

HOLDERHOF

*Apple juice: an explosion
of goodness that is making
the market grow*

WP 1000 ERGON

**CARDBOARD CASES
ARE GAINING SPEED**



IN THIS ISSUE



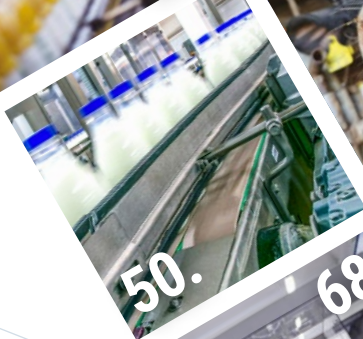
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EDITORIAL 2025/31

Efficiency, always
and everywhere.

the environment in which we live. In Italy, Latteria Soresina, the largest national cooperative in dairy production, celebrated the important milestone of 125 years of activity in 2025; a milestone that is also a starting point for further future developments aimed at greater production capacity and lower environmental impact thanks to the installation of a new SMI EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulding machine.

In the United Kingdom, the company Radnor Hills has been innovating and diversifying the production of water and beverages for 35 years, paying great attention to sustainable packaging made from a wide range of machines supplied by SMI since 2008; among the most recent installations at the facilities of this Welsh company are a WP 800 ERGON case packer for packaging in kraft cardboard boxes and an ASW 40 F ERGON shrinkwrapper with a 90° infeed.

In Switzerland, Holderhof Produkte, a leading food company in the production of fruit juices, three years after the launch of the aseptic line supplied by SMI, is investing again in state-of-the-art technologies; it has recently purchased a LWP 30 ERGON wrap-around case packer and two APS 620 ERGON palletisers to meet production needs for its own brand and for "private labels".

In Brazil, Água Pedra Azul has been bottling pure and uncontaminated spring water that flows from the mountain of the same name for over 30 years. To preserve the precious water source and ensure the well-being of consumers, the company invests in modern technologies such as the SMI EBS 10 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder. SMI's mission to provide its customers around the world with innovative solutions that meet their demands in terms of efficiency, reliability, flexibility, and energy savings is realized in the continuous development of new versatile and sustainable solutions, such as those we present in the 'innovation' section of this issue of SMI NOW.

Thank you for your attention and I hope you enjoy your reading.

Paolo Nava, President & CEO, SMI S.p.A.

Looking to the past to preserve traditions! Looking to the future in a more sustainable way!

These are constant thoughts in the daily activities of companies, which, by embracing the traditions and excellence of the past, continue to act, invest, and grow to look towards the future, prioritizing excellence, quality, and well-being. These themes provide the backdrop for the case histories that we will present in this issue of SMI NOW, where we tell the stories of companies that have achieved significant milestones but do not stop; rather, they continue to invest to ensure the future well-being of their customers by creating solutions that preserve



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Product pictures in this issue are shown for reference only.

RADNOR HILLS

RADNOR HILLS MINERAL WATER, A LEADING WELSH COMPANY THAT SPECIALISES IN THE BOTTLING OF WATER AND SOFT DRINKS, HAS BEEN INNOVATING AND DIVERSIFYING ITS PRODUCTION FOR 35 YEARS, TO OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF PACKAGED DRINKS USING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS. THIS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO ITS LONG COLLABORATION WITH SMI, WHICH BEGAN IN 2008 AND HAS RECENTLY LED RADNOR HILLS TO INSTALL A WP 800 ERGON WRAP-AROUND CASE PACKER TO PACK CANS OF WATER INTO KRAFT CARDBOARD BOXES AND TRAYS, AND A 90° ASW 40 F ERGON SHRINKWRAPPER.

➤ **SECTOR: WATER**

RADNOR HILLS MINERAL WATER
Knighton, Powys, United Kingdom
www.radnorhills.co.uk

- Wrap-around case packer WP 800 ERGON
- Shrinkwrapper ASW 40 F ERGON
- Conveyors

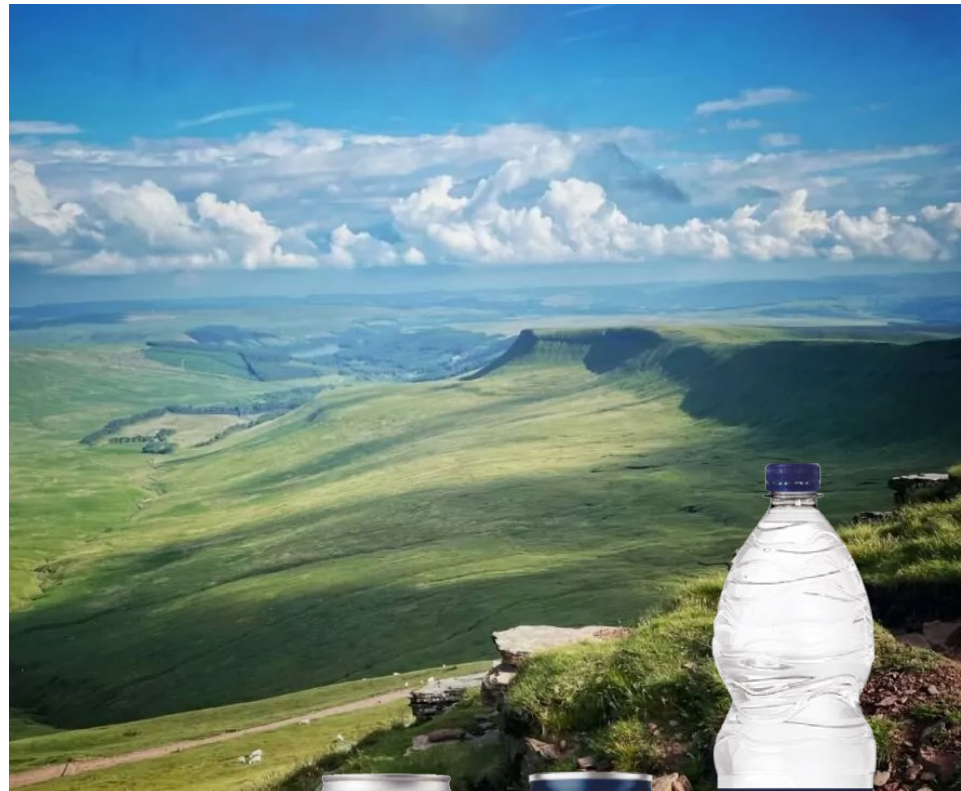


GEO LOCATION

WONDERFUL THINGS HAPPEN ON THE WELSH HILLS

"WHEN WE FIRST FOUND WATER ON OUR FAMILY FARM, WE DUG A WELL WITH THE INITIAL AIM OF USING IT AS A WATER SOURCE FOR OUR LIVESTOCK. HOWEVER, SOON WE DISCOVERED THAT WE WERE SURROUNDED BY THE BEST NATURAL SPRING WATER. THE TASTE OF THIS WATER WAS SO GOOD, THAT WE IMMEDIATELY DECIDED IT DESERVED A WIDER AUDIENCE AND THAT IT HAD TO BE OFFERED ON THE MARKET. WITH THIS RADNOR HILLS WAS BORN," SAYS WILLIAM WATKINS, FOUNDER AND CEO OF RADNOR HILLS. "I DIVERSIFIED INTO THE NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE SECTOR IN THE EARLY 90S WHEN WE DISCOVERED WE WERE SURROUNDED BY THE BEST NATURAL SPRING WATER IN WALES."

A source of exceptionally pure, rich mineral water, a mild climate, and surrounded by vast expanses of green hills and the tranquillity of an unspoiled land. In this fairy-tale setting stands the Radnor Hills company, the history of which began at the end of the 1980s, when the founder and current CEO, William Watkins, returned to Knighton, a town in the Welsh county of Powys, with a degree in agricultural and food marketing from the University of Newcastle. At that time, his father who managed the family farming business situated on the green hills of Powys, discovered a source of water which was initially going to be used to provide water for the cattle. However, he immediately realised that this water was of a much superior quality to normal standards due to its exceptional taste, acquired as it filtered naturally through ancient layers of rock, and that it deserved more attention, but above all it needed to be offered to the market. Driven by these factors, William started a new family business dedicated to bottling and distributing this spring water, it quickly became successful also thanks to the supply of mineral water to British Airways. Since 1990 (the year in which the company was founded), Radnor Hills has continued to evolve, focusing on the production of a wide range of still, carbonated, and flavoured non-alcoholic beverages, for which numerous investments have been necessary for the expansion of the production lines, warehouses, and recycling facilities.

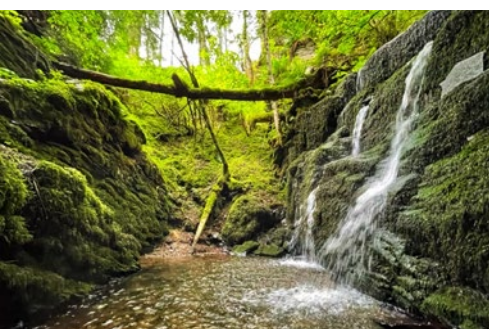


Today, 35 years later, the Welsh company has ten bottling, canning and Tetra Pak lines, capable of achieving a production capacity of many millions of litres of product per year.





SMALL BEGINNINGS FOR A GREAT STORY



DIVERSIFIED PRODUCTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Radnor Hills is perfectly integrated into the environmental context that surrounds it, characterised by vast expanses of hills and unspoiled landscape. The company from Knighton, is passionately committed to bottling spring water and producing excellent soft drinks, paying the utmost attention to environmental protection; an example of Radnor Hills' sustainable commitment is represented by the company's mission to be a zero-impact production site, a commitment recognised by the award received in 2019 at the Powys Business Awards for the category 'Sustainable and Ethical Producer 2019'. Sustainability does

not stop at a single goal, because the commitment to the planet is consistently pursued in multiple aspects, from zero-impact production to the use of lightweight cardboard for secondary packaging or 100% recycled plastic bottles. The management system at Radnor Hills is certified according to the ISO 14001 standard, demonstrating serious commitment to these issues. Further proof of the dedication to safeguarding the territory is that the Welsh company has planted over 14,000 new trees and recycles everything it can.



➤ RECOGNITION AT POWYS BUSINESS AWARDS 2023

In 2023, Radnor Hills Mineral Water received important recognition at the 'Powys Business Awards', established to reward companies that stand out for their environmental commitment. William Watkins, CEO of Radnor Hills, expressed pride in the ongoing sustainability efforts made by the company he leads: We work continuously to become more sustainable and we are proud to have won this award, which reflects the incredible work of the Radnor team in the journey of corporate sustainability, from zero waste to landfill to self-generated energy from the solar plant. At the Powys Business Awards, Radnor Hills received not only the sustainability award but also the recognition of 'Powys Business of the Year', an important testimony to the daily hard work carried out with dedication and passion. The two recent awards add to the numerous recognitions obtained by Radnor Hills throughout its activity, such as the 'Gold Award' won for traditional lemonade at the 'Farm Shop & Deli Show 2023', which assesses the taste of the product and its value chain, or the 'Best in Can' award received at the 'Zenith Innobev Awards' in 2023.



35 years have passed since the discovery of the Radnor Hills spring.

Today, the company is a household name which continues to evolve, and is a significant reference in the water and beverage industry thanks to its ability to continuously develop new products in response to the sustainability goals of customers to reduce the use of plastic.

Their two production facilities in Wales, produce and package a wide range of beverages in various formats, using recycled plastic, cans, glass, or Tetra Pak cartons; among them, the 125 ml format of pure fruit juice, specifically developed for the travel sector.

Driven by the goal of satisfying an ever-growing consumer base, Radnor Hills Mineral Water has recently introduced a new range of flavoured infusions and still water in 250 ml Tetra Pak containers with a tear-off opening that do not even require a plastic straw; moreover, the 250 ml 'brick' is a perfect fit for packaging in trays or boxes.



➤ FUELLED BY SUNLIGHT

In order to pursue the vision of an increasingly greener future, at the end of 2023 Radnor Hills installed a new solar system worth £1.8 million, which added to the existing panels installed on the rooftops of the facilities. This new system, which produces 2,000 kWh of energy per year, can generate up to 25% of the electricity needed within the company.



➤ ZERO WASTE IN THE LANDFILL

The company from Knighton, is constantly committed to ensuring that no waste goes to landfill and to achieve this goal, it has invested in its own state-of-the-art recycling plant to manage all waste, as well as relying on a team of experts to facilitate every activity that promotes the circular economy.



➤ 100% RECYCLABLE

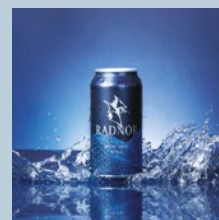
Radnor Hills' environmental commitment could not overlook the aspect of packaging; in fact, all the PET bottles used by the company are 100% recyclable and are made up of 30% recycled material. Radnor Hills was also the first company in the industry to use 100% recyclable shrink film that's made up of 30% recycled plastic.



➤ CANS OF WATER FOR GOLF

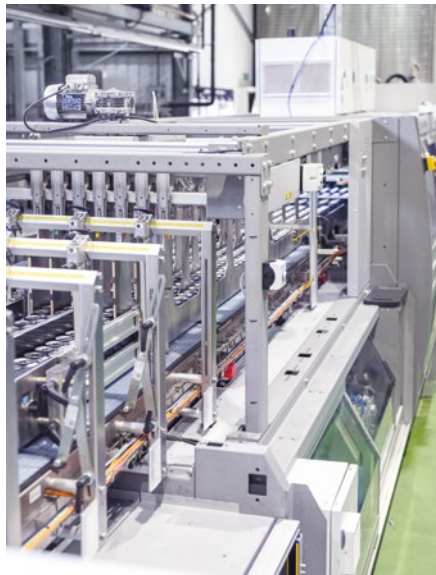
Radnor Hills is the official water supplier for various golf tournaments within the DP World Tour and the Senior Open Championship.

For a positive long-term impact, the tournaments are committed to being carbon neutral, and, to ensure the hydration of golfers during professional events, they have opted to use cans of water provided by Radnor Hills, a type of infinitely recyclable packaging that's collected efficiently after use, to ensure that each event has zero environmental impact. Maria Grandinetti-Milton, head of sustainability for the DP World Tour, commented: 'Eliminating single-use plastics from our tournaments has been a key priority within our "Green Drive" program, and the Radnor Hills metal cans, used by the players are perfect for water supplies; they are convenient, easy to recycle, and have a real impact on reducing the environmental footprint of a tournament.'



SMI SOLUTIONS

FOR RADNOR HILLS



Radnor Hills offers a wide range of still, sparkling, and flavoured beverages all produced with spring water sourced from its own wells, while keeping environmental sustainability at its heart.

A distinctive feature of the Welsh company's commitment to sustainability is the use of aluminium cans, which, among all the packaging materials used, boasts the highest recycling rate; every used can is infinitely recyclable and comes from within a 65-mile radius of the Radnor Hills Mineral Water facilities, reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation.

In terms of secondary packaging materials, Radnor Hills uses 100% recycled kraft cardboard and shrink film, both solutions that ensure a lower environmental impact and high-quality packaging.



