

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

North America's largest producer of impact-extruded aluminium packaging, CCL Container, is benefitting from its faith in the beverage bottle market. Mónica Higuera talked to sales chief, Ed Martin



Aluminium beverage bottles have become the fastest growing sector in the portfolio of CCL Container, with new lines being installed to meet demand. CCL's bottle business was spun off from excess capacity and flat growth rates in the aerosol can sector in the early 1990s.

CCL Container, a division of the diverse Toronto-based CCL Industries, specialises in the production of impact-extruded aerosol cans. CCL Industries also comprises the CCL Label and CCL Plastic businesses, and in Europe the aerosol contract-filling joint venture ColepCCL.

The expansion to aluminium bottle-making technology in North America provided some additional challenges, recalls vice president for sales and marketing Ed Martin.

"The first challenge was to machine a thread into an extrusion using a necking process without losing line speed," he says.

"The next big challenge was to achieve a seal required for drinks products. Then understanding the importance of flavour management in the beverage market. That led us to recognise the need for specially-formulated internal linings and post washing. Another challenge was 'outserting' plastics bottle finishes onto our bottles at high speed.

"We added post washers, palletisers, a long-stroke necking machine, and outserters. It was a leap of faith pushed by R&D along sales and marketing to secure the millions of dollars required to convert the first line. Success happened and the rest as they say is history," says Martin.

The first customers for the aluminium bottles in 2002 were Cadbury Beverages for the Mystic RE range of energy drinks,

and Canada's Vincer for Tabu, a Vodka-based range of beverages. Since then, Snapple Elements, Iron City Beer by Pittsburgh Brewery, Molson Kick, Winfuel vitamin supplements and Innovación Commercial en Alimentos, the marketers of Hot, a 'hangover' tea, have joined the bottle mania along with others.

CCL has installed six production lines since September 2003, four at its Penetang plant in Ontario, Canada, and two at Hermitage, in Pennsylvania, US. A fur-

ther two lines have been ordered to raise CCL Container's total capacity to 750 million containers a year.

"We have expanded both Hermitage in the US and Penetang in Canada with 60,000 sq ft of additions. We are looking at a major expansion of our Mexican operations as well."

CCL has 11 lines at Penetang, nine at Hermitage and five in Mexico. Out of the 24 lines, six manufacture bottles: four at Hermitage and two at Ontario. ▶

"The aluminium bottle gets people excited about the product," says CCL's Ed Martin (above). CCL's bottles and aerosol cans cover a wide range of applications



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The company's manufacturing lines are supplied by German manufacturer Mall+Herlan, with one long-stroke necking machine from Italy's Fratini and post-washers by Germany's Hinterkopf.

"We think of ourselves as a custom packaging creator. It is part of our corporate DNA to reinvent ourselves. Our success has been built on

new product development and innovation," says Martin.

But what was the reaction from fillers to the impact-extruded aluminium bottle, a much more costly container than the beverage can? "As with anything, people resist change. That always is a challenge. But generally we have found the bottling community to be receptive to aluminium bottles. Some have even embraced them," he says.

"There are perhaps at least two markets emerging for aluminium bottles. We think that there will be a market that will value a package that is resealable and unbreakable. The package may be similar to the packages in the Japanese markets, such as those from Takeuchi and Daiwa. The end-use products in this segment are more likely to be more price-sensitive.

"We also see a market developing that values highly stylised packages with custom shape equity and 'product use life rigidity'. This is the segment of the market where we see impact-extruded aluminium bottles thriving. We look at 'on premise' beer as an ideal use occasion for the aluminium bottles. We see marketers using them to encourage trial and consumption on premise that will then drive consumption during other use occasions (at home)

where the product may or may not be packaged in an aluminium bottle.

"It is also important to recognise that consumers are much less price sensitive in situations of immediate consumption. So we see any distribution channel of immediate consumption — energy drinks purchased at convenience stores for example — as being great prospects for extruded aluminium bottles. Immediate consumption is not about price," says Martin.

He remembers that many people doubted that the impact-extruded bottle had any future. Now 44, Martin has worked in the packaging industry for more than 22 years in sales, marketing and operations, and one of the first lessons he learned was that anything is possible.

