

AWARDS

2023 sees **STEKLARNA HRASTNIK** hailed as Exporter of the Year

Acclaimed as 2023 Exporter of the Year, STEKLARNA HRASTNIK gained international recognition recently for excelling at premium bottle production for spirits, wines and mineral waters, accompanied by its global reach, sustainability efforts and a growth in revenue that's no less impressive – all characterized by innovative glass production and a measurable carbon footprint reduction.





Received by General Manager Peter Čas, The Exporter of the Year award was recently presented to Steklarna Hrastnik at the 10th Slovenian Exporters Conference in Brdo pri Kranju. During the conference, such prominent figures as Minister of Economy, Tourism, and Sport Matjaž Han, Acting Director of Spirit Slovenia Rok Capl all joined economic experts to discuss economic forecasts and provide insights on increasing the added value of companies. Selection of Steklarna Hrastnik as the ninth Exporter of the Year was made from a pool of five finalists, which included Steklarna Hrastnik, Adria Dom, Cetis, Intersocks, and Robeta.

WHY STEKLARNA HRASTNIK?

Being numbered among the top three global providers of premium bottles for spirits, Steklarna Hrastnik also manufactures bottles for high-quality wines and mineral waters. Over the past two years the company has achieved a remarkable

increase in sales - reaching EUR 99.5M in the previous year. This growth in volume has led to a substantial improvement in the profit margin from operations, with a whopping 23.8 percent EBIT margin, which places it among the best large companies in this regard. Here sustainable development is a cornerstone of the business, with a focus on setting trends in the glass packaging industry. Indeed, General Manager Peter Čas predicts 'a 20 percent increase in Steklarna Hrastnik sales, a 33.5 percent rise in the EBITDA margin, EUR 29.5M in operating profit, EUR 40M in EBITDA, and a 21 percent net sales network for the current year.'

SALES IN 60 NATIONAL MARKETS - WITH ITALY TRUMPING ALL

Steklarna Hrastnik derives 97 percent of its revenue from foreign markets and serves customers in 60 countries. Its primary export markets are within the European Union, accounting for 84 percent of total sales (39 percent in Italy, 20 percent

in France and 10 percent in Germany). Beyond the EU, significant exports were also made to the USA (7 percent) and the United Kingdom (5 percent). In the previous year, it expanded its prestigious spirit bottle exports to new destinations - including Cuba, Armenia, Georgia and Finland. Steklarna Hrastnik caters to both beverage brand owners and bottle distributors.

ALL-IN-ONE PRODUCTION OF PREMIUM BOTTLES

Over the past six years, Steklarna Hrastnik has invested more than EUR 93M in its operations, revamping its production programme and implementing automation processes. It has shifted its focus from table and lighting glass to producing premium bottles for spirits, rosé wine and premium water. Today it's among the top three global suppliers of high-end bottles for renowned beverage brands such as Remy Martin, Pernod Ricard, Bacardi, Belvedere, Hennessy, Brown Forman, William Grants and SPI groups, among others. It offers a comprehensive, full-service approach - from idea con-

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ception, design and development right through to production and delivery. Additionally, customers can choose from Hrastnik1860's extensive collection of 32 different bottles. In 2022, it received the Red Dot Design Award for its smart solution, the e-bottle, as well as the EcoVadis gold medal for sustainability while this year it has received the Red Dot award for its water bottle developed in collaboration with the JRE Association.

REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR CLEANER BOTTLE GLASS

Today Steklarna Hrastnik is committed to offering very high quality bottles in the market, crafted from one of the purest forms of glass that does not contain heavy metals. It recently introduced a new hybrid furnace worth USD 25M that runs on electricity (up to 40 percent, up from the previous 10 percent) and natural gas. Last month it showcased the production of bottles with a significantly reduced

carbon footprint, with one of the glass furnaces using a higher proportion of hydrogen as an additional energy source (up to 30 percent of energy input). The company is also heavily investing in automation and digitization. This year, it became custodian of the CEDIT project for digital transformation of the industry, which integrates cutting-edge technologies into production as well as other processes. Automation has also been implemented in the glass production process, where radar measures the quality of each drop used to make a bottle, and each bottle undergoes automated quality inspection with at least two multifunctional control machines.

OWNERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE GROWTH

Steklarna Hrastnik is owned by the Vaider Group, which includes not only the Hrastnik factory but also a facility in Serbia (SFS Paraćin). The Group aims to increase its revenue from EUR

100M last year to EUR 300M within five years. The General Director of the Vaider Group is Peter Čas, with Igor Lah as its President and Matevž Fazarinc as the Operational Director of the Vaider Group and the Executive Director of Steklarna Hrastnik. Steklarna Hrastnik currently employs slightly over 600 people, having hired 151 new employees last year. In the first half of this year, it added 33 new staff members, with further hiring expected by the end of the year. ■

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