➤ WRAP-AROUND CASE PACKER WP 800 ERGON

Product worked: 0.15 L / 0.25 L / 0.33 L cans

Packs created: boxes in Kraft cardboard in various formats 2x3, 2x4, 2x5, 3x4, 4x6 and trays with a height of 50mm in 4x3 and 6x4 formats

Main characteristics

- continual packing using a wrap-around system which ensures a smooth production process
- shock-resistant packaging, able to protect the product during transportation
- better pack quality and reduced mechanical wear and tear
- ergonomic machine structure
- safe and easy maintenance operations



➤ BENEFITS FOR FLEXIBILITY

Driven by the goal of satisfying a wide range of consumers, Radnor Hills has a very diverse range of production, both in terms of products and also packaging solutions. The WP800 ERGON case packer provided by SMI packages different types of cans in various formats. Possibilities range from fully enclosed wrap-around kraft paper boxes, to corrugated cardboard boxes in the 'fridge pack' format, as well as standard tray packs. The transition from one format to another is simple and quick, allowing for immediate adaptation of production to current packaging needs.



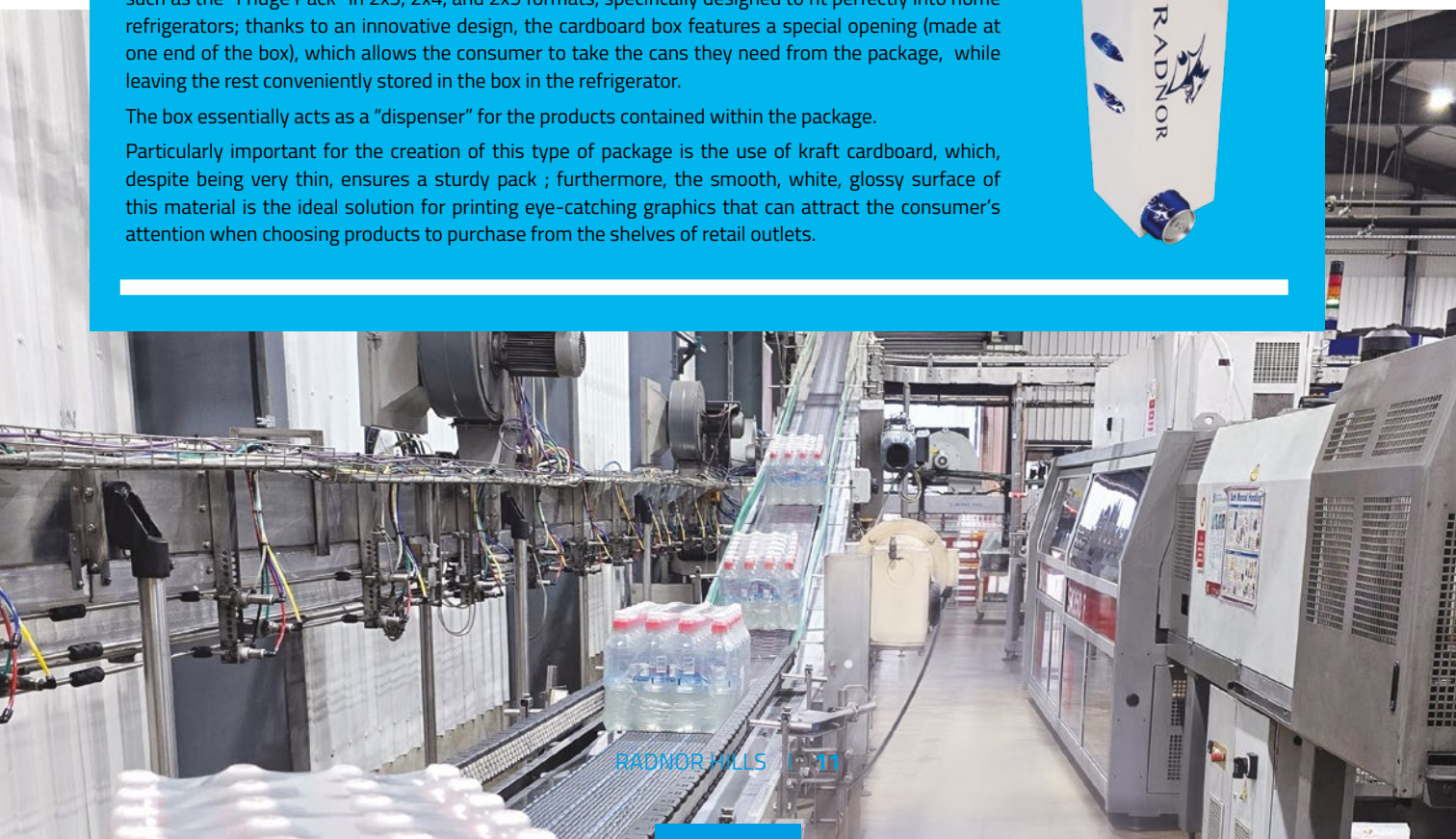
➤ BENEFITS FOR COMPETITIVENESS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The WP 800 ERGON case packer meets Radnor Hills' need to face growing market competitiveness and satisfy consumer demands.

Achieving these goals involves the use of innovative, economical, and functional packaging solutions such as the "Fridge Pack" in 2x3, 2x4, and 2x5 formats, specifically designed to fit perfectly into home refrigerators; thanks to an innovative design, the cardboard box features a special opening (made at one end of the box), which allows the consumer to take the cans they need from the package, while leaving the rest conveniently stored in the box in the refrigerator.

The box essentially acts as a "dispenser" for the products contained within the package.

Particularly important for the creation of this type of package is the use of kraft cardboard, which, despite being very thin, ensures a sturdy pack ; furthermore, the smooth, white, glossy surface of this material is the ideal solution for printing eye-catching graphics that can attract the consumer's attention when choosing products to purchase from the shelves of retail outlets.



➤ BENEFITS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The strong environmental commitment of Radnor Hills puts the packaging of its products at the forefront, by using sustainable materials such as lightweight kraft cardboard. The WP 800 ERGON case packer is suitable for creating strong packages using both 1.5 mm microwave kraft cardboard and 3 mm standard cardboard, by simply changing settings the machine can handle packaging materials with different thicknesses. The use of kraft cardboard allows Radnor Hills to achieve resistant and lighter packaging thanks to the reduced use of material, resulting in savings in material and production costs.



➤ BENEFITS FOR THE OPERATOR

The Easy-Load automatic loading system, standard equipment on the WP 800 ERGON case packer, offers the great advantage of making the workload of the machine operator easier during the loading phase of the cardboard magazine, and, ensures that the wide range of 3 mm micro-flute cardboard and kraft paper blanks are loaded smoothly and consistently.



RADNOR HILLS & SMI: A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

Radnor Hills Mineral Water has experienced remarkable growth, characterised by continual investment; the Welsh company has come a long way since 1990, becoming a household name in the UK and abroad, and demonstrating that family management can successfully align with the production systems of large organizations. SMI has been a long-standing supplier of Radnor Hills, as it has supported the Knighton company since 2008 in choosing the most suitable solutions for the secondary packaging needs of a wide portfolio of canned drinks, PET bottles, glass, and Tetra Paks under the Radnor brand. Never before, even in the UK, has the packaged beverage industry experienced such strong and diversified development as it has in the last few years, for that reason, with its continual investment in numerous shrinkwrappers and case packers the Welsh company has been able to seize market opportunities, increasing the capacity and efficiency of its plants to meet the greater demands of consumers. In addition to the quality of the product, Radnor Hills pays great attention to the characteristics of the packaging, because appealing, up-to-date, easy and safe-to-use packaging is often a fundamental element for the success and competitiveness of a brand.

➤ COMMITTED TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Radnor Hills has deep roots in the local community, involving employees, friends, and neighbours. The Welsh company cares deeply that the rural valley in which it is located, has everything it needs, from jobs to recreational facilities. For this reason, it takes the support of its employees and their families very seriously and supports numerous local sports activities and events such as the 'Radnor 7's Rugby Festival', which takes place every year at the Knighton Rugby Pitch. It also supports charity fundraising for the organization 'The Little Princess Trust', which donates wigs made from real hair to children and young patients with cancer. Radnor Hills also sponsors the Presteigne Carnival, providing water to the volunteers of the annual event that attracts locals and visitors to enjoy the traditional carnival and the countryside fair.





➤ SHRINKWRAPPER ASW 40 F ERGON

Product worked: cardboard boxes and trays arriving from the W P800 ERGON wrap-around case packer

Packs made: repacking in film only packs

The ASW 40 F ERGON shrinkwrapper is a compact machine with a single-lane infeed that allows Radnor Hills to repack cardboard boxes and trays coming out of the WP 800 ERGON wrap-around case packer. In particular, the cardboard boxes in 2x2 formats are repacked in 6x4 bundles in film only; the 2x4 boxes in 4x6 bundles in film only; the 3x4 and 4x6 trays are turned and processed respectively into 4x3 and 6x4 formats in film only. All the other formats of can boxes in 2x5 and 3x4 formats are rotated by 90° and transit through the ASW 40 F ERGON to go directly to the palletiser.

Main characteristics

- machine with single-lane infeed
- compact layout and reduced footprint
- high operational flexibility to work with various products in multiple formats
- ergonomic machine structure
- easy maintenance operations



➤ BENEFITS FOR ERGONOMICS

The ASW ERGON shrinkwrapper is a compact version with single-lane infeed, of the automatic packaging machines from the SK ERGON series. Thanks to innovative solutions in terms of modular assembly, space reduction, advanced ergonomics, and state-of-the-art automation, the ASW ERGON automatic shrinkwrapper has the best technology in the industry for secondary end-of-line packaging. Ergonomics is an important plus for the safety of line operators, as the single-lane infeed, preferably positioned on the opposite side of the operator, facilitates the correct channelling of loose containers onto the packaging machine infeed conveyor belt.



➤ BENEFITS FOR COMPACTNESS AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The reduced size of the packaging machine easily adapts to the logistical conditions of the end-of-line, as, thanks to the single-lane infeed belt, it is not necessary to have a divider to lane products into the machine.



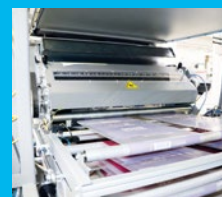
➤ BENEFITS FOR FLEXIBILITY


With the single-lane infeed, it is possible to work with different types of containers of various sizes without needing additional conveying equipment, with the advantage that format changes are easy and quick as there's no need to adjust the guides of the various lanes.



➤ BENEFITS FOR MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

With its compact design, the film cutting unit on the ASW ERGON is equipped with a blade powered by a direct-drive brushless motor, which enhances the precision and accuracy of cutting and simplifies maintenance operations.





THREE YEARS AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW ASEPTIC JUICE LINE , THE SWISS COMPANY HOLDERHOF PRODUKTE AG HAS RENEWED ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH SMI BY PURCHASING AN LWP 30 ERGON CASE PACKER AND AN APS 620 ERGON PALLETISER; BOTH SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED AT THE BRAND NEW FRUIT PROCESSING CENTRE IN SULGEN, WHERE APPLE JUICE IS PACKAGED IN GLASS BOTTLES OF VARIOUS CAPACITIES (FROM 0.25 L TO 1 L). HOLDERHOF IS ONE OF THE LEADING NATIONAL PRODUCERS OF JUICES AND CONTINUOUSLY INVESTS IN CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES FOR ITS OWN BRAND PRODUCTION AND FOR THIRD-PARTY SERVICES. RECENT INVESTMENTS HAVE ALSO AFFECTED THE HENAU PLANT, WHERE, IN ADDITION TO THE PREVIOUSLY SUPPLIED MACHINES, SMI HAS ALSO INSTALLED AN APS 620 ERGON PALLETISER.

HOLDERHOF

➤ **SECTOR: JUICE**

HOLDERHOF PRODUKTE

Sulgen, Canton Turgovia, Switzerland

www.holderhof.ch

- LWP 30 ERGON wrap-around case packer
- Conveyors
- APS 620 ERGON palletising system



GEO LOCATION





A MODERN FRUIT PROCESSING CENTER HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN SULGEN

The fruit processing centre located in Sulgen, a town of about 4,000 inhabitants in the canton of Thurgau (northeastern Switzerland), is a state-of-the-art facility that currently ensures that Holderhof Produkte has efficient operation of the entire apple juice production line and, in the future, the possibility of starting to pack new products.

Inside the new plant in Sulgen, designed especially to optimise processing and workflow, the Swiss company transforms up to 15,000 tons of cider apples into juice each year (2022 harvest data).



➤ OPTIMISING ENERGY CONSUMPTION USING A SOLAR SYSTEM

Holderhof Productke constantly promotes renewable energies; a significant example of this commitment is represented by the solar panel system implemented by the Swiss company to cover a large part of the main building of the production site in Henau, which thus autonomously generates energy solely from renewable sources.

In the future, part of the solar energy will also be used to charge the batteries on the company's electric trucks, ensuring zero CO₂ emissions when transporting the fruit juices between the Henau and Sulgen facilities, where the large storage tanks are located.

The fruit processing centre in Sulgen is also energy efficient, as the energy used for the processing and storage of the juices comes from 100% renewable sources.



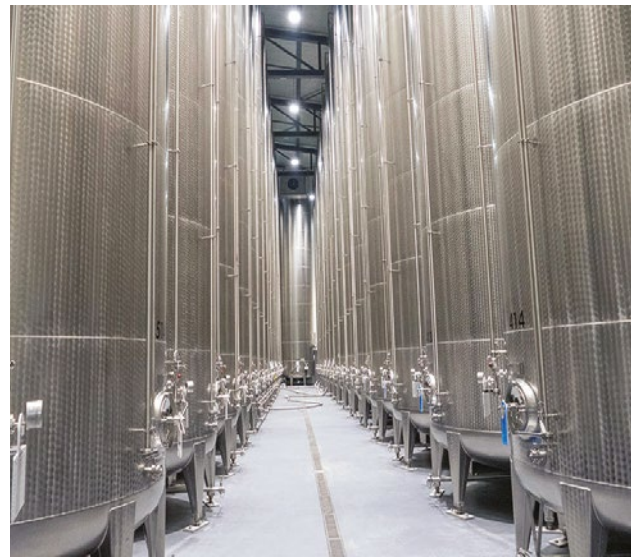
The processed apples come directly from the plantation owned by Holderhof Produkte and from regional fruit companies with long-term purchase contracts.

In the goods acceptance area, the harvested apples are emptied from the trailers into silos, where they float in water until they reach the sorting table to be selected, based on quality to produce the puree, from which apple juice is extracted.

The centrifuge separates the sediments from the raw juice, and the result is a natural and pure juice that is pasteurised and stored in 150 sterile tanks containing 100,000 litres each.

The juice is then drawn continually from the storage tanks to be processed further in the company's beverage production or resold as an industrial product to third-party customers.





FROM ELDERBERRY TO APPLES: BUSINESS SUCCESS COMES FROM CONTINUAL INVESTMENTS



Over twenty years ago, when he was still an apprentice farmer, Christof Schenk planted the first elderberry trees on his parents' farm in Ufhofen, thus giving rise to the company Holderhof Produkte, which today employs around 100 people and produces syrups, beverages, and fruit juices at its three locations in Henau, Ufhofen, and Sulgen.