"My first selling job involved selling promotional packaging and creative display packaging. In the promotional packaging world anything is possible because the cost is not linked to unit cost. Thinking anything is possible has stayed with me my entire career," says Martin.

And his career has been focused on packaging. He gained a degree in packaging science from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and an MBA in international business from the University of Connecticut.



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Martin is also involved with a number of industry bodies. He serves on the board of directors of the Con-

sumer Specialty Products Association (CSPA) and the National Aerosol Association (NAA), as well as being on the industry advisory board of the Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) School of Packaging Science.

"I would say that I am passionate about business growth via innovation and great design. I think our recent wins at the Cans of the Year Awards demonstrate the emphasis we place on product development as a driver of sales growth," he says.

CCL Container scooped three prizes at the annual Grand Prix for the world's can-making industry. It won Gold in the two-piece food can category with an aluminium jar with a child-proof plastics twist-off cap for Winfuel, vitamin supplements produced by Goen Technologies Cos.

The company also received two Silver awards in the aerosol and bottle can categories with an aerosol can for Procter & Gamble's Febreze air freshener and a bottle for the Snapple Elements energy drink respectively.

"I see the aluminium bottle not as a competitive product to DWI beverage cans but as another metal packaging option for the beverage industry. It competes directly with glass. The aluminium bottle gets people excited about a product and that

drives consumption of beverages across all package forms used by a brand, not just the percentage packaged in aluminium bottles.

"Part of what sells the impact extruded bottle experience is 'product use life rigidity' Unfortunately, DWI beverage cans, while certainly the workhorse of the beverage world and a noble cost-effective package, lack 'product use life rigidity'. Glass has it. Plastics don't. So, while we will look at developing more cost effective packages we will not look at reducing wall thicknesses to the point of losing shape equity and rigidity," he says.

The company's focus will thus remain on impact-extruded packaging. CCL has worked on its so-called Alulite technology to make containers using the DWI process, but speaking at the recent aerosol can conference in Athens, Rami Younes, CCL Container's chief executive, said: "We haven't embraced that technology. We've done market research and the consumer wants to hold something that feels hard and strong. Also, the DWI process is not so easy for shaping online cost-effectively."

Concludes Martin, "With extruded bottles many unique designs, styles and finishes are 'creatable' with great speed to market and relative economy." 🍻🍷

From beer and energy drinks to dietary supplements, aluminium bottles are being used for food and beverages



USED EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

1. KBA-PLANETA, VARIMAT, METALSTAR 4 COLOR PRINTING LINE: 1990, 2000
2. CRABTREE 1290 45" x 38" 2 COLOR 45" x 38" PRINTING LINE: 1995
3. COMPLETE MAILANDER TYPE 122 45" x 38" 2 COLOR PRINTING & COATING LINE: 1990
4. COMPLETE MAILANDER TYPE 162 45" x 38" 2 COLOR UV PRINTING LINE
5. COMPLETE MAILANDER TYPE 162 45" x 38" PRINTING & COATING LINE
6. COMPLETE MAILANDER TYPE 460 COATING LINES: 1977, 1990
7. COMPLETE MARQUESS 45" x 38" 1 COLOR UV

★ SPECIAL SALE ★

1. THREE(3) SOUDRONIC FBB 5501 WELDERS WITH NORDSON ISS/OSS SYSTEM: 1991
2. TWO(2) SOUDRONIC FBB 5600 WELDERS WITH SPS POWDER CURING SYSTEM: 1992
3. COMPLETE 300 DIA 3PC CAN MAKING LINES WITH 500 CPM: 1997
4. KRUPP CUT-O-MAT DUPLEX SLITTER: 1997
5. KRUPP CAN-O-MAT COMBINATION MACHINES WITH 300 DIA: 1997
6. KRUPP 300 DIA END-O-MAT SYSTEME WITH 2,500 EPM: 1997
7. SOUDRONIC FBB 420, ABM 420, ABM 250 WELDERS
8. KARGES-HAMMER COMBINATION MACHINE: 1991
9. FULLY REBUILT 300, 307, 401 DIA STEEL FULL PANEL EOE LINE
10. 3PC BEVERAGE CAN & FOOD CAN LINES: 202, 211, 300, 307, 401, 603 DIA
11. 18L SQUARE CAN LINE WITH 25 & 30 CPM: 1985
12. LITTELL LM-1E COIL CUTTING LINES: 1984
13. HEISLER BAIL-O-MATIC FOR 5 GALLON PAIL
14. COMPLETE 10L, 20L PAIL MAKING LINES
15. MB 160, 240, REYNOLDS NC-10 NECKERS, BELVAC 585 NECKER
16. COMPLETE COSTER AEROSOL FILLING LINE WITH 100 CPM: 1997
17. SPECTRAL WALLACE KNIGHT UV OVEN WITH 6 LAMPS: 1992
18. RUTHERFORD BASECOATERS
19. 2PC ALUMINUM MONOBLOC AEROSOL CAN LINE
20. MELTOG BODYMAKERS

