

Bag-in-Box Wines - Freshly Tapped and Effectively Marketed

by Jürgen Nünning

People scarcely let go of their old habits. And if they do, they only do it reluctantly. This also applies to wine connoisseurs, whose high-class wines used to be stored exclusively in bottles with natural corks. The bottle caps then gradually changed: natural corks were followed by plastic corks; these in turn were followed by screw caps. Also the containers changed: instead of bottles, the wines were filled into beverage cartons. For several years now a further innovation has made its way: in the catering trade and at home, wines flow through the tap into the glass more and more often from what is referred to as bag-in-box (BIB) containers. In the catering trade and at home, innovative BIB cooling devices help to tap wine comfortably and to pour it out at the perfect temperature. Additionally: they reveal new ways of marketing the products.

The trend towards 'BIB bottling' comes from Australia and began as early as in the 1970s. Bag-in-box describes the principle of packaging: the beverage manufacturers fill the wine into wine pouches, to which a tap valve is attached. A corrugated cardboard box stabilizes the pouches. Bordeaux and the like - but also a great number of other high-quality wines - can be tapped comfortably this way. Today, the enterprise Down Under already sells more than half of their wines in containers. The proportion of bag-in-box is increasing in Europe as well; in Norway, it is already about 33 percent. With an increase of about 8 percent, the largest growth rates can be notched up by Sweden. Meanwhile, even in France, the country of wine per se, the bag-in-box wine market has a proportion of 4 percent.

How the wine gets into the pouch

In order to fill wines or other liquids into the pouches (material e.g. polyethylene), fully and partially automated plants (manual insertion of pouches) are used. During the bottling process, a pump

conducts the liquid to the container through a tap valve attached to the pouches. Expressed in simplified terms, the bottling process consists of three steps: vacuuming of the pouches, filling process (by pressure pump) and closing of the connecting piece. Nitrogen can be optionally injected to prevent oxygen from penetrating. Depending on the bottling machine, an inductive flow metering may take place during the filling process. The possible pouch sizes reach from 2 liters for use at home to 1000 liters. The connecting piece, via which the liquid is filled, can be immediately or subsequently equipped with different top pieces: whether a tap for direct tapping from the container or a connector which connects the containers to different dispensing systems is selected, depends on the place of application (catering trade or bars). The pouches are sheathed in overwrapping made of corrugated



Semiautomatic bottling stations - here the model Liquiwell Filler BIB Italy - pump wines and other still liquids into the pouches. The optimum filling is ensured by inductive metering of the liquids - depending on the capacity of the pouches. (Image source: Liquiwell)

cardboard. The filled pouches can be placed mechanically into the folding box by what is referred to as a loader. The full pouches fill the cartons almost completely and ensure the required stability during transport or storage.

Bag-in-box boom

The European bag-in-box wine market is growing - and with it the sales and marketing potentials. Perfect advertising spaces offer newly developed wine coolers, in which high-class wines are cooled at optimum temperature (cooling temperatures between 0 and 18 degrees) and poured out of integrated taps. The company Gastro-Cool, one of the leading providers of innovative cooling solutions at the point of sale, offers beverage manufacturers a bag-in-box wine cooler (dimensions 121 x 37 x 55 cm, capacity 110 liters net) with three taps. Up to three 10-liter-containers red wine, rosé and white wine for professional application can be stored in it. They are connected to the tapping equipment via three separate, food-safe hoses.

Bag-in-box - bottling with market and marketing potential

The basis for the development of the device was made up of various criteria, crucial for successful application in catering firms. Special attention was paid to product quality, economical operation in practice, environmental compatibility and suitability as marketing tool. Christian Machers, managing director of Gastro-Cool, describes the product's advantages as follows: "Due to the vacuum packaging, no air can get to the wine or other still liquids in the pouch. As a result of this, a shelf-life of high quality wine of up to three months from opening the container can be achieved. As each drop gets into the glass of the guest, there are no perishable leftovers as it is the case with wine bottles." This means: The efficiency - and with it the profit - increases. The packaging waste

from the filling process is little: similarly to a deflated balloon, a thin outer cover is finally left.

“Form follows function”

Under the design principle “form follows function”, the innovative BIB wine coolers serve as effective and valuable marketing tools. This is of special significance especially in times of tight marketing budgets. The bag-in-box wine cooler fulfils this requirement to a great extent. Branded with the logo of the company or the winegrower, the devices are highly visible and advertise the product as well as the manufacturer of the wines or fruit juices directly at the point of drink.

“Within the scope of product development, we rely on the three fundamental considerations to advertise a product or a brand as effectively as possible, to achieve a great sales-promotional effect and thus generate a large profit.



Compact and comfortable for commercial application or use at home: The compact Gastro-Cool bag-in-box cooler is suitable for pouches with a capacity of up to 3 liters. Depending on the optimum drinking temperature, the wines can be cooled at 8 or 18 degrees. (Image source: Gastro-Cool)

This applies to both the beverage manufacturer and the trader,” says Christian Machers.

Also in the area of direct and dialogue marketing, branded coolers are perfectly suitable for retaining customers and attracting new ones. Marketing opportunities are provided by prize games, in which attractive BIB coolers are offered as rewards. Another B2B marketing opportunity is for example providing quantity buyers with free, branded cooling devices.