Over the years, this important Swiss industrial entity has remained true to the founder's initial vision of transforming its own high-quality, natural raw materials into special beverages without preservatives. Every year, the company markets more than 70 million bottles of over a hundred varieties of beverages and continues to launch innovative products.

Today, Holderhof Beverages can be found on shelves all over Switzerland and abroad.

Furthermore, a growing number of customers (including the Coop and REWE supermarkets) rely on the professionalism and expertise of this brand, to have their products produced and bottled benefitting from the continual investments made by the

company within their bottling and packaging plants.

The most recent investments in advanced manufacturing technologies date back to 2022, when the Swiss company implemented a new herb drying plant in Ufhofen and a new fruit processing centre in Sulgen. Holderhof Produkte has focused specifically on the production of pure juice rather than concentrate, particularly for apple juice.

The concept has worked from the very beginning, so much so, that the amounts of processed fruit are steadily increasing, and more and more farming families are joining the company with the same goals.

The fruit processing centre was designed with the future in mind, as it can easily accommodate additional spaces to respond to the growing demand from an ever-expanding base of consumers in the DACH region.

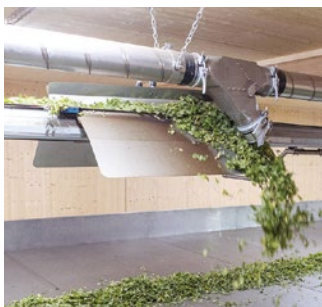
Thanks to this new investment, Holderhof Produkte has been able to launch a dedicated production line for bottling and packaging of apple sauce and installing a new machine for peeling apples, along with



dryers and three juice presses.

Despite its imposing size and a surface area of about 9,500 square meters, the new production facility fits perfectly into the environmental context.

The company's distinctive purple logo on the gray walls also adds a touch of colour and while in spring everywhere is very quiet, with the arrival of autumn there is a bustle of tractors loaded with apples.



➤ CLOSE TO NATURE FOR QUALITY DRINKS

Quality products require selected, excellent raw materials, cultivated efficiently and naturally.

For this reason, most of the elderflowers, herbs, and apple trees are grown directly on the organic farm in Ufhofen.

Here, there are about 1600 elder trees, 15 hectares of land dedicated to the growth of herbs such as mint, lemon balm, nettles, thyme, verbena, mallow, and sage, and for about six years, also 2 hectares of land for the cultivation of cider apples, which are then processed into juice at the Sulgen facility.

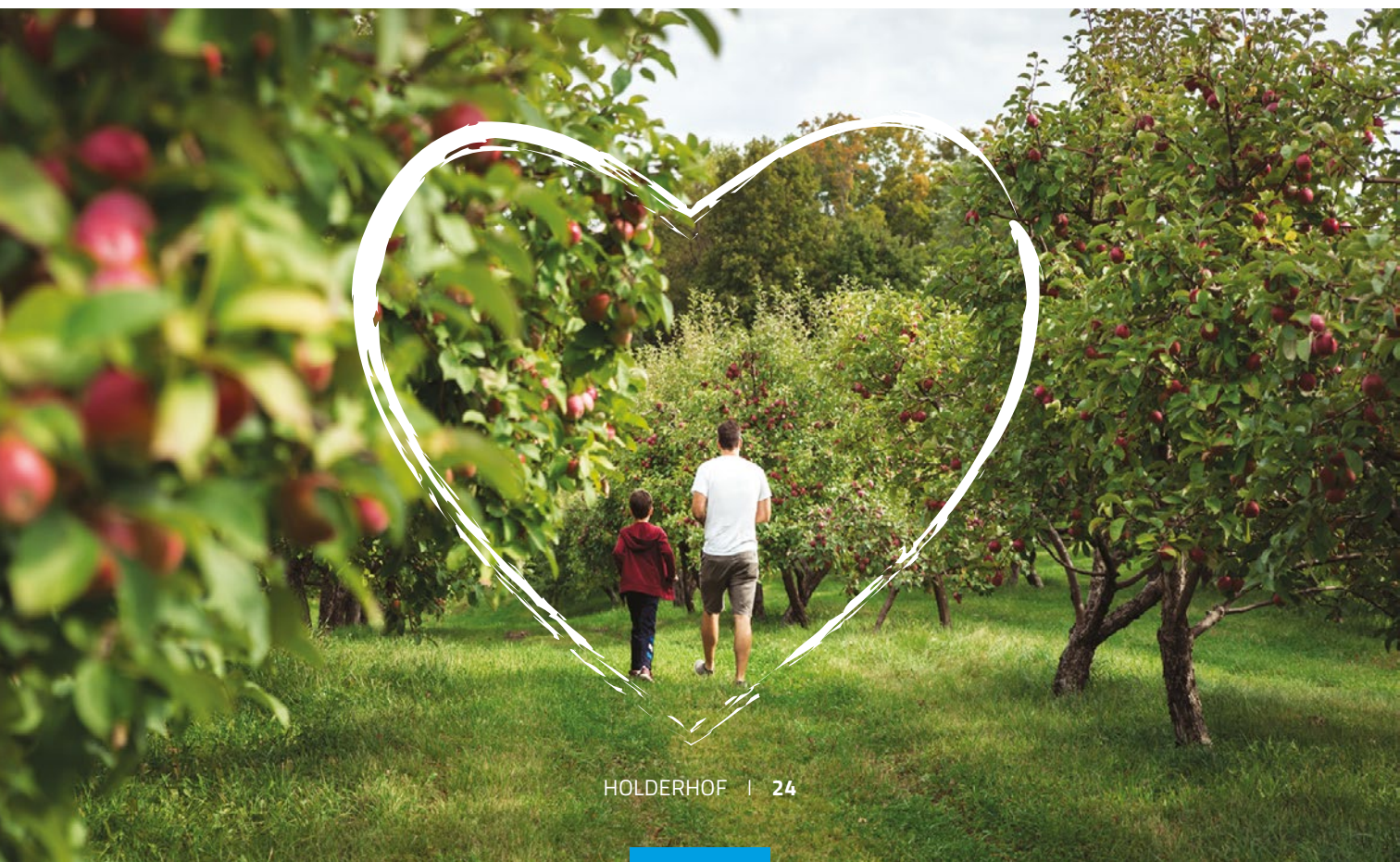


THE MOST LOVED FRUIT IN SWITZERLAND: THE APPLE

Eaten fresh or drunk in liquid form, the apple is the most loved fruit in Switzerland. The new line launched by the company was created to meet the growing market requests, the new family of apple products branded Holderhof includes pure juice, which contains only the juice of the fruit, and a line of 'spritzers' (usually sparkling), which is a diluted juice variant with a fruit/water ratio of between 60 to 40%.

Both types of products are available in naturally cloudy or clear versions, cloudy juice comes straight after pressing and still contains visible parts of the apple, while the clear juice goes through a filter in an additional processing stage.

Pure cloudy apple juice is considered the most natural variant and contains most of the health-beneficial substances; that's why the popular saying goes 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away' and with a glass of juice pure apple and naturally cloudy juice per day is already on the right track, since it takes about 1.2 kilograms of cider apples to produce one litre of this juice.



APPLE JUICE: AN EXPLOSION OF GOODNESS THAT IS MAKING THE MARKET GROW.

Apple juice, a refreshing beverage that is timeless, the essence of nature's sweetness in liquid form. Derived from juicy, crunchy apples, the juice embodies a harmonious blend of flavours, giving a delightful explosion of natural goodness. With a rich history that is centuries-old, apple juice has evolved from a traditional product to a nutritious drink, rich in vitamins, antioxidants, and natural sugars, for health-conscious consumers. The consumption of apple fruit juice has the same strong growth today, that it will have for many years to come, thanks to its health benefits and the growing awareness of the importance of physical well-being, among an increasing number of consumers.

> ORGANIC QUALITY, WITH A PRIVATE LABEL OR OWN BRAND

The products of the new line of Holderhof apple juices are offered in both certified organic and conventional versions, in various filling formats in both PET and glass bottles. Additionally, thanks to a flexible and efficient production system, Holderhof Produkte specialises in contract manufacturing for major private labels such as Coop and REWE, offering a wide range of bottled beverages in glass or PET in various sizes and formats; this allows clients, regardless of the sector, to leverage the great marketing potential of the Swiss company and benefit from continuous investments in new technologies and new packaging solutions.

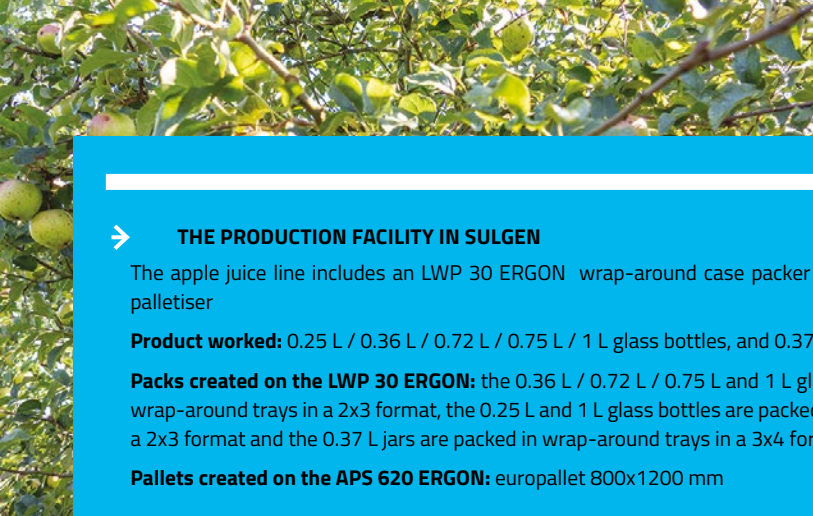


SMI SOLUTIONS FOR HOLDERHOF



An industrially produced organic apple sauce that is completely natural? This is exactly what Holderhof Produkte does at the new fruit processing centre in Sulgen, where fresh apple sauce is packaged in jars and glass bottles on a newly installed line that can fill up to 2000 jars per hour, depending on the size of the product. For now, the Swiss company has decided to bottle the apple juice in glass bottles and jars because this solution suits a biological and high-quality product, whose constantly growing consumption contributes to the increase in company revenue and makes it necessary to innovate the packaging based on the characteristics of the various product types. The increase in demand, both for the Holderhof-brand products and for private labels, has led Sulgen to equip its production plant with extremely flexible and eco-friendly, high-tech secondary and tertiary packaging facilities which are able to quickly switch from one bottle format to another and from one type of packaging to another. Among these, the LWP 30 ERGON case packer supplied by SMI, represents the ideal solution for secondary packaging in trays and wrap-around boxes for a wide range of containers.





➤ THE PRODUCTION FACILITY IN SULGEN

The apple juice line includes an LWP 30 ERGON wrap-around case packer and an APS 620 ERGON palletiser

Product worked: 0.25 L / 0.36 L / 0.72 L / 0.75 L / 1 L glass bottles, and 0.370 L glass jars

Packs created on the LWP 30 ERGON: the 0.36 L / 0.72 L / 0.75 L and 1 L glass bottles, are packed in wrap-around trays in a 2x3 format, the 0.25 L and 1 L glass bottles are packed in wrap-around cases in a 2x3 format and the 0.37 L jars are packed in wrap-around trays in a 3x4 format

Pallets created on the APS 620 ERGON: europallet 800x1200 mm



➤ THE PRODUCTION FACILITY IN HENAU

To manage the end-of-line for the packs of cans and boxes of bottled glass packaged within the Henau facility, Holderhof Produkte has integrated a new APS 620 ERGON palletiser into the existing machinery

Packs created: 0.33L cans in 3x2 and 6x4 bundles, 0.25L cans in 4x3 bundles, 0.5L and 0.7L glass bottle in 3x2 boxes

Pallets created: europallet 800x1200 mm





LWP ERGON WRAP - AROUND CASE PACKER

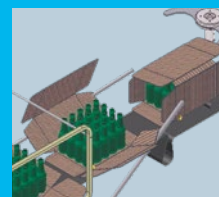
➤ FLEXIBLE PACKAGING FOR EVERY REQUIREMENT

The wrap-around case packer of the LWP 30 ERGON range, quickly adapts to the new package formats required by Holderhof Produkte and offers original and innovative packaging solutions, tailored to the logistical and marketing needs of the company. With just one machine, it is possible to create various pack configurations both in wrap-around boxes and in tray-only.



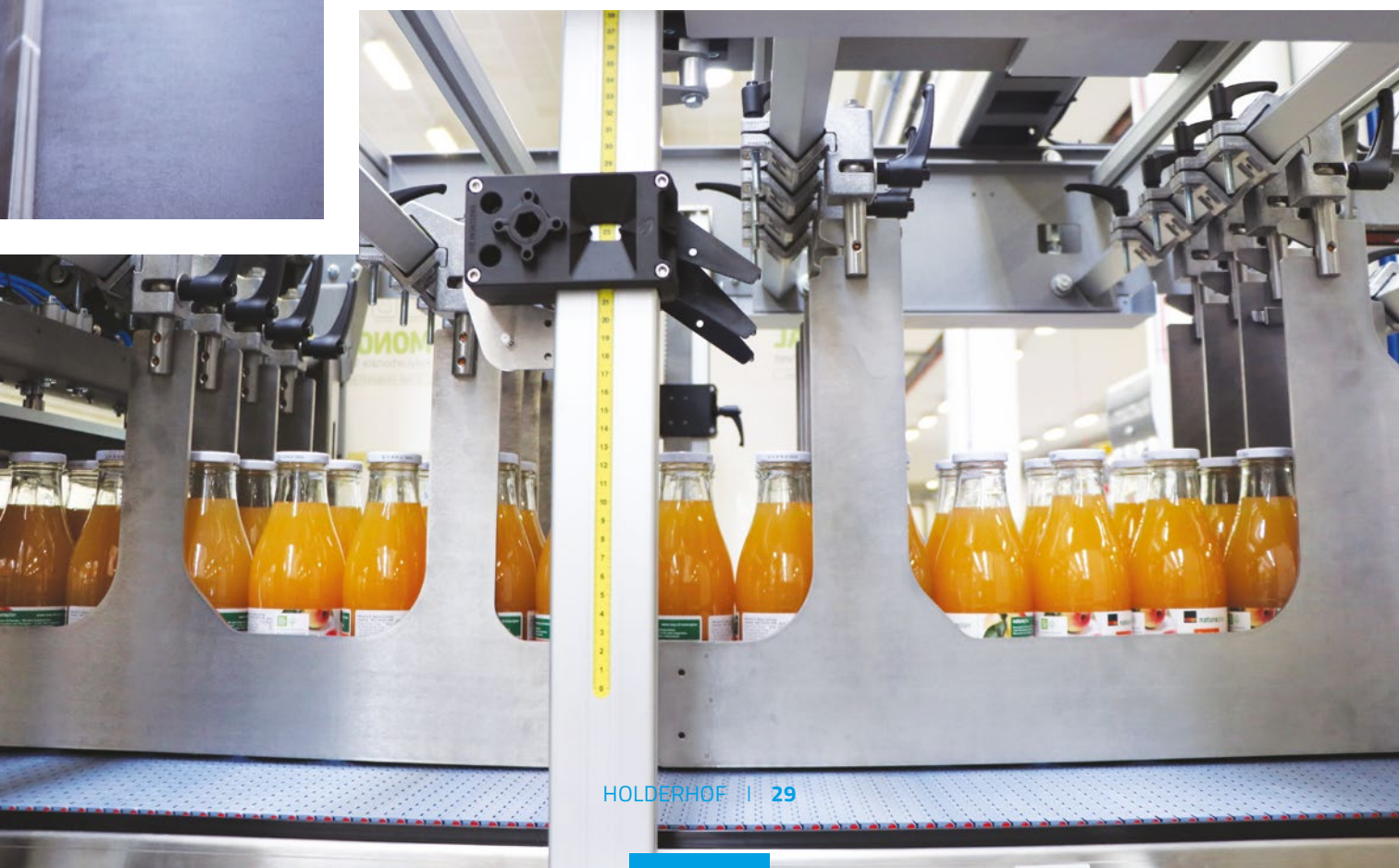
➤ COMPACT AND ECONOMIC

This wrap-around packaging system forms the cardboard box and encloses the glass juice bottles inside using a single machine. This case packer is a compact solution with an excellent quality / price ratio for any end-of-line logistics configuration.



