

LUXURY PRODUCTS

Celebrating luxury packaging leader

GLASS VALLEY: courtesy of FEVE



Jean-Marc Arrambourg



Stéphane Franconville

THE EVOLUTION OF GLASS VALLEY

Evidence of a glass industry in the Bresle Valley can be traced way back to the Middle Ages, when glassmakers settled in the forest and began using its resources to produce glassware and flat glass - notably windows and stained glass for fine homes and churches.

Then a developing passion for perfumery among the Parisian bourgeoisie saw a shift towards luxury bottles that stood for quality, style and the latest in fashion. Brands that are known and loved today, such as Guerlain, began

Premium glass craftsmanship has its roots in France's 19th century Bresle Valley, from which it would lead up to what GLASS VALLEY represents today. Here FEVE takes a look at this world-leading packaging centre that's responsible for over 70 percent of the world's luxury glass bottle production for perfume, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.



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collaborating with local glassmakers on unique designs - leading to the creation of the Paris-Le Treport railway line to transport glassware to city centres.

Today Glass Valley is the world's leading producer of luxury packaging, representing more than 70 percent of global production of glass bottles for perfume, spirits, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical industries. With over 60 companies and 10,000 specialized employees all working in close proximity, Glass Valley has become a unique industrial hub that offers a wide range of traditional products - each exemplifying the best of 'Made in France'. This brings together a network of know-how while regrouping specialized companies at all stages of glass packaging production.

Says President of MG Group France, Stéphane Franconville: "The skills and expertise of Glass Valley members make it a sort of one-stop-shop that's capable of offering some of the world's biggest brands in perfumery, cosmetics and spirits with a wide range of traditional products - all made in France."

MEETING QUALITY CRITERIA FOR LUXURY PRODUCTS

The unique properties that make glass such an exceptional



material for luxury products are essentially three:

- As an inert material, glass ensures optimal preservation of its content while its longer shelf life makes it ideal for storing valuable cellar wines and spirits.
- Its recyclability, reusability, and versatility in terms of shapes and design makes it a popular choice in the perfumery industry, as it allows for unique branding and differentiation that builds brands.
- The transparency and purity of glass enhances the appearance of products, highlighting their true colours and characteristics and adding to the iconic silhouette of many collections.

As succinctly put by Jean-Marc Arrambourg, Chairman and CEO of Saverglass Group and member of both La Glass Vallée and FEVE: “Compared to other packaging materials, it’s right to say that glass is the only one that combines all the above advantages.”

HOW BEING A ‘HUB’ ADVANCED GLASS PACKAGING INNOVATION

Glass Valley’s rise to world-leading hub comes down to two key factors, namely proximity and shared know-how. Here Glass Valley represents more than 60 interconnected companies from

all levels of the value chain - all operating in close proximity. This allows them to offer their expertise in all stages of production, from model makers to decorators to manufacturers. Glass Valley also counts on complementary companies, such as those in the transport and storage industry, to deliver finished high-end and luxury glass packaging. Together, these elements give their members the capacity of sharing their know-how on innovation, sustainability and quality with partnering brands. Says Franconville: “Glass Valley is a centre of excellence for the most complicated packaging that’s also of optimum quality. Here proximity enables co-innovation between the suppliers and

the customers, and we offer that to the market.”

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN THE LUXURY INDUSTRY

Today’s luxury glass is facing significant challenges as consumers, and in turn customers, become increasingly aware of the sustainability footprint of their preferred products. The biggest challenge is balancing regulatory and environmental constraints with innovation and customer support. To address these issues, the industry is working on various weight reduction, recycling, and decarbonisation initiatives.

In turn, Glass Valley is currently working on creating sustainable glass packaging solutions by following three principles of



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customer proximity and collaboration, as well as 5 R&D principles:

- Reduce: Initiatives to reduce the weight of glass while maintaining its identity
- Reuse: Scouting for new reusable glass packaging solutions for perfume bottles
- Recycle: Increasing collection of glass throughout the value chain
- Replace: By advancing the “glassification” of luxury packaging products to the detriment of other packaging materials
- Disrupt: Providing disruptive solutions to customers and premium brands

Glassmakers must balance environmental constraints with innovation to continue supporting customers while reducing their environmental footprint. Finally, to push initiatives forward





WHAT IS THE GLASS HALLMARK?

The Glass Hallmark identifies the container glass on which the mark appears as recyclable while optimally preserving its content thanks to its inert nature. The Glass Hallmark neither expresses nor claims any other product-related characteristic. As such it's not an official certification stamp. More specifically, the Glass Hallmark constitutes no other environmental claim e.g., that the glass container concerned contains a minimum percentage of recycled glass or that it will be recycled at the end of its life.

that address future challenges, Glass Valley provides in-house 360-degree training with skilled trainers to prepare the next generation of workers to make a positive impact on the industry. Says Arrambourg: "We see this period as a step change - we need to be agile, flexible and as cooperative as we can. We're finding solutions for the industry that will ultimately provide solutions to the market and to customers."

BRINGING THE GLASS INDUSTRY 4.0 TO LIFE

The glass industry is committed to addressing environmental challenges and has set ambitious decarbonisation objectives that demonstrate its commitment to

sustainability. In turn, Glass Valley will continue to strive for sustainable development through sharing its members' progress, with a clear path towards achieving a more climate-neutral, circular and fit for the future glass packaging.

'Glass Industry 4.0' focuses on using technology to enhance expertise in hollow glass, where Industry 4.0 technologies, such as machine learning, are already improving production quality and customer satisfaction. Digital simulation and measurement systems, along with industrial data analysis, help improve process optimization and quality control, as well as reduce CO2 emissions. Human expertise and technology integration ensure success in the premium market.

These initiatives, and others like it across the glass industry, are proof that Glass Valley is building on its combination of historical expertise and modern advancements, creating sustainable solutions while providing training and support to the next generation of workers.

It is this legacy of innovation in glass craftsmanship – along with the exceptional properties of glass as a packaging material, and collaboration from an interconnected network of companies from all levels of the value chain – that have seen Glass Valley become a world leader in luxury packaging. And it is this same legacy that will see them pave the way for the packaging that we rely on in the future. ■



FEVE

Avenue Louise 89, Bte 4
B-1050 Brussels - Belgium
Tel.: +32-2-536-0080
Fax: +32-2-539-3752
E-mail: secretariat@feve.org
www.feve.org