The “BIB-mini” - small and sales-increasing

Much smaller in their dimensions, 3-liter bag-in-box wine coolers turn out to be not less efficient with respect to their market opportunities. With or without individual branding, they can be placed on every table and are able to cool containers with a capacity of up to 3 liters. Its handling is easy: place the container into it, connect it to the mains and white wines, rosé and red wines flow out of the tap optimally cooled at either 8 or 18 degrees. “The competitive

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White wine, rosé and red wine flow out of three taps at optimum temperature directly into the glass. The beverages flow - following the force of gravity - from the top to the taps at the bottom through food-safe hose connections without any additives. (Image source: Gastro-Cool)

advantage compared to bottling is that the provision is considerably simplified: the wine cooler is on the table and the guests comfortably tap the wine themselves. As due to this the profit is boosted - initial experience with the device has shown that the wine consumption increases by up to 30 percent - the use of the "small" BIB wine cooler pays off rapidly" Christian Machers explains. Besides professional users, the target group of the "minis" among the BIB tapping devices is also private wine connoisseurs, since the selection of high-quality wines on supermarket shelves and in drinks warehouses is constantly increasing.

The trend of bottling more and more wines - but also fruit juices or still liquids - in bag-in-box containers is strongly taking hold in the European market; thus, the product range, services and marketing opportunities around the product BIB increase as well. In order to keep track of this and to be able to optimally use bag-in-box bottling, an international

website, which covers nearly all facets of the bag-in-box market, is currently under construction. It will serve as an extensive BIB-catalogue, in which for example professional users receive the opportunity to form business contacts and consumers in search of specific products can quickly make a find.

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Jürgen Nünning is a freelance journalist based in Düsseldorf, Germany. He specializes in Beverage Industry topics whilst concentrating on innovative products & technologies and current trends and developments from a perspective of marketing

The Label Which Dissolves in Water

Summertime invites to all kinds of leisure activities and also to spend time in a beer garden. While many industries are complaining about reduced businesses during summer breweries indeed are boosting sales. They fill their large beer amounts in kegs that have to be labeled in their plants with the most important information like e.g. the production date.

As those kegs are reusable, empty kegs are returned to the breweries and labels have to be removed somehow. Cleanliness and hygiene are extremely

important not only for marketing purposes. Good beer quality needs an attractive keg without adhesive residues on the front side surface because that might influence customers impressions negatively.

At that point the differences in quality appear clearly: While some labels are difficult to remove others leave residues on the surfaces, some might be washed off but block filters and drains. Completely water soluble labels are the most efficient solution to this problem. A German company is specialized in this subject and delivers their special label materials to printing houses all over the world.

The Label 3200 and Label 4200 dissolve completely in clear cold water and therefore suit well for these applications. Due to the fiber structure the water penetrates the label very easily and the adhesive separates from the surface and dissolves within seconds. The keg can be cleaned fast and efficient; filters and drains stay clean.

In the beverage industry and especially in breweries not only beer kegs are labelled but also pallets. With this measure traceability is ensured that is set in the EU regulation 1935/2004 and came into effect 27th October, 2006.

A completely water soluble label may directly be placed on one crate of the pallet. Exactly as with the kegs the crate



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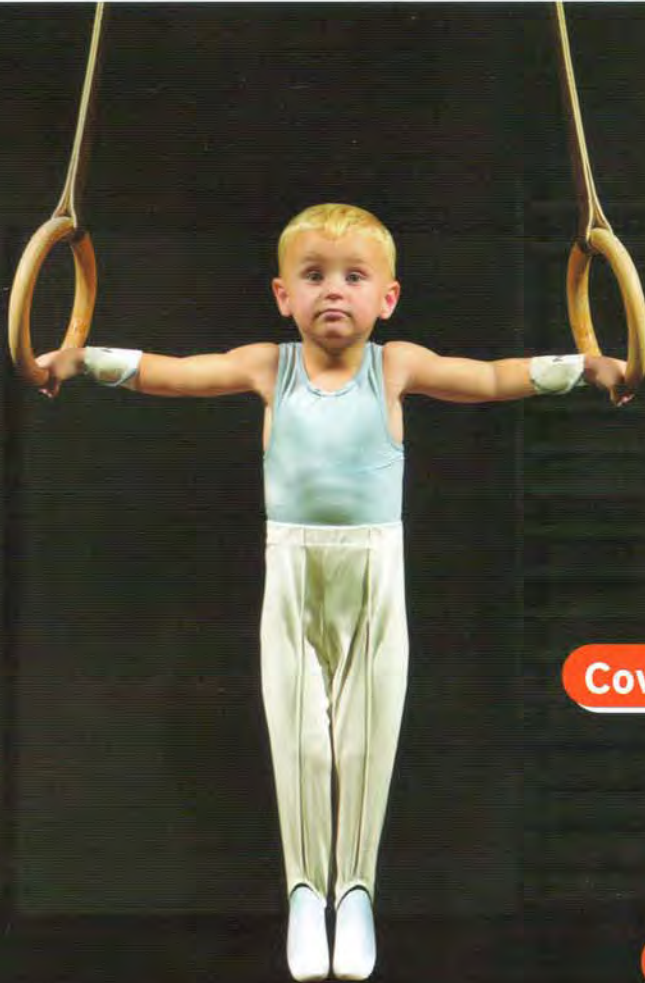
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