➤ STABLE AND RESISTANT PACKAGING

The wrap-around boxes made of corrugated cardboard are very resistant to shocks and are therefore, the ideal solution for preserving the integrity and qualities of the products contained within them. The cardboard blank is folded and carefully wrapped around the products simultaneously as they are grouped into the desired format, without stopping the machine, thus ensuring stability for the packages themselves.





APS 620 ERGON PALLETISER

➤ COMPACT AND FLEXIBLE END OF LINE

The palletising system installed at the production facilities in Sulgen and Henau is a versatile solution that simplifies package handling, reduces changeover times, increases performance, and reduces the footprint within the production line.



➤ SAFE OPERATIONS

The heart of the SMI APS 620 ERGON automatic palletiser consists of the central structure that houses the three-axis Cartesian system responsible for pallet formation. All activities related to installation, management, and maintenance of the system are easily and safely carried out by the operator.



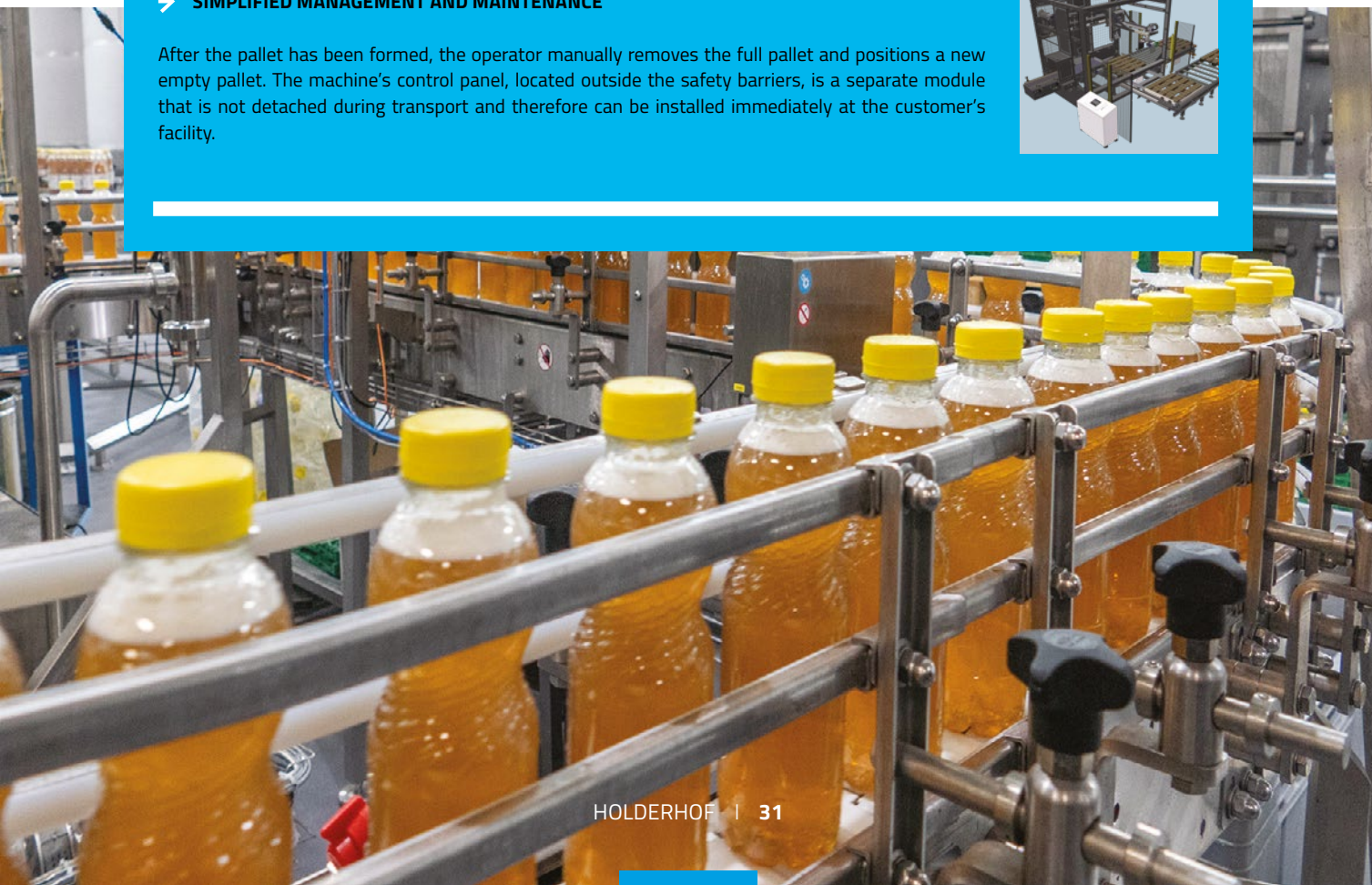
➤ FUNCTIONAL INFEEED

The product to be palletised arrives on an infeed conveyor and is phased by a rubber conveyor; subsequently, it is brought to the picking position by means of a spacing conveyor, where the picking head picks up the single package or the set of grouped packages and deposits it onto the pallet on the ground. The cyclic repetition of this operation allows various layers of palletisation to be formed.



➤ SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

After the pallet has been formed, the operator manually removes the full pallet and positions a new empty pallet. The machine's control panel, located outside the safety barriers, is a separate module that is not detached during transport and therefore can be installed immediately at the customer's facility.



AUTUMN IN SWITZERLAND HAS AN INTENSE FLAVOUR THAT SMELLS OF APPLES

When the leaves change colour, the wine festivals begin and all the seasonal specialities like apples, pumpkins, and chestnuts arrive on the table. It is the sign that autumn has arrived. Autumn in Switzerland is an unforgettable experience, thanks to the explosion of flavours, breathtaking landscapes and colours, mild temperatures, and a great variety of culinary delights to enjoy. In Sulgen, a locality a few kilometres from Lake Constance, in addition to admiring beautiful landscapes, you can eat freshly picked apples. This Swiss town is a great starting point to explore autumn in the region, and for unforgettable experiences like the foliage, which, with its vivid colours, paints the surrounding mountains and forests, giving the whole area a fairy-tale appearance. In the woods, you can gather mushrooms and chestnuts, while in the fields, pumpkins and colourful root and tuber vegetables can be harvested; in the kitchen, local vegetables and fruits are transformed into delicious dishes, and the grapes are turned into fine wines.





PEDRA AZUL

ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL IS AN IMPORTANT BRAZILIAN BOTTLER THAT HAS BEEN BOTTLING PURE AND UNCONTAMINATED SPRING WATER FOR OVER 30 YEARS, SOURCED IN THE REGION OF THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SAME NAME, WHICH IS AN ICONIC LANDMARK OF THE ENTIRE AREA; IT IS A UNIQUE GRANITIC ROCK FORMATION IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF BRAZIL, WHICH, WITH ITS HEIGHT OF 1,822 METERS, ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF MANY VISITORS. THE COMPANY CONTINUOUSLY INVESTS IN MODERN TECHNOLOGIES TO ENSURE THE WELL-BEING OF CONSUMERS AND PRESERVE THE PRECIOUS WATER SOURCE, WHICH IS A SOURCE OF LIFE AND HEALTH. THE RECENT INVESTMENT IN THE PURCHASE OF AN SMI MODEL EBS 10 KL ERGON STRETCH - BLOW MOULDER STEMS FROM THE NEED TO RESPOND TO THE GROWING MARKET DEMAND FOR NATURAL AND CARBONATED MINERAL WATER IN 0.5 L PET BOTTLES.

➤ **SECTOR: WATER**

ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL

Marechal Floriano, Espírito Santo, Brazil
aguapedraazul.com.br

➤ Rotary stretch-blow moulder EBS 10 KL ERGON



GEO LOCATION



INVESTING IN MODERN TECHNOLOGY FOR CONTINUAL GROWTH

Technology and innovation are strategic objectives, and Água Pedra Azul is concretely pursuing them by relying on SMI technologies to modernise and expand its production capacity. Recently, the Brazilian company installed a state-of-the-art SMI rotary stretch-blow moulder at its facility in Marechal Floriano, a town of about 20,000 inhabitants in the State of Espírito Santo, designed to optimise the production of 0.5 L PET bottles for bottling natural and sparkling water. During a recent visit to SMI's headquarters in Italy, accompanied by staff from the Brazilian subsidiary SMI Do Brasil, the CEOs of Água Pedra Azul had the opportunity to see first hand the solutions in the beverage sector developed by SMI. After a series of technical evaluations, the EBS 10 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder appeared to be the machine suitable to meet the production needs of the company, while at the same time allowing efficient and sustainable operations.



BELOW: LUCIANA RAMBALDUCCI AND JULIANA RAMBALDUCCI, RESPECTIVELY CEO AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL, VISITING THE SMI HEADQUARTERS IN ITALY, ALONG WITH FABIO SISIMBRO, SALES DIRECTOR OF SMI.

AT THE BOTTOM: JOSÉ ÂNGELO RAMBALDUCCI, FOUNDER OF ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL.



➤ ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL BRIEFLY

The company began its activities in the late 1980s with the sale of 5 litre bottles of water, but in a short time, between 1990 and 1991, the production facilities were expanded; in 1999, Água Pedra Azul invested in new machinery to bottle sparkling water in small capacity PET bottles, already blown by other companies. In 2002, sales of sparkling mineral water increased significantly, necessitating further investments to purchase the first blowing machines intended for the internal production of PET bottles. In 2005, Água Pedra Azul launched the production of glass bottles for the 'Premium' line and in 2008, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its founding, it obtained an important product quality certification and revamped the graphics of the bottles and labels.

Today more than ever, the Brazilian company continues to expand its facilities to respond to the growing market demand for natural and sparkling water in the 0.5 L format, this expansion also included the recent installation of an SMI model EBS 10 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder.



BLUE STONE MOUNTAINS: A MAGNIFICENT GIFT FROM MOTHER NATURE

In Brazil, there are several mountains or areas known for blue stones or that have a bluish appearance, even if they are not necessarily 'blue stone mountains' in the literal sense.

Mount Pedra Azul is definitely the most well-known and is located between the towns of Venda Nova do Imigrante and Vitória, north of the city of Alfredo Chaves, next to Pico das Flores.

Although in a certain sense off the beaten path, Pedra Azul State Park is worth a visit, especially for the magic of its beautiful surroundings, the fresh air, and the preserved natural beauty.

The main attraction of the park is its peak, which is named for the blue hue that reflects off the rock at certain times of the day.

But the original touch is given by a natural sculpture on its right slope, known as 'Pedra do Lagarto' (Lizard Rock), because depending on the angle of the sun, it really resembles a gigantic reptile climbing the slope.

Viewed from below, it is truly impressive.

Mount Pedra Azul, together with Pedra das Flores, at an altitude of 1,909 meters, and Pedra do Lagarto, forms a splendid granite rocky ensemble that, besides being one of the two "postcards" of the State of Espírito



Santo, is also considered a geological heritage of Brazil within the Pedra Azul State Park; the latter stretches over an area of 1,240 m² and was created in 1991 to protect the natural heritage of the region, particularly the famous Pedra Azul.

The name "Pedra Azul" comes from the presence of lichens that give the rock a bluish hue when viewed from a distance.

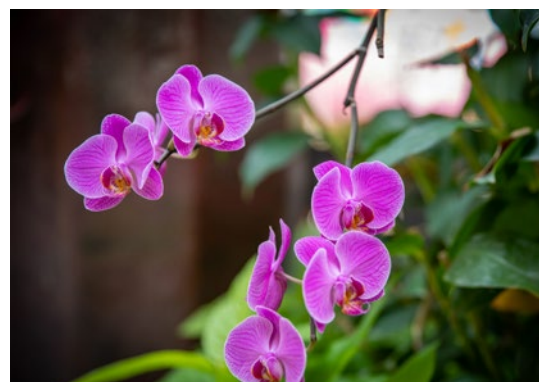
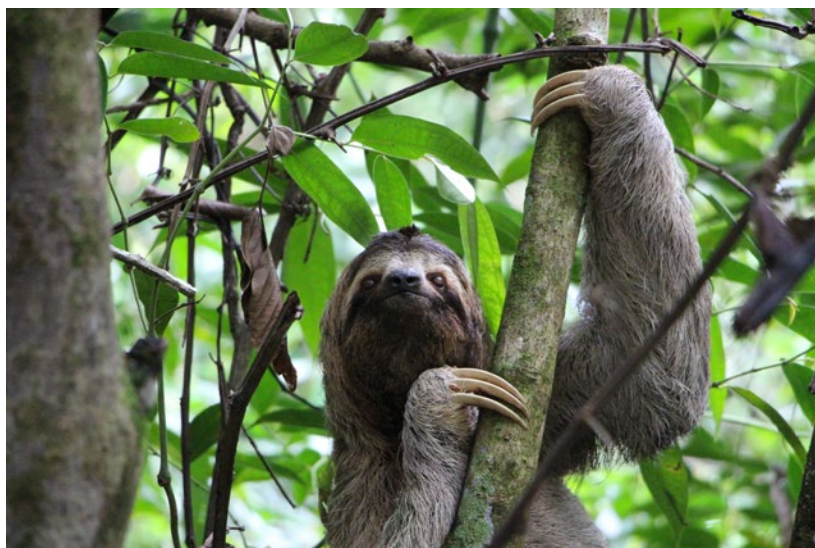
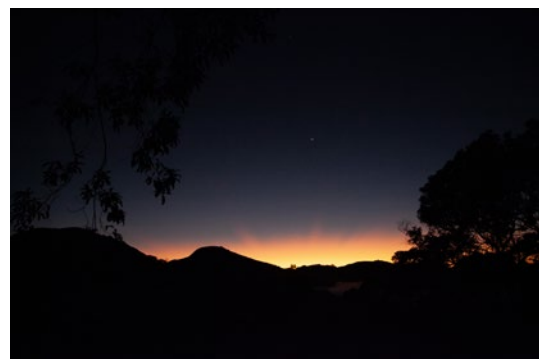
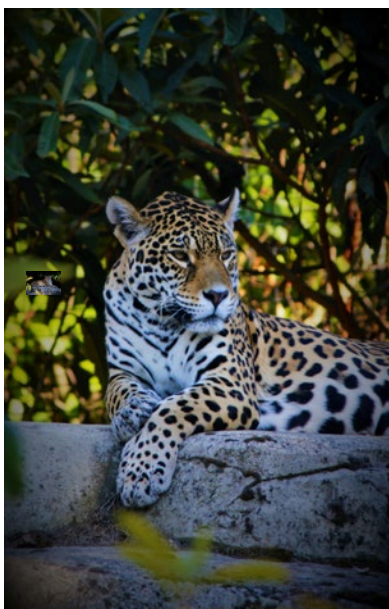
However, depending on the time of year and the intensity of sunlight, its natural gray-blue colouring changes for the human eye 31 times a day and can take on shades ranging from orange to pink.

