow Alconor to constantly improve its performance at an industrial and financial level. The number of employees, which today sees the presence of around 300 people, is also constantly growing.

Transformation and investments

The diversification of the products offered by Alconor made it necessary to install various bottling and packaging lines; furthermore, the objective of envi-

ronmental sustainability imposed on the Romanian company investment choices that favoured plants and machinery compatible with the best standards for environmental respect and energy saving, as demonstrated by the recent installation of an SMI SFP 30 Ergon stretch film packaging machine.

"[...] To achieve and maintain high levels of production quality, within the Carei and Bucharest plants, we use systems supplied by leading companies in the sector, such as rotary stretch-blow moulders for PET bottles and the fully automatic bottling and packaging lines supplied by SMI, who fully satisfy our requests", says Norbert Varga, CEO of Alconor Company. Currently the company has several production lines in which PET containers of different sizes are bottled: from small formats of 0.33l and 0.5l, to standard formats of 1.5l, 2l and 3l, up to large capacity containers of 5l and 6l. "We are constantly attentive to the latest technological trends in the market and, within our factories, we adopt the most efficient solutions that meet the most rigorous international quality standards and requirements to offer our customers high-end products at competitive prices", continues Norbert Varga, CEO of Alconor Company.

Focus on quality

Alconor Company has paid close attention to all stages of bottling and packaging of its products, which are constantly subjected to scrupulous laboratory checks, to guarantee the high-quality standards that the company offers its customers. For this reason, Alconor adopts a food safety, management system, based on the HACCP (Hazard Analysis Control Critical Points) and ISO 22000 regulations issued by Tüv Rheinland.

SMI East Europe: local service

The constant support provided by the SMI East Europe branch, allowed Alconor to face the strong changes imposed by the market in the 2000s, a period of time in which both consumption habits and the way of communicating changed.

The flexibility offered by the bottling and packaging lines supplied by SMI, has allowed Alconor to embrace new market challenges, seize opportuni-

ties and adapt quickly to changes. The SMI East Europe S.r.l. branch, located in Timosoara, provides its services throughout the territory of Romania and the surrounding areas; the headquarters of the SMI Group company occupies an area of approximately 100m² and has spaces equipped for sales, after-sales and administrative assistance. Alconor Company, thanks to the positive experience found in the supply of the first bottling line in 2007 - explains Claudio Begnis - has relied on SMI to face the growth of the market and to invest in new production lines, both for the headquarters of Carei and for the new Bucharest plant.

Full of energy and the importance of diversification

At the beginning of its business, Alconor Company only bottled carbonated soft drinks in PET contain-

ers, while today, thanks to the use of modern technologies, it continues to surprise its customers by launching new products or packaging existing ones in increasingly innovative and original packaging solutions. For example, the fruit-based flavoured water "Aromatic Western Water" is a joy for the palate thanks to the aroma of lemon or strawberries and to the eyes, thanks to sublime "packaging", made according to the latest market trends. The "Squizzly" lemonade remains among the favourite summer drinks for entire generations, as well as the "Max Speed" brand, energy products, a delicious energy drink to recharge your batteries and vitamin B, which, since 2020, has been the subject of an image "restyling".

www.smigroup.it
www.alconor.ro

Plant in Carei - SMI equipment:

3,600 bph PET bottling line with a rotary stretch-blower EBS 3 HC Ergon

Products worked: 5 and 6l large capacity bottles

End-of-line 24,000 bph, PET bottles, consisting of:

- SK 800F Ergon shrinkwrapper
- HA 80 handle applicator
- Packsorter divider and conveyor belts
- APS 3090P Ergon automatic palletising system
- Containers worked: 0.5l and 2l bottles in PET
- Packs created: 0.5l bottles in 4x3 film only + handle and 2l bottles in 3x2 film only + handle
- Pallets worked: 800x1,200 mm

10,800 bph PET bottling line, consisting of:

- SR6 rotary stretch-blow-moulder
- SK 300F packer
- SFP 30 Ergon stretch film wrapper
- DV 200 divider and conveyor belts
- Containers worked: 0.33l, 0.5l, 0.75l, 1l, 2l and 3l bottles in PET
- Packs created on the SK 300F packer: 0.33l and 0.5l bottles in 4x3 film only, and 2l and 3l bottles in 3x2 film only
- Packs created in stretch film on the SFP 30: 0.5l bottles in 2x4 film only, and 0.75l, 1l, 2l and 3l bottles in 2x3 film only
- Pallets worked: 800x1,200 mm

SK 450T Packer and conveyor belts

- Containers worked: 0.25l Slim; 0.5l cans and 2l PET
- Packs created: 0.25l Slim; 0.5l cans in 6x4 in tray + film and 2l bottles in 3x2 film only