- PRINTING LINE: 1986
8. COMPLETE MARQUESS 45" x 36" 2 COLOR PRINTING LINE
9. COMPLETE CRABTREE 1200 45" x 38" 2 COLOR PRINTING & COATING LINE: 1994
10. COMPLETE CRABTREE 40" x 36" 2 COLOR PRINTING & COATING LINE: 1975, 1986
11. COMPLETE CRABTREE 1200 45" x 38" COATING LINE
12. COMPLETE MAILANDER 460 45" x 38" COATING LINE
13. CRABTREE MARQUESS MT2 40" & 45" 2 COLOR PRINTING PRESSES
14. HOE PRINTING PRESSES
15. COATERS: CRABTREE, MAILANDER, WAGNER, YODOGAWA
16. ALCOA LT-16 LIGHT TESTER FOR 2PC BEVERAGE CAN: 1995
17. OBERBURG CAN BODY EXPANDER WITH 400 CPM: 1997
18. STANDUN B-3 BODYMAKER, STANDUN H-30-60 CUPPER (* NEW)
19. AEROSOL MACHINES: 60 CPM, 180 CPM, 250 CPM
 - DUPLEX SLITTER: CCC 361 ST, BLISS 5325
 - SOUDRONIC VAA 20, VAA-K100, ABM 150, ABM 420 WELDERS
 - NORDSON ISS & OSS + FREI CURING SYSTEM
 - LANIGO BEA 325, BF 280AE COMBINATION MACHINES
 - ANGELUS 60L, 41P, 43P, CCC 450
- SEAMERS
 - BORDEN, COSTER RB 18/E, RB 27/E,

BONFIGLIOLI AEROSOL TESTERS

- PALLETIZERS
- AEROSOL TOP MAKING LINES: 200 (48 MM), 211 (65 MM) DIA
- 20. STOLLE SYSTEM BRUDERER 3 LANE CONVERSION PRESS: 200 DIA EOE
- 21. MINSTER EC-H125-QL CONVERSION PRESS WITH 209 DIA: 1994
- 22. MINSTER P2-75 PRESSES WITH 206 DIA DRT SYSTEM
- 23. COMPLETE 206/211 DIA AND 200/202 2PC BEVERAGE CAN LINES: 1980
- 24. COMPLETE 200 DIA EOE LINES WITH 3,200 EPM: 1988
- 25. COMPLETE 206 DIA EOE LINES WITH 600 EPM
- 26. COMPLETE 206 DIA EOE LINE WITH 1,000 EPM
- 27. COMPLETE 209 DIA FULL PANEL EOE LINE WITH 900 EPM: 1994
- 28. CMB 4000 LINER, PREFERRED HSL-4 LINER(1994)
- 29. COMPLETE 3PC 200/202 DIA CAN LINE WITH 1,200 CPM: 1992, 1994
- 30. COMPLETE 3PC 206/211 DIA CAN LINES WITH 500 CPM AND 1,000 CPM: 1997
- 31. COMPLETE 300, 307, 401 DIA CAN LINE WITH 750 CPM
- 32. COMPLETE REDICON 300 DIA 2PC DRD CAN LINE WITH 520 CPM
- 33. COMPLETE REDICON 307 DIA 2PC DRD CAN LINE WITH 900 CPM
- 34. ALCOA MODEL 591 PROFILER FOR 2PC BEVERAGE CAN WITH 1,800 CPM



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