The park is rich in biodiversity, with about 126 species of orchids, 182 species of birds, and other animals such as monkeys, sloths, and some jaguars.

It is one of the most visited parks in the State of Espírito Santo, especially during the winter period, to admire the beautiful mountain landscapes.

Overall, a visit to the park gives a new perspective of this area of Brazil, which has a long history of immigration, particularly from Italy, thanks to the presence of a vast network of marked trails, it is possible to go on various hikes to enjoy the surrounding landscape from panoramic viewpoints.

It is also possible to discover beautiful natural pools formed in the rock cavities, which give the opportunity, to the more daring visitors, to take a dip in crystal-clear but icy waters.



➤ QUALITY PURITY AND LIGHTNESS

In the heart of the magical natural beauty of Parque de Pedra Azul, for over 30 years Água Pedra Azul has been bottling mineral water that springs from the crystal clear and pure water sources among the mountains of the state of Espírito Santo. From the spring until it reaches the tables of consumers, the company based in Marechal Floriano subjects the water to rigorous quality controls throughout the entire production chain, from collection to bottling, to ensure the purity of the source to the end consumer. Daily, samples of water are taken in the laboratories to guarantee the quality of all products and to offer consumers pure, healthy water with low sodium content. The certifications obtained by Água Pedra Azul demonstrate the efficiency of the entire system, as well as the quality and safety of the water. Água Pedra Azul is the only water from Espírito Santo with internationally certified quality from NSF (National Sanitation Foundation), a North American institution that is a world leader in food safety and public health protection, which conducts rigorous annual inspections. Furthermore, the company is a member of the Brazilian Association of Mineral Water Industry (Abinam), established to protect consumers and the mineral water market, and belongs to the International Group of Natural Mineral Water Industries of the European Union (Unesem/Gisemes), the most important global organization in the sector.





ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL:

THE COMPANY'S SUSTAINABLE COMMITMENT

Water is a source of life, health, and well-being and is part of a vast ecosystem that in turn requires protection.

For this reason, Água Pedra Azul is daily committed to actions that demonstrate respect for the environment and a commitment to sustainable development. For the company in Marechal Floriano, the safeguarding of the environment goes through the enhancement and preservation of the springs; for example, the extraction process is carried out with

advanced technologies to preserve the natural properties of the water and to avoid damaging the areas where it flows.

With over 30 years of history behind it, Água Pedra Azul is considered the industry leader in the State of Espírito Santo, which has a population of over 4 million.

In addition to the State of Espírito Santo, the company operates in the south of the State of Bahia, in the State of Minas Gerais and in the State of Rio de Janeiro, where it is significantly expanding its presence this year. The company was the first mineral water

industry in the State of Espírito Santo to use solar energy, a way to generate clean and renewable energy without emitting pollutants into the atmosphere.

Moreover, this important South American business operates with respect and responsibility to take care not only of the water and the people but also of the entire surrounding green area, continuously committing to reforestation; to date, it has planted more than a thousand native plants. The commitment to the environment is also realised by promoting the recycling



of materials and properly disposing of the waste generated during production. Água Pedra Azul is at the forefront of water reuse within its facilities; for example, the water used to disinfect bottles is reused to clean floors and restrooms and to irrigate gardens and outdoor areas.

The commitment to the well-being of the population of Espírito Santo is another important aspect of the company's activities and is realised through various social initiatives in partnership with local associations.



➔ "VALUED CUSTOMER'S CLUB", AN EXCLUSIVE AWARD GIVEN BY SMI DO BRASIL

Born from an idea of Guilherme Vivona, Managing Director of the SMI Do Brasil branch, the award given to members of the 'Valued Customer's Club' was created to testify and strengthen the partnership among the customer, SMI, and the branch, a partnership that goes well beyond the mere supply of machinery, as the collaboration begins with the analysis of the end user's requests for the system, continues with the design and implementation of the most appropriate technological solution, and concludes with the installation of the machinery and the start of production.

SMI Do Brasil, based in São Paulo, Brazil, puts every customer at the centre of attention and follows them step by step, listening to their needs, studying and creating solutions and projects that best meet their expectations, up to the delivery of the purchased machinery. Upon the completion of the machine installation, the management of SMI Do Brasil symbolically shakes hands with the end customer, presenting them with a unique and exclusive work of art, a symbol of SMI engineering, where mechanical precision and technological innovation meet.

The award is represented by a grip mandrel, the mechanical element symbolising the first point of contact of the stretch-blow moulder with the journey undertaken by the preform, which, before transforming into a container (in this case into the beautiful Água Pedra Azul bottle produced by an EBS 10 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder), passes through the heating oven before entering the mould.

The grip mandrel is welded onto a stainless steel plate with a plaque, where the company's name, the model of the machine purchased, and its serial number are engraved.

This trophy expresses the gratitude of SMI do Brasil towards the companies belonging to the "Valued Customer's Club" for choosing SMI technology to achieve their growth and success goals. Every detail of the award has been designed thoughtfully, planned to testify and over time remind everyone of the partnership between the companies.

Below: SMI Do Brasil staff's hands the "Valued Customer's club" award to Luciana and Juliana Rambalducci, respectively CEO and Managing Director of Água Pedra Azul.



A CHAT WITH THE CUSTOMER

→ **Luciana Rambalducci, CEO of Água Pedra Azul, and Juliana Rambalducci, Managing Director of Água Pedra Azul, explain how the family business has grown in recent years and why they decided to invest in a new SMI stretch-blow moulder.**



Q: Water is a source of life, health, and well-being. For over 30 years, Pedra Azul has worked with dedication and seriousness to take care of this precious resource. What are the key milestones of your success?

A: Since our inception, we have had a very clear goal: to take care of our customers through quality. This commitment comes from the values built in the family and proudly passed down from generation to generation. Our purpose and our values have been with us step by step since the beginning.

We believe that success is the result of genuine work that conveys these values to both our collaborators and our customers. Our product is what we are. Maintaining this consistency over time is what distinguishes our success.

Q: How important is sustainability for Pedra Azul?

A: Sustainability is an essential value and thinking about an increasingly cleaner future is part of our company's DNA. Caring for water, customers, partners, and the environment is a

unique and integrated commitment.

We believe that every initiative today contributes to shaping a tomorrow where consumption and conservation walk side by side.

For this reason, we have been pioneers in the State of Espírito Santo, by forming a partnership with the EU RECICLO brand, which promotes the transformation of recycled materials and strengthens the recycling supply chain.

Currently, we are the only bottled water company in the state with a proprietary solar park. 40% of our energy comes from clean and renewable sources, and over the next few

ON THE SIDE: LUCIANA AND JULIANA

RAMBALDUCCI AT THE FISPAL 2025 TRADE FAIR WITH PAOLO NAVA, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF SMI S.P.A., AND GUILHERME VIVONA, DIRECTOR OF SMI DO BRASIL LTDABRASIL LTDA



years, we intend to increase this percentage to 100%.

We have been using solar energy for a long time and continue to invest to expand this commitment to the environment.

Furthermore, we responsibly preserve the native forest around our sources and facilities, strengthening the care of the territory in which we operate because the future depends on sustainable attitudes, and Pedra Azul continues to do its part every day.

Q: What factors drove you to invest in a new SMI rotary stretch-blow moulder?

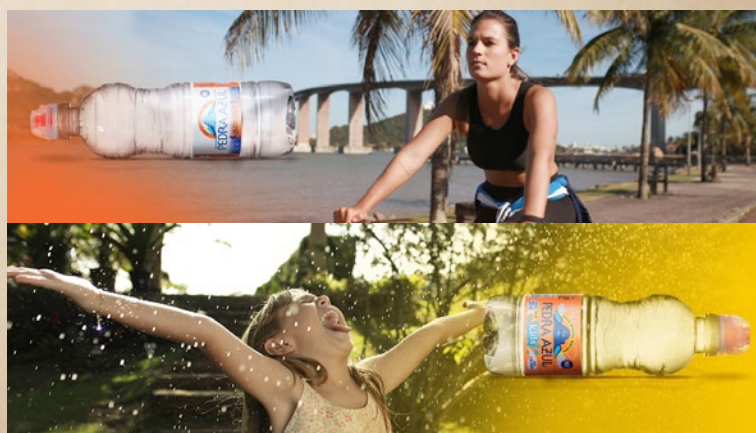
A: We were looking for a reliable technical solution, with proven results from other companies, that would allow us to achieve a new level of productivity and efficiency.

We were already familiar with SMI and, before making our decision, we wanted to look for some references in the market, which further strengthened our choice.

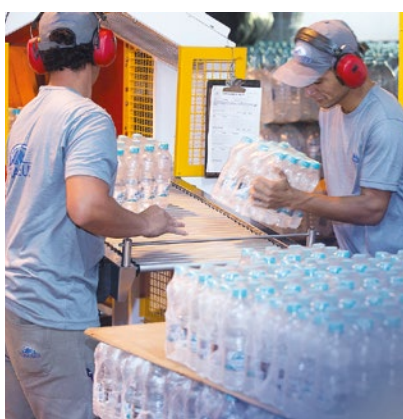
We knew that the solution offered by SMI would be innovative and pioneering in Brazil. The presence of the SMI do Brasil branch, with its local technical team, which guaranteed us complete support from installation to after-sales, gave us the necessary confidence to make the investment.

Q: How do you see the future of the mineral water market?

A: The consumption of mineral water is continuing to grow rapidly, with double-digit annual increases. In this scenario, sparkling water is gaining more and more space, driven by the public's preference for healthier and more natural products. In a context of easy access to information and greater awareness of health and well-being, consumers are looking for alternatives that take care of their mind and body, mineral water fits perfectly into these consumption habits that are destined to remain. Consequently, we believe that mineral water will play an increasingly important role in people's daily lives ; a choice in line with health care and the enhancement of what is essential.



SMI SOLUTIONS FOR ÁGUA PEDRA AZUL



The company constantly invests in cutting-edge production technologies, for the installation of which, it relies on highly experienced partners like SMI, present in the country through the SMI Do Brasil subsidiary. The Água Pedra Azul brand is well-known both in Brazil and abroad for the quality and purity of its products, which enjoy significant success among wide segments of the South American population. Equally important is the investment made by the company in creating a strong and appealing identity, recognised and appreciated by customers also thanks to the practicality of the PET bottles made by the EBS 10 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder supplied by SMI.



➤ ROTARY STRETCH-BLOW MOULDER EBS 10 KL ERGON

Functions: stretch-blow moulding of PET bottles for still and sparkling water at a maximum speed of 22,000 bottles/hour

Bottles worked: 0.5L cylindrical containers

➤ REDUCED CHANGEOVER TIMES

For Água Pedra Azul, it is essential to have an efficient and flexible production system that allows quick changeover operations to promptly adapt to new formats.

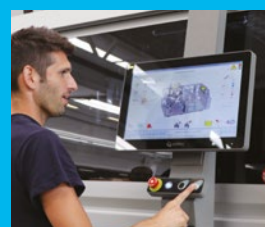
The changeover operations and mould replacements are simple and fast, as they involve adjusting processing parameters from the POSYC® operator interface, replacing each half of the mould by loosening four screws, and changing the bottom by means of a mechanical hook..



➤ ADVANCED AUTOMATION AND OVERALL EFFICIENCY

The stretch-blow moulding system is managed by the MotorNet System® automation and control system, which ensures the constant maintenance of optimal processing parameters throughout the entire production cycle and the direct modification of machine settings, thus simplifying format change operations.

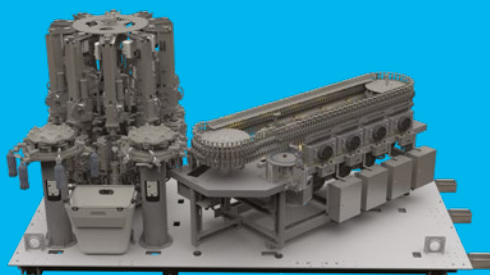
The simplicity of management and maintenance operations guarantees a high overall efficiency index.



➤ MODULAR AND COMPACT STRUCTURE

The compact and ergonomic design of the EBS 10 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder allows the integration of the heating functions for preforms and the stretch-blow moulding of bottles within a single module.

The reduced dimensions of the system ensure a reduced footprint within the bottling line and significant advantages in terms of operational flexibility and workplace safety, enabling the user to easily carry out all activities related to the use, cleaning, and maintenance of the machine.



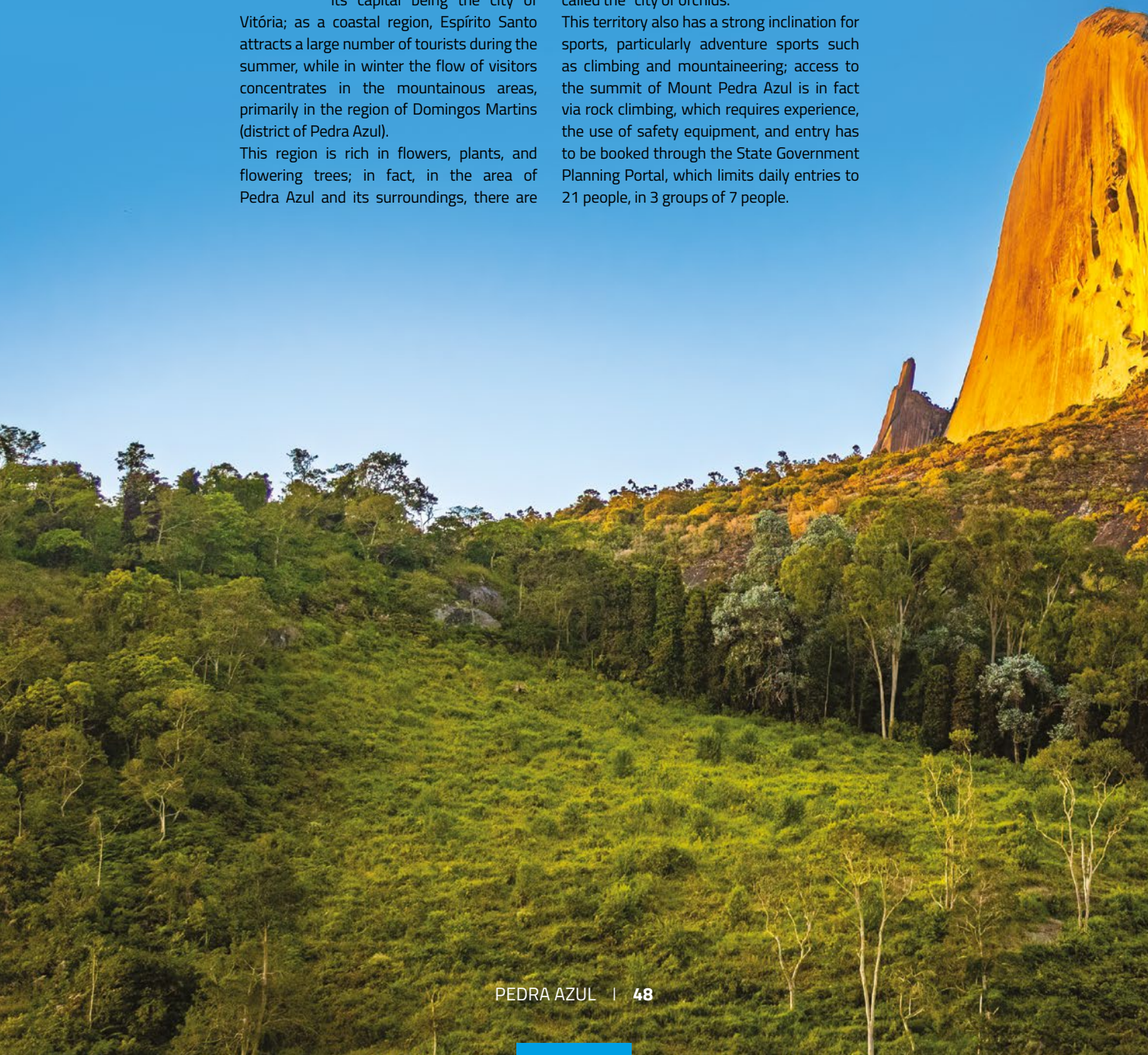
A PERMANENT KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLORS

Espírito Santo is a state in Brazil located in the southeastern part of the country, with its capital being the city of Vitória; as a coastal region, Espírito Santo attracts a large number of tourists during the summer, while in winter the flow of visitors concentrates in the mountainous areas, primarily in the region of Domingos Martins (district of Pedra Azul).

