

SUCCESS STORIES

VETROPACK partners with J. C. FRIDLIN GEWÜRZE for lightweighting excellence

Stretching back over a decade, the winning collaboration between renowned glass packaging manufacturer VETROPACK and J. C. FRIDLIN GEWÜRZE has seen a variety of glass jars refined – both aesthetically and in terms of sustainability. A particular highlight of this journey has been the launch of an innovative lightweight glass, designed to conserve resources across the entire value chain.



Benno Wyss, Fridlin Gewürze CEO

It's 250 years now that J. C. Fridlin Gewürze Ltd. has dedicated itself to the mission of bringing diversity to the spice rack. Established in Zug in 1775, the Swiss family-owned enterprise not only sources spices and herbs from every corner of the globe but also processes them at its in-house facility. Within the company's milling plant, over 350 finished products are crafted from around 100 different natural raw



materials - ranging from seeds, roots, bark and flowers to leaves and beyond. While household staples such as black pepper, sweet and hot paprika and cinnamon remain perennial favourites (particularly in the colder months), the assortment also includes exotic varieties and complex blends, including ajowan from India, Guatemalan cardamom and the boldly aromatic cassia cinnamon from Indonesia. "In many cases, we also develop blends to meet customers' requests - these often consist of eight to twelve spices from different origins. Thanks to our own production in the milling plant -the only remaining spice mill of this size in Switzerland- we ourselves are able to influence the degree of processing and the quality. Wherever possible, we believe it's very important to process pure and whole spices. That way, we can guarantee purity and quality," says Benno Wyss. He joined Fridlin Gewürze 18 years ago and has been its CEO since summer 2024. Demand for convenience products has been a particular trend in recent years, he notes. These include spice blends that trigger an exceptional flavour experience in certain dishes - creations that are a recipe for certain success. Juniper berries are also gaining popularity due to the ongoing gin boom.

ENHANCED DESIGN AND REDUCED WEIGHT FOR MILLIONS OF JARS ANNUALLY

Fridlin Gewürze commands a well-established presence in Switzerland's retail landscape, food industry and catering supply sector. "We also supply the retail and industrial sectors of the German and Austrian markets, but there's still scope for expansion there: our core market is very definitely Switzerland," Wyss continues. The longstanding collaboration with Vetropack traces its roots back to the late 1960s. "We really gained momentum again after the turn of the millennium, when we stepped up our collaboration with Vetropack and they became our main glass jar supplier. And most recently, in 2008, we joined forces with Vetropack to develop our own new jar design. A new design remains on the market for around 15 years until a major change comes about." Glass, being a fully recyclable and inert material, is exceptionally well suited to preserving the quality of spices and herbs. It safeguards the contents effectively, ensures impressive shelf life and provides an ideal canvas for appealing labelling. The current delivery volume ranges from 10 to 15 million jars each year. Vetropack supplies Fridlin Gewürze with three dif-

ferent jar types, two of which have recently been optimised to conserve resources and better meet consumer expectations. Among these, the introduction of a lightweight glass jar stands out. "We don't just view sustainability as an isolated issue - we consider it holistically throughout the entire value chain. But with global procurement, that's no easy task. We pay regular visits to our 90 or so suppliers, we give them the best support we can and we're committed to economic and social sustainability - but, of course, our scope of influence is limited," Wyss explains. "We're also investing in organic products -demand for them is very clearly present in Switzerland- and thanks to the Max Havelaar Fairtrade quality label, we have products in our range that are exemplary in terms of ecological as well as social criteria."

ELEVATING EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE SUPPLY CHAIN

A further strength of the alliance with Vetropack lies in the joint pursuit of measurable advances in packaging efficiency. The optimisation project initiated in the first quarter of 2022



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set out to enhance the jars' technical design. "Our prime objective is to combine a modern, sustainable packaging with optimal design. To achieve this, we place great value on resource-conserving production and minimal use of materials," says Robert Simoni, who has served as Project Buyer for Packaging at Fridlin Gewürze for the past two and a half years. The project began with an update to the design of the 225-ml jars. At the request of Fridlin Gewürze, adjustments to the base geometry have yielded a more stable container, significantly reducing the risk of toppling. A further milestone was the development of a new 112-ml jar using lightweight glass, in collaboration with Vetropack. Simoni explains: "The new 112-ml size replaces the previous 80-ml and 125-ml jars and is 13 percent lighter in weight than a standard container. Taken across the entire value chain, this yields savings of around 190 metric tons of glass per year. Vetropack assisted us proactively and provided highly professional support for the whole venture - even after the project period had ended." Additionally, both newly designed jars offer improvements in palletisation, enhancing storage and transportation efficiency while significantly lowering CO2 emissions. "Our aim was to develop a modern design with a reduced carbon footprint as a contribution to overcoming the global challenge of climate protection - and that's why we opted for a new design. Vetropack played their part by giving us proactive support - not only



with design suggestions, but also for communication and realisation with the end customer."

SUCCESS IN EXECUTION MATCHES THEORY

All the theoretical benefits outlined at the beginning of the project were ultimately realised in practice. Indeed the proactive approach to project management and communication, including with end customers, contributed to the success of the initiative. The updated jars proved to be more robust and stable, while the new lightweight version achieved a 13 percent weight reduction. Improvements in production and palletisation - through increased layering- combined with more efficient logistics have made a tangible difference. Altogether, the new packaging format saves approximately 190 metric tons of glass annually. This year, Fridlin Gewürze celebrates its 250th anni-

versary. "We want to look to the future, face up to the challenges ahead and not rest on the laurels of the last 250 years," Wyss stresses. "Vetropack is an ideal partner to help us achieve this. Based on intensive dialogue and thanks to valuable suggestions for optimisation, we have come to know Vetropack as a flexible, innovative and professional glass manufacturer. Superb service and uninterrupted supply are critical factors - because nothing happens if there are no jars. Our collaboration with Vetropack gives us a partner who shares our values!" ■



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