

VETROPACK rings in a new era

A new glass works for a new era: one of the leading glass manufacturers in Europe is investing in a new flagship facility for the storied Italian market. The aim is for cutting-edge production to commence in Boffalora sopra Ticino near Milan in 2023 – not far from the old site and designed to be future-proof, flexible and sustainable.

for the food and drinks industry with products ranging from olive oil and preserves to nut nougat spreads and juices, soft drinks and spirits of all kinds. Wine and prosecco are particularly popular with the Italian market.

The subsidiary Vetropack Italia S.r.l. has belonged to the Group since 2015, though the glass making at the Trezzano site dates back to 1960. As Johann Reiter, CEO of Vetropack, points out: “It was already clear from early on that the old site in Trezzano sul Naviglio was not going to meet the company’s long-term objectives. The important Italian market with its rich culinary traditions and many world-famous brands plays a central role in our strategy.”

The future started on the canals: from the thirteenth to the twentieth century, goods for the burgeoning Milanese industrial region were transported on the Naviglio Grande, a canal that connects to the river Ticino and forms the border between Lombardy and Piedmont. The groundbreaking ceremony for the new glass works of the Vetropack Group – a listed Swiss company and one of Europe’s leading glass manufacturers – took place on 25 October 2021. With nine glass works and around 4,000 employees, Vetropack delivers high-quality glass packaging to markets in central, eastern and southern Europe, in particular



Groundbreaking ceremony for the new glass works

This is in addition to the ambitious quality and sustainability targets the company has set for itself for the year 2030, including flexible and bespoke production on the one hand and the most efficient usage of resources on the other.

SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST A GLASS WORKS – A LIVING PIECE OF THE FUTURE

Planning for the new production facility, the investment for which amounts to more than CHF 400 million, has begun, with preparations long in the making. All stakeholders – including the Italian authorities, landscape designers, architects, employees in Trezzano and experts from the Vetropack Group – were involved in good time in order to draw up a particularly future-proof and sustainable concept. The production facility, which is being built on the site of the former Reno di Medici paper factory and abides by all environmental requirements, has 347,000 square metres with approximately 170,000 square metres dedicated to production equipment.

Large parts of the site's structural remains are being reused. A historically important warehouse is being restored and opened to the public as an information centre. Even the SP225 main road will be modified during the construction works, with additional relief provided by parking spaces built for cars and lorries. Part of the area is also envisioned as a 31,000 square metre park, which, as a public green space, will strike an attractive contrast with the modern industrial landscape. All trees felled in the course of the construction work will be planted anew elsewhere. The glass façades blend into the landscape harmoniously – not least because of the muted colour palette of greens and browns. In addition to this, the roof is being

constructed so it is possible to install photovoltaic cells over its entire surface area, a portion of which will be in use right from the outset.

Great importance is therefore being placed on sustainability, not only in terms of construction and landscaping but also technologically and socially: all 301 employees at the old Trezzano site will be given the opportunity to transfer to the new Boffalora site approximately 25 kilometres away. Even though the output

per employee is being significantly increased, the size of the workforce will also slightly increase due to the higher capacity, with both new and existing employees already being trained since 2020 to use the new production machinery.

DOING MORE WITH LESS, BESPOKE MINI-SERIES AND INDUSTRY 4.0

How will production work in the new glass works? Vetropack



NEW GLASS WORKS



is capitalising on the benefits of a smart factory, while leaving space for human expertise and creativity: all glass production processes are based on the Vetropack Group's expertise and are being brought in line with the latest technology. The Vetropack philosophy of "safety first" has been implemented consistently and the newest developments within ergonomic workplace design have been taken into consideration. Both white and cuvée coloured glass will be manufactured at the site and the productivity per tonne of glass will increase significantly as a result of the ultra-modern machinery. As in the previous glass works, there will also be two furnaces in operation at Boffalora at first. The complete infrastructure is, however, already designed for an expansion of production capacity as a positive market development is anticipated both in Italy and abroad in the medium term. Even with only two furnaces, an increase in production capacity of around 50 percent will have

been achieved.

"As such, Boffalora will be one of the Vetropack Group's largest sites," says Christoph Burgermeister, Project Manager at Vetropack. "We will be able to produce more flexibly at the new glass works and will therefore be more able to meet the rising demand for high-quality packing, including in smaller batches – so-called semi-specialities." A stand-out is the fully automated warehouse: automated vehicles will transport the finished bottles and glasses from the production facility into the warehouse and from there to the

loading ramp safely and without human intervention.



**Vetropack Project Manager
Cristoph Burgermeister**

VETROPACK IS A PIONEER IN SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

In particular, environmental sustainability and efficient use of resources are being heavily invested in at the new glass works. Glass is without doubt one of the most sustainable packaging materials as it is 100 percent and often endlessly recyclable. Vetropack is one of the pioneers of recycling and started

collecting used glass in Switzerland as early as 1970. Nowadays, the proportion of recycled glass within the Vetropack Group is approximately 55 percent, with the aim of surpassing 70 percent by 2030.

The specific measures for boosting sustainability include:

- decontaminating the industrial site
- reusing materials from the demolition of the original building and facilities
- low noise pollution during the day and at night
- energy-efficient processes and production equipment and using waste heat
- producing green electricity using photovoltaic systems
- reducing emissions using the newest filtration systems (dust and NOx)
- low water consumption using closed-loop systems

Production of glass packaging will commence at Vetropack's new Italian site in the first quarter of 2023. Precise planning as to how to shift production from the old glass works to the new one, as well as training at various sites and suppliers' premises, are already under way.

Ultimately, Burgermeister is thinking ahead: "As there are back-up solutions for the product lines within the Italian market at other Vetropack glass works, continuity of supply will be guaranteed at all times. We are looking forward to the beginning of a new era for our customers and are confident that Boffalora's success will reflect positively on the entire Vetropack Group." ■

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