This region is rich in flowers, plants, and flowering trees; in fact, in the area of Pedra Azul and its surroundings, there are

important orchid growers, so much so that the locality of Marechal Floriano, where the Água Pedra Azul establishment is located, is called the “city of orchids.”

This territory also has a strong inclination for sports, particularly adventure sports such as climbing and mountaineering; access to the summit of Mount Pedra Azul is in fact via rock climbing, which requires experience, the use of safety equipment, and entry has to be booked through the State Government Planning Portal, which limits daily entries to 21 people, in 3 groups of 7 people.



➤ AN EXPLOSION OF SENSES

Charm is a constant in the Pedra Azul district region, which, with the presence of cosy inns and delightful restaurants, is becoming a consolidated tourist destination, with a special vocation for winemaking, gastronomy, and adventure sports.

Also part of this territory is the municipality of Domingos Martins, considered by many to be the 'most romantic place in Brazil' thanks to a rich architectural, gastronomic, and cultural influence from European immigration; the area is located near Venda Nova do Imigrante, a locality founded by Italian immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century. The gastronomy is of high quality, featuring specialities from Italian, Portuguese, French, organic, and exotic cuisines; there are also hundreds of family-run rural properties that offer cured meats, cheeses, honey, jams, bread, pastries, organic products, liqueurs, wines, and beers.



EXCELLENCE ON THE TABLES AROUND THE WORLD

IN 1900, THE FOUNDERS OF LATTERIA SORESINA SET OUT TO BRING "THE EXCELLENCE OF THEIR LAND TO THE TABLES OF THE WORLD." TODAY, 125 YEARS LATER, THE CREMONA-BASED COMPANY CONTINUES TO PROMOTE ITS EXCELLENT TRADITION OF QUALITY, DOING SO IN INCREASINGLY SUSTAINABLE WAYS. FOR THESE REASONS, IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR LATTERIA SORESINA TO EQUIP ITSELF WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART PRODUCTION PLANTS, CAPABLE OF ENSURING THE RIGHT FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO THE DIVERSE DEMANDS OF THE MARKET WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY RESPECTING THE ENVIRONMENT WITH INVESTMENTS IN GREEN SOLUTIONS.

➤ **SECTOR: MILK**

LATTERIA SORESINA SOCIETA' COOPERATIVA AGRICOLA
Soresina, province of Cremona, Italy
www.latteriasoresina.it

➤ Rotary Stretch-blow moulder EBS 6 KL ERGON



GEO LOCATION

SORESINA

PRODUCING IN STEP WITH THE TIMES

One hundred and twenty-five years without stopping even for one day, because the market does not wait for those who bask in their laurels. In a constantly evolving market in terms of consumption and business models, it is essential to always prioritise the strategic thoughts of the founders, which consist in ensuring excellence everywhere and at all times.

The history of Latteria Soresina is a demonstration that the company has seized market signals and has sustained their value, thanks to the growth of efficiency and innovation, expertly integrated with successful marketing strategies.

Today, all the goodness of the milk from the cows, sourced from a certified supply chain and processed traditionally with the use of innovative techniques, is ready to be

enjoyed in convenient PET and rPET bottles (produced with 50% recycled plastic), blown by an EBS 6 KL ERGON blow moulder.

The great advantage of the new system provided by SMI is that the moulds are equipped with 'ReduxAir', an efficient system for performing the stretching-blowing operations at lower pressures than those typically used.

ReduxAir is a high-tech system and, depending on the characteristics of the preform, the bottle, and the working conditions, it allows the stretch-blowing process for 0.5 L and 1 L bottles to be carried out at 20-25 bar compared to the 30-35 bar usually employed in this type of operation.

This makes it possible to reduce the use of the high-pressure air compressor, resulting in lower electricity consumption.

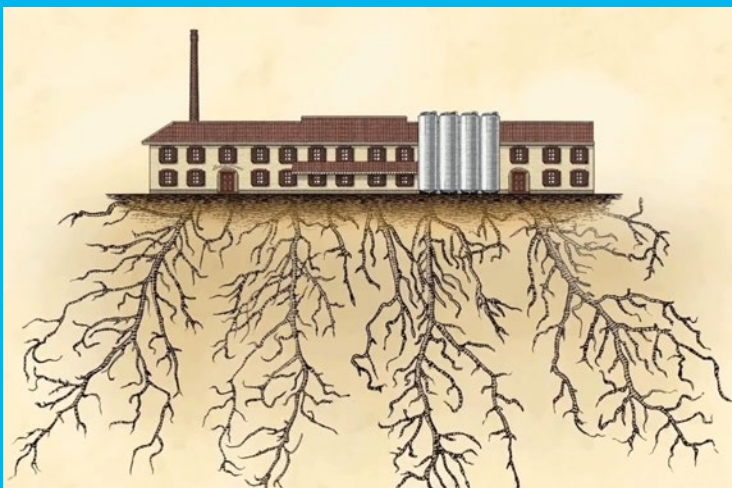


The constant commitment to reviving the traditions of the past within a globalised world is the driving force behind Latteria Soresina's continuous search for the best products, focusing on quality, innovation, sustainability, and the well-being of people, animals, and the environment. Nothing is overlooked, with great attention paid to every step of the production process, from milking the cows to packaging using solutions inspired by the 4 Rs of sustainability: Reduction, Recycled, Recyclable, Renewable.



➤ ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE!

Latteria Soresina is a cooperative established on 5 February 1900, using the close synergy between farmers and milk producers in the town of Soresina (province of Cremona): an associative form that, today as then, represents the most suitable model to translate the close bond that unites its members into operational reality. The relationship that binds them is solid and based on reciprocity; An inseparable bond, such so to make them the main players in the transformation and sale of the same quality product, contributing to the growth of the company. The goal of the partners was and is to offer quality by combining tradition, experience and innovation. "Today Latteria Soresina continues to work as a big family, where everyone has a role to play and respects that of the others," says Davide Arpini, Technical Director since 2006. "In addition, the commitment to ensure the future health of our land and our grandchildren means promoting greater sustainability in our sector"



➤ **BIG CELEBRATIONS IN CREMONA: LATTERIA SORESINA CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF ACTIVITY**

On February 5, 2025, Latteria Soresina, a model of aggregation and growth for Italian DOPs, reached the important milestone of 125 years of activity: a story of passion, tradition, and innovation that has accompanied generations of producers, employees, and consumers. "This anniversary represents not only a historic milestone but also a starting point towards the future," said Tiziano Fusar Poli, President of Latteria Soresina, during the event organised on February 10, 2025, at the Teatro Ponchielli in Cremona. "It is a moment to celebrate the work of all those who have contributed to the success of our cooperative: from the members who uphold the dairy traditions, to the employees who ensure the quality of our products every day, to the consumers who put their trust in us." During the evening, the most significant milestones in the history of the cooperative were revisited, emphasizing the deep connection with the territory, its values, and the vision for the future. The evening, in addition to the speeches by the President of Latteria Soresina, Tiziano Fusar Poli, and the General Director, Michele Falzetta, included institutional speeches from the Minister of Agriculture Francesco Lollobrigida, the President of the Lombardy Region Attilio Fontana, the President of Confindustria Maurizio Gardini, and the Mayor of Cremona Andrea Virgilio, along with an inspiring reflection on the future by Prof. Giuliano Noci.

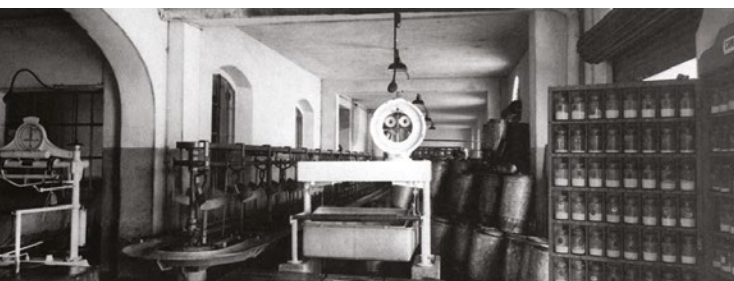


DAIRY SECTOR: THE LEADING POSITION OF THE ITALIAN DAIRY-FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

The dairy sector in Italy continues to push for exports; the enhancement of the Italian cheese tradition, innovation in agricultural practices, and a balanced management of resources are representative of the stability and flexibility of the sector that allow for constant growth.

Lombardy remains the Italian region with the highest production of milk, accounting for over 45% of the total production. (source www.dairyexpotech.it).

The territory within the province of Cremona plays a fundamental role in the national landscape, not only because 11% of Italian milk is produced here, but also for the common goal of creating a quality product that is healthy and safe for consumers. This is true sustainability.



LOMBARDY REMAINS THE ITALIAN REGION WITH THE HIGHEST PRODUCTION OF MILK, ACCOUNTING FOR OVER 45% OF THE TOTAL PRODUCTION.



EACH TO THEIR OWN MILK

Because it is produced in Italy from farms located in the green heart of the Po Valley and situated near the processing plants, to ensure a sustainable, controlled, and quality daily production, choosing from:

- fresh milk: flagship product, offered in convenient PET bottles, both high-quality whole and partially skimmed milk
- ESL milk: thanks to pasteurisation and ultrafiltration processes, the milk in either whole or partially skimmed version remains good for several weeks
- UHT milk: available in whole, partially skimmed, and easily digestible versions.

A healthy and complete food, irreplaceable during the growth period and valuable

throughout life, milk is an excellent source of micro and macro nutrients, and for this reason, it is considered a true food rather than just a beverage.

- The tastiest is full cream milk, because it undergoes very few processing steps; this results in a beverage full of flavour, rich in calcium and from a nutritional point of view, it is complete, which ensures a balanced supply of minerals and vitamins.

- The lightest is partially skimmed milk, which undergoes a separation process from the fat component, but ensures a complete nutritional supply, although in lower quantities than the full cream version.

- The most digestible is High Digestibility milk, which, thanks to its special processing, is easily digestible and is particularly suitable for those who are lactose intolerant.





➤ LOOKING TO THE FUTURE IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

The goal of Latteria Soresina is to generate a positive impact for society and the dairy-food sector. The passion for quality and the territory translates into concrete choices in the name of sustainability such as environmental protection, animal welfare, and constant support for members, employees, and collaborators. The sustainable supply chain is realised through periodic investments to renew barns, haylofts, and dairy processing plants to reduce environmental impact and energy consumption. All the breeding members with their over 200 barns located near the Latteria Soresina plants have signed a supply chain agreement that includes careful monitoring of the entire production cycle, with preventive actions and periodic controls. Among the concrete interventions for the protection of the territory, the ones that stand out are the use of renewable energies, biogas, and photovoltaic systems installed in each of the barns on every farm, along with the reduction of water consumption, collaborative logistics, and "truck sharing" for the sustainable transport of milk.



IF THE COWS ARE DOING WELL, THE PLANET AND THE COMPANY BENEFIT

For years, Latteria Soresina has promoted a culture of sustainability, both in the care and well-being of animals and in respect for the environment. It is scientifically proven that an animal raised with full respect for its well-being, produces more milk and of better quality. Ensuring the well-being of animals is also an environmental issue, as it allows for the consumption of fewer resources and reduces CO2 emissions per litre of milk produced.

GUARANTEED QUALITY AT EVERY STEP OF THE PROCESS

Quality is not achieved by chance: every phase of the production process undergoes strict controls and follows certified



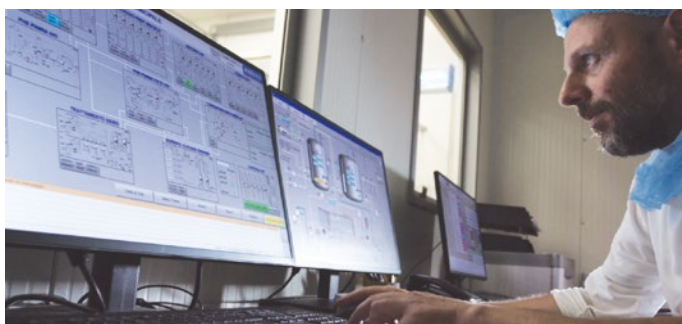
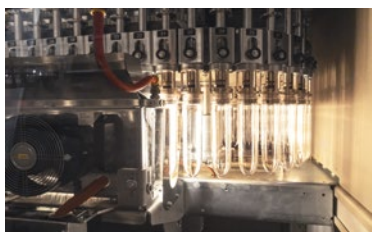
procedures. The milk from every tanker that arrives at the Latteria Soresina facilities is sampled and sent to the laboratory for analysis. Transparency, quality, and safety throughout the entire supply chain are the principles guaranteed daily that have led the Cremonese company to obtain important certifications to protect its partners and individual consumers. This excellence is also verified by CSQA, an independent body that certifies the food quality of products through essential sampling checks needed to obtain distribution authorisation.



Have a look at our certification



SMI SOLUTIONS FOR LATTERIA SORESINA



In response to the growing popularity of fresh milk and to produce PET and rPET bottles made with 50% recycled plastic, in sizes of 0.5 L and 2 L, Latteria Soresina has invested in a plant that allows it to increase its operations with a focus on reducing environmental impact.

The SMI EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder, installed at the Soresina facility, meets these needs and ensures flexible and sustainable production.

The SMI stretch-blow moulder meets the needs of Latteria Soresina to increasingly use rPET bottles; moreover, the use of preforms with an increasingly lighter weight helps the company optimise distribution and reduce its carbon footprint.

To reduce the environmental impact of packaging, the 0.5 L and 1 L containers used for fresh milk have been redesigned to lighten their weight (15% raw material savings).

The SMI stretch-blow moulder has also been tested with the use of white PET preforms with titanium dioxide (TiO₂), which acts as a light barrier, an important element for the production of ESL (Extended Shelf Life) milk.



➤ ROTARY STRETCH-BLOW MOULDER EBS 6 KL ERGON

Functions: to stretch-blow mould bottles in PET that will contain fresh milk, at a maximum speed of 12,000 bottles/hour (0.5 L format).

Bottles worked: cylindrical containers in 1L and 0.5 L

➤ REDUXAIR MOULDS

The moulds installed on the EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder are equipped with 'ReduxAir' bases, which, through specific technical and design measures, permit a much faster release of the air located between the outer walls of the bottle and the surface of the mould, making it possible to produce the 0.5 L container with air pressure at 20 bar and the 1 L at 25 bar; pressures that are much lower than those normally used (around 35 bar), ensuring a significant advantage in terms of energy savings and environmental protection to Soresina.

➤ AIRMASTER RECOVERY SYSTEM

The EBS 6 KL ERGON stretch-blow moulder is equipped with a dual-stage air recovery system, called "AirMaster," which allows for an additional device to be used alongside the basic air recovery system to recover and recycle part of the air from the high-pressure blowing system, ensuring a significant savings on compressed air consumption and energy costs.

➤ HIGH-EFFICIENCY THERMO-REFLECTIVE PANELS

The SMI stretch-blow moulder features a system of high energy efficiency ceramic composite thermal-reflecting panels, positioned both in front of and behind the lamps, which allows for an even distribution of heat, promoting energy savings.

➤ LOW CONSUMPTION PREFORM HEATING

The innovative and compact preform heating oven of the SMI stretch-blow moulding machines is equipped with an aluminium diffuser that ensures optimal temperature control to prevent possible overheating. Energy costs for bottle production are also reduced thanks to the presence of high energy efficiency IR lamps.

➤ SIMPLE AND QUICK FORMAT CHANGE

The preform feeding system is equipped with adjustments via numerical position counters, which ensure simple and quick format change operations.

➤ MOTORISED STRETCH RODS

The stretch rod carousel is equipped with motorised stretch rods controlled by digital drives, which ensure precision in operations and energy savings (compressed air is not needed and power consumption is lower compared to solutions with linear motors).





100% ITALIAN MILK FROM THE GREEN HEART OF THE PO VALLEY

A green heart beats within the products of Latteria Soresina, the Po Valley, a vast area made fertile over the centuries by the Po River; this flat expanse stretches over much of Northern Italy across an area of almost 48,000 km², and in Cremona, it occupies nearly a quarter of the entire provincial territory.

Always devoted to agricultural tradition and farming, the Po Valley boasts unique natural and environmental characteristics, which benefit the more than 200 farms of Latteria Soresina members that produce all the goodness of the brand.

The extraordinary journey of the milk, produced by the 46,000 cows raised in the farms of the Po Valley, begins every morning at 5 AM, when the transporters collect it from the farmers to bring it in just a few hours to nearby plants, thus ensuring fresh and daily processing that results in high-quality products.

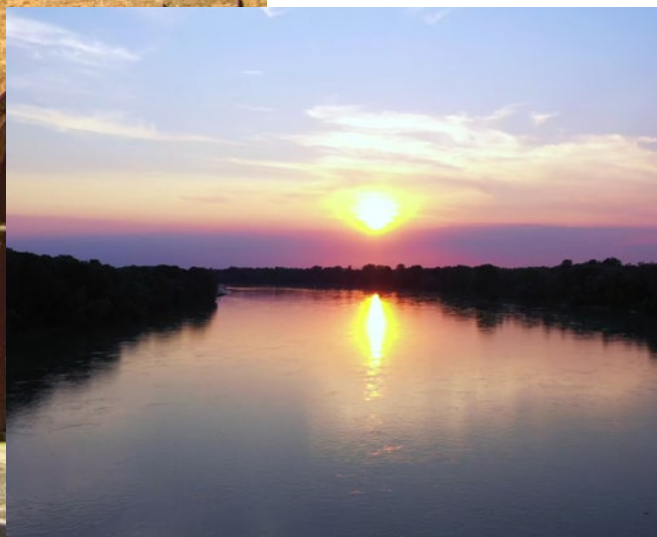
TOWARDS THE WARM AND QUIET INFINITE OF THE GREEN PADANA LAND

"I resumed the road towards the Italian plain, from the snowy proximities to the bluish mists of the corn landscapes, from the shining purity of mountains and valleys, towards the warm and quiet infinite of the green Padana land."

Thus, in 1913, the great German writer Hermann Hesse described the territory of Cremona while travelling in Italy; the vastness of the plain and cultivated fields was the aspect that struck the writer the most and still fascinates all who traverse the Pianura Padana today.

The territory of Cremona is rich in water, thanks to the rivers Adda, Oglio, and Po that run through it, and in cultivated fields, farms, and gastronomic traditions that personalize its history, culture, and flavours.

This area of Northern Italy is a true treasure trove of flavours and DOP, DOCG, IGP products, crossed by a dense network of genuine production centres: the farms.



GASTRONOMIC EXCELLENCE FOR ALL TASTES

From the farms of Cremona come the excellent gastronomic products that have made Cremona great and famous, to which the city dedicates specific celebration days every year.

Even in Roman times, this area of Northern Italy was known for the production of fine pork and cured meats, as well as the equally fine production of numerous types of cheese, the most famous of which is Grana Padano (Latteria Soresina is the main producer globally), six of which have obtained the recognition of Protected Designation of Origin (DOP).

Besides the legendary Stradivari violins, Cremona is also famous for other gastronomic delights such as torrone, which, according to local legend, was invented in 1441 for the wedding banquet of Bianca Maria Visconti and Francesco Sforza, and mostarda, which, made from candied fruits, is produced between the end of summer and the beginning of autumn.





➤ PEDAL TO BELIEVE IT

'The Milk Roads', is a curious, fun way to discover the places that help produce milk, this event takes place every year in June and winds through the country roads, farms, and herds where, according to tradition, the good milk of Lattoria Soresina is collected every day.

It is organised by ASD Pedale Soresinese, in collaboration with Lattoria Soresina, and represents a new way to discover and experience the unique territory and the precious supply chain.



TELL YOUR STORY WITH A BOTTLE



When we talk about sustainability, we often think of complex choices that require significant investments; yet, installing a rotary stretch-blow moulder from SMI within the production facilities, equipped with special moulds to produce label-free PET and rPET containers, is proof that innovation can be simple.

At the Drinktec 2025 trade fair, which will be held in Munich (Germany) from September 15 to 19, SMI will display an EBS 10 KL ERGON rotary stretch-blow moulder, equipped with specially designed moulds to produce 0.5 L label-free PET bottles.



**LABEL-LESS
BOTTLE**
scan this QR code

The container designed by SMI designers for this important occasion, has a fairly classic appearance, but with a sinuous and elegant shape that has allowed for an area to emboss the company logo, positioned vertically at the height of the bottle; a design that does not go unnoticed on retail shelves, given that all other bottles, due to the functional requirements related to labelling, have the traditional cylindrical or square shape.

Opting for a bottle without a label is an innovative and eco sustainable choice that any bottler can adopt; at the same time, it is a simple, effective, and appealing solution from a communication standpoint, as the very shape of the container becomes a powerful marketing tool thanks to the ability to literally highlight the company logo.

The bottle that SMI will present in Munich, tells a corporate story made of passion and continuous innovation, rather than simply giving information about a drink. From the QR code printed on the cap, it is possible to access the information on the SMI Group website, but the idea behind this project is the practical opportunity to present visitors with a customisable container featuring their logo and the story of their business successes.

The true innovation is the removal of the paper or plastic label, which is generally the element that is hardest to recycle in a PET container; the solution presented at Drinktec 2025 offers significant advantages to the bottler, as it allows them to save on initial investment (no labeller is needed) and on the costs of purchasing labels and glue, to reduce storage costs, and to simplify the production process.

➤ FUNCTIONAL, EFFICIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE PRIMARY PACKAGING

In the realm of primary packaging solutions, sustainability and efficiency are increasingly emphasized, two goals achievable through a series of solutions involving the lightweight nature of containers, the use of rPET, and the elimination of physical labels.

All of this is masterfully expressed in the bottle that SMI will present at Drinktec 2025, made with a low-weight preform of 10.6 g and a 26/22 Gravity neck, produced on a large scale without the need for glue and paper or plastic supports for the label.

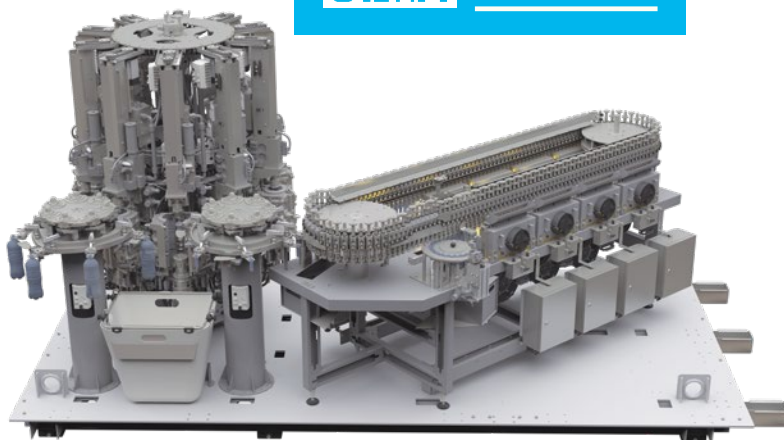
All essential information regarding the liquid contained can be accessed through the QR code printed on the cap. Additionally, the bottle designed by SMI aims to assist visually impaired or blind customers, as the QR code is marked with Braille.



The PET recycling process is also more efficient and linear, as there is no longer the need to separate the label from the container as done with traditional solutions.



ECOBLOC®
3D VIDEO
scan this QR code





smi WP

WP 1000

100 PACKS/MINUTE

CARDBOARD CASES ARE GAINING SPEED WITH THE NEW WP 1000 ERGON CASE PACKER

At the Drinktec 2025 trade event, SMI will unveil the new WP 1000 ERGON wrap-around case packer, designed in response to numerous customer requests for high-performance packaging in cardboard boxes, quick format changes, and greater ergonomics.

The new WP 1000 ERGON wrap-around case packer also meets the needs of companies in the food & beverages sector that prioritise environmental protection through the use of packaging solutions made with sustainable materials, such as lightweight kraft cardboard.

With the SMI WP 1000 ERGON, it is possible to produce packages of various shapes and sizes using kraft cardboard, 1.5 mm thick microwave cardboard or standard 3 mm cardboard, adapting the machine to various processes through simple adjustments from the POSYC® operator panel.

➤ PERFORMANCE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

The new WP 1000 ERGON automatic case packer is the ideal solution for packing various types of containers of different sizes in multiple configurations of wrap-around boxes or trays, at a maximum speed of 100 packages per minute (speed referred to aluminium cans in a 3x4 format).

The innovative technology of this machine, along with the fluid packaging system, typical of the entire WP range, ensures high reliability and excellent quality of the final package.



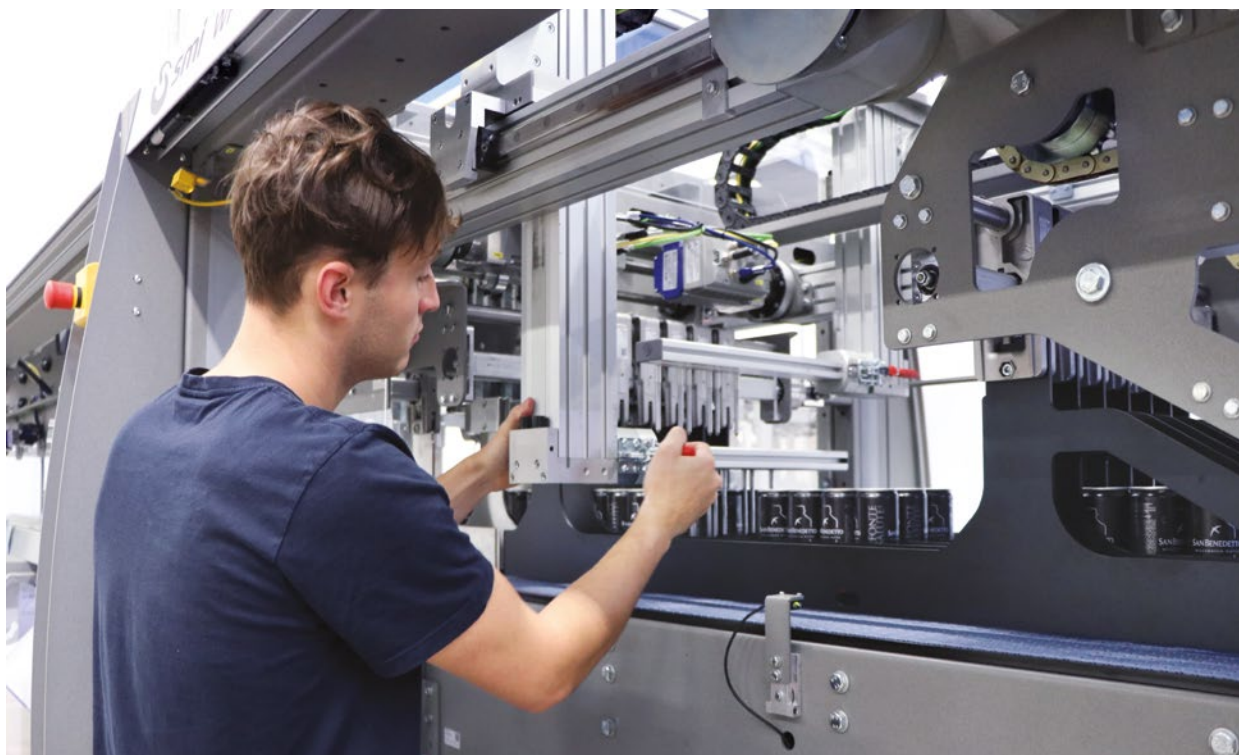
WP 1000

MAXIMUM OPERATING EFFICIENCY AND SPEED OF FORMAT CHANGE

The high performance of the system is also achieved thanks to the speed of the format change operations, made possible by an innovative automatic adjustment system for loose product guides installed at the infeed of the WP 1000 ERGON. Safety and precision of movements are the main pluses that characterise this system, allowing the operator to optimally, flexibly, and extremely efficiently manage the format change operations, especially when there is repeatability in production cycles. Downtime, represented by machine stops to adapt to the new format being processed, is drastically reduced, as the operator's intervention is limited to the simple selection of the desired format

from the POSYC® control panel, where the operating parameters for the formats to be used are saved. The automatic format change at the machine infeed, in addition to speed, flexibility, and efficiency, also guarantees:

- reduction of machine downtime and consequent reduction of costs (greater profitability of the plant)
- guarantee of quality and efficiency of the repeatability operations of format changes
- reduced risk of human errors and consequently greater precision and efficiency in production, thanks to the simple selection of formats from the control panel





The reduction of format changeover times and, consequently, the improvement of the machine's operational performance, is ensured by an innovative top product separation system.

The separation of the loose product flow is extremely smooth, fast, and efficient thanks to the presence of two opposing elevated bars that release the product group based on the set format.

The fully automatic device designated for this function is highly efficient, as it does not use traditional bottom product separation systems with pins, and it ensures that the products themselves can move smoothly and quickly on the conveyor belt; this is a factor that is extremely important in high-speed production processes.

To switch from one format to another, it is, in fact, sufficient to disassemble the two plates that hold the separator pins from each of the two elevated bars and install those prepared with the pins suitable for releasing the group of products for the new format to be processed.

The operation is very quick and precise and reduces the risk of human error since, thanks to the innovative quick release and

locking system, it is possible to remove the plate that is no longer needed and insert the new one for the format in use.

No screws and/or special tools are required to perform this unlocking/locking operation; therefore, any operator can easily and quickly make this modification, ensuring an increase in productivity and efficiency of the production line.

Another innovative aspect that contributes to the final quality of the package is the closure system for the flaps on the wrap-around box.

To ensure optimal performance during the box sealing phase, which occurs at high speeds, the system is equipped with two opposing side locks made with chains capable of efficiently closing the pack; thus, the system ensures compression and sealing of the package at the highest quality levels.

**EASYLOAD
VIDEO**

scan this QR code



➤ **GREATER ERGONOMICS OF THE SYSTEM**

The ergonomic and functional design of the new SMI WP 1000 ERGON case packer allows the operator to easily perform all activities related to the use and maintenance of the machine, while maintaining high levels of safety and efficiency.

An example is represented by the Easyload magazine, an innovative system that automatically loads cardboard blanks into the machine's designated magazine and provides optimised performance for high-speed packaging operations.

The loading device consists of a series of motorised conveyor belts on which the operator easily places the cardboard blanks in uniform horizontal stacks; the corrugated cardboard blanks are then picked up from the cardboard magazine by a newly designed suction cup cam lifter.

The blank travels up the cardboard ramp and is positioned under the incoming product group with the front side facing the short side.

THE ERA OF REALTIME AND DETERMINISTIC CONTROL **HAS BEGUN**

WE ARE IN AN ERA WHERE CONTROL SYSTEMS ARE DESIGNED TO RESPOND TO EVENTS OR STIMULI WITHIN SPECIFIC AND PREDICTABLE TIMES, ENSURING THAT THE SYSTEM'S ACTIONS OCCUR ACCORDING TO A PREDEFINED AND DETERMINISTIC PLAN. DETERMINISTIC BEHAVIOUR MEANS THAT, GIVEN THE SAME INITIAL CONDITIONS AND INPUTS, THE SYSTEM WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE THE SAME OUTPUT AND THE SAME BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE REQUIRED TIMINGS. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE ARE NO RANDOM OR UNFORESEEN ELEMENTS THAT INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME. REAL-TIME AND DETERMINISTIC CONTROL IS CRUCIAL IN APPLICATIONS WHERE TIMING AND PRECISION ARE FUNDAMENTAL, SUCH AS IN ADVANCED AND HIGH-PERFORMANCE INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATION SYSTEMS.



VLSPRO ETHERCAT

HOW DOES THE AUTOMATION AND SUPERVISION OF CONVEYOR BELTS CHANGE?

SMITEC inaugurates the era of real-time and deterministic control for logistics automation and the management of conveyor lines dedicated to bottling and packaging in the systems proposed by SMI.

The automation and supervision solution for SMI conveyor belts through the VLS (VaryLine System) PRO maintains the strengths that have characterised this solution until today.

In particular, the flexibility and openness ensured by a PC-based and distributed architecture, the use of a softPLC solution, and the HMI capable of offering extensive parametrisation; all elements that have



characterised the generation based on the PROFIBUS-DP serial fieldbus and that now give way to the more modern, high-performance, fast, and deterministic VLSPRO ETHERCAT solution (Ethernet for Control Automation Technology).



VLSPRO ETHERCAT

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF AUTOMATION

The important evolutions are those that maintain continuity with what has been validly applied in the past and know how to integrate the new, more efficient, open and real-time solutions. The key innovations in the transition from PROFIBUS-DP to ETHERCAT are:

1) PROFIBUS-DP is replaced by ETHERCAT (EC), a next-generation automation fieldbus based on Ethernet, which allows for superior performance and reliability in communication with inverters and other devices distributed along the production line, increasing the potential for integration with other present and future systems.

Main advantages:

- update of field I/O in the order of milliseconds
- ensures continuity of product in the future, no longer assured by PROFIBUS-DP, which has now reached the final stage of its lifecycle.

VLSPRO
EtherCAT
simpler,
more performance
& control



2) With the use of ETHERCAT, complex “add-on” fieldbus interface cards are eliminated, as this task can be managed directly from the ethernet port of the automation PC-PLC.

Main advantages:

- simplification of hardware configuration, eliminating the presence of an important component (the fieldbus interface card)
- increases the overall reliability of the system.

3) ETHERCAT overcomes the limitations of the delicate connection system of PROFIBUS-DP, moving to Ethernet connectors.

Main advantages:

- greater reliability and ease of installation.

4) Use of a state-of-the-art ‘softPLC’ (DIAGOS) for executing the control logic of the line.

Main advantages:

- real-time and deterministic execution cycle with millisecond timing, compared to the hundred milliseconds ensured by the previous VLSPRO PROFIBUS-DP solution
 - control one hundred times faster and more accurate of the lines, with the ability to manage very high production speeds with maximum precision
 - direct management of product flow manipulation systems, such as unloading and accumulation pallets without pressure, simplifying the configuration of the line itself, improving its overall reliability and reducing overall management and maintenance costs
 - simplification of commissioning and maintenance operations, with reduced times and improved quality of interventions.
- The use of the new “softPLC” ensures, for example, a more accessible and high-performing development and debugging environment (TOOL IDE) in terms of compilation times (cut in half) and downloads to the PLC (reduced by 90%).



➤ THE NEW SMITEC SOLUTION IN SUMMARY

VLSPRO ETHERCAT offers the ability to control with millisecond precision in a real-time and deterministic manner:

- up to 98 conveyor belts (driven by ETHERCAT slave inverters NORD)
- up to 3 unloading pallets, signal exchange (via MODBUS/TCP or through wired signals) for up to 10 machines in line
- up to 10 ethercat “slave” I/O modules.

Additionally, the new version of the system allows direct Industry 4.0 connection to supervisory systems (MES/ERP) with MODBUS/TCP protocol (client or server) and OPC UA (server).

➤ VLSPRO ETHERCAT ARCHITECTURE

From an architectural point of view, VLSPRO ETHERCAT features a simple and classic configuration composed of a panel-PC (POSYC®), where the HMI for line control is executed, which connects via ethernet to a PC-PLC (CPC), that runs the line control program via the ‘softPLC’ DIAGOS.

The PC-PLC, through its second internet port, connects to the ETHERCAT network and thus to the line systems to be controlled (inverters and I/O modules), typically through at least one ‘switch’ in order to divide them into at least two sections (depending on the line layout).

Features	VLS PRO ETHERCAT	VLS PRO PROFIBUS
Fieldbus	standard, next generation	serial end of life cycle
Timing of fieldbus data acquisition	1 millisecond	50 milliseconds
Need for fieldbus interface card	NO (uses ethernet port)	YES (addon card on PC bus)
Robustness of electrical connection fieldbus	High	Low
Type of control	deterministic realtime	not strictly deterministic
Control timing	1 millisecond	50 milliseconds
SoftPLCSOft	next generation (DIAGOS)	end of life cycle
PLC development environment	next generation and easily accessible	end of life cycle
PLC program compilation timing	several seconds	several minutes
PLC program download timing	several seconds	many minutes
Direct control capacity of fast systems	✓	✗
Product counting capability	✓	✗
Possibility of controlling high-speed lines	✓	✗
Availability of I4.0 OPC UA connection	✓	✗

SMI UK & IRELAND

10 YEARS ASSISTING BRITISH AND IRISH CLIENTS

Since 2015, SMI has been consistently committed to providing its customers in Great Britain and Ireland with fast and efficient local support, both commercially and technically, to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving market.

SMI (UK & Ireland) is a company based in Manchester, a major logistical and industrial hub strategically positioned to assist the current and potential customers of the SMI Group and respond promptly to their service requests.

The staff, currently consisting of 6 people, coordinated by Paul McGovern, Sales Director of SMI (UK & Ireland), assists customers with commercial requests, technical enquiries, spare parts supply, maintenance, and new applications.

Competence and professionalism are undeniable strengths of the UK & Irish branch of the SMI Group, increasingly engaged in managing important projects such as the recent supply of secondary packaging machines to the Welsh company Radnor Hills to meet the needs for valuable and eco sustainable packaging solutions



INTERVIEW WITH PAUL MCGOVERN, BRANCH & SALES DIRECTOR OF SMI (UK & IRELAND) LTD.



Q: In 2025, the UK branch of SMI will celebrate its tenth anniversary. Can you compare 2015 to today? How has the company developed?

A: In 2015 Mr Paolo Nava, SMI Group CEO, asked me to open an SMI Branch in the UK. At that time SMI had been servicing the UK & Irish markets remotely from Italy. Although historically SMI had sold a respectable number of machines in to the UK & Ireland market the overall business turnover in this area was gradually declining and for that reason SMI decided that opening the branch in the UK, in order to have a physical presence with UK based people managing existing and new customers, was the only way to increase our sales again and improve our customer service.

Q: Which are the main challenge you've faced in these 10 years?

A: The SMI world, and in general food & beverage packaging sector, is technically demanding. Attention to technical detail to fulfil customer projects successfully is possibly the biggest challenge that has faced us. Today, after 10 years, we are satisfied that we have achieved this in a positive way for our customers and we can see the results when they come back to purchase more machinery from us, this makes us very happy, but we always strive to do better for them. Moreover, we see the positive feedback from our customers every time they turn to us again to purchase more machinery; this aspect fills us with joy and

satisfaction, but at the same time, it drives us to increase our commitment to always give our best for their present and future success.

Q: Customers and their needs change, how does SMI (UK & Ireland) adapt to this evolution?

A: We are in constant contact with our customers via our customer service department in Manchester, headed up by our Operations Manager, Karen Peel, and also physically by making customer visits. In 2023, we appointed a Business Development Manager, Mr Gary Whitmore. Gary has been busy making sure that we are meeting all of our customers needs in terms of their evolving requirements and what they need from our packaging solutions.

Q: Can you share some particular events/situation of this 10 years of activity?

A: During our 10 year history we have taken the SMI Group active machine install base from around 60 to over 200 in 2025. Over these past years, we have overseen the sales and installation of over 150 packaging, blow moulding and filling machines and conveyor lines, this makes our team very proud to have contributed in such an important way to the SMI Groups increasing presence in the UK & Ireland.

Q: What do you hope to achieve in the next 10 years? What are the objectives of SMI UK for the coming years?

A: As I mentioned earlier, the activity carried out by SMI (UK & Ireland) is highly technical. My job as the branch Director

is to make sure that the branch infrastructure is in place to ensure another 10 successful years. As this is something that takes time, we are putting it in place now. Over the last few years we have started to install complete blowing and filling lines in the UK & Ireland, something which the SMI Group has had great success with over the years elsewhere in the world, but the UK & Ireland has proven to be a difficult market to open up due to very strong competition. Now that we have managed to get some full line references and we are putting more technical infrastructure in place, then we see the business winning more full line contracts during the next 10 years, however, we will remain focused on providing high levels of service to our loyal existing customers who have been with us for over many years.

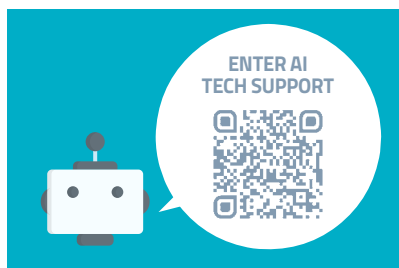


AI TECH SUPPORT, THE SMI CHATBOT HAS ARRIVED

Artificial intelligence is constantly evolving, with future scenarios predicting an ever-deepening integration into the daily lives of individuals and businesses. One of the most relevant applications of AI, which is changing online communication between companies and customers, consists of chats; in versions equipped with artificial intelligence, these digital tools are known as "chatbots," that is, automated systems capable of conversing with users in a manner similar to a human being. Thanks to advanced algorithms and technologies like natural language processing and machine learning, chatbots understand questions, provide relevant answers, and perform specific tasks; in short, they are computer programs designed to interact and converse with users through an interface that learns and adapts responses based on such interactions.

How to use the AI Tech Support service?

Just access the reserved area of the SMYZONE portal using your credentials; in the 'Customer Services' section, select AI Tech Support and indicate the serial number of your machine, then set your preferred interaction language. This service is available through a dedicated app as well.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR 24/7 AFTER-SALES SUPPORT

The intelligent virtual assistants of the AI Tech Support service handle a wide range of requests, providing personalised assistance with immediate responses, step-by-step operational instructions, and technical and maintenance information.

Here are the main advantages of the new service:

- **improved troubleshooting service and customer experience:** chatbots play a key role in diagnostic and problem-solving activities, providing timely suggestions and reducing downtime
- **timeliness:** chatbots can handle an unlimited number of conversations simultaneously, ensuring a 'real-time' response to a multitude of users.
- **efficiency and availability:** thanks to uninterrupted 24/7 support, with immediate responses for basic requests and various information, chatbots significantly reduce customer waiting times, ensuring operational efficiency and lower management and maintenance costs of SMI systems
- **service personalisation:** each user receives personalised and contextualised responses based on the serial number of the machine installed at their facility
- **multilingual and multimedia support:** the conversation occurs in the language selected by the user, benefiting from a clear, fluid, and accessible service. Responses can also include multimedia content such as images and videos



DRINKTEC 2025: THE INNOVATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF BEVERAGE PACKAGING

Cutting-edge technologies, networking, and future trends: in Munich (Germany) from September 15 to 19, 2025, Drinktec 2025 will showcase the event that redefines the beverage and liquid food industry. The global beverage industry is undergoing a major transformation, driven by innovation, sustainability, and new consumption habits. In this context, Drinktec 2025 reaffirms itself as the reference platform for those who want to anticipate the future of the sector. The fair will be the place where decision-makers, producers, and innovators can network, discover new technologies, and create strategic synergies.



NEW PACKAGING REGULATION PPWR 2025: REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

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The PPWR (Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation), published in the Official Gazette on January 22, 2025, establishes requirements for the entire life cycle of packaging and includes important measures and goals for reducing packaging waste, improving recyclability and recycled content, phasing out hazardous and harmful substances, as well as promoting reuse systems for packaging.

The new regulation aims to reduce waste generated from packaging, focusing on three main objectives that are essential for contributing to environmental sustainability and the conservation of natural resources:

- reduce the amount of waste through the use of materials and design that minimise the packaging produced
- encourage reuse by promoting the adoption of reusable packaging and encouraging practices that extend their useful life
- increase the percentage of recycled packaging by improving separate collection and the treatment of recyclable materials.





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