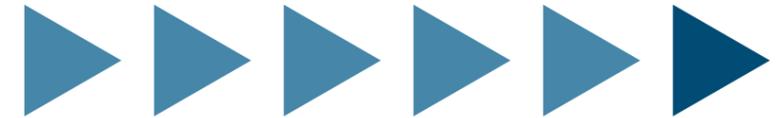


FRANCE

# LOOKS LIKE GLASS, BUT IT'S PET!



SIDEL ARE TASKED WITH DESIGNING A SURPRISINGLY UNIQUE BOTTLE FOR ONE OF FRANCE'S LEADING MINERAL WATER PROVIDERS.

orders in these outlets include a request for water.

Like in many other countries, France's bottle market is traditionally dominated by glass. When customers order water in restaurants, it's usually served either in a glass bottle or a glass carafe. To gain a share of this significant market within the French hospitality sector, SEAB knew they needed to come up with something strangely attractive and unique. And breaking free from the constraints of glass seemed like a great start.

Restaurant visitors occasionally encounter diverse and unusual packaging designs. But never triangular PET bottles. However, sooner or later, someone had to try it. One of France's leading water providers, Société des Eaux d'Aix-les-Bains – or SEAB for short – was up to the challenge.

“Our objective was to ensure the promotion of our brand image,” explains Philippe Germaneau, General Manager of SEAB. “We needed to bring different and innovative products to consumers within the hospitality sector. In addition, we wanted to develop a competitive advantage through packaging which was more respectful of the environment.”

They decided to develop this new bottle for their still water product. And to push the limits even further, they also wanted to shed the traditional paper label and, instead, display the statutory information via a laser-engraved imprint. Coming up with such original ideas was certainly an interesting first step. But at the end of the day, somebody had to bring it all to life.

#### KEY PRODUCTION DECISIONS TO BE MADE

For production and filling of the new bottle, SEAB had the choice of installing a completely new high-output line or modifying their existing bottling

#### WHY SUCH A DISTINCT NEW SHAPE?

When French restaurant visitors aren't sipping wine, they're drinking water – and a lot of it! In fact, 12% of all mineral water is sold through hospitality outlets, such as cafés, restaurants and hotels. And two-thirds of all drink



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line. After careful consideration of the financial implications, the group decided to launch production on its existing equipment, but in relatively small quantities at first.

SEAB's existing line, already capable of filling up to 25,000 1L or 1.5L bottles in a single hour, was converted to include a Sidel Combi machine. But SEAB were not looking for a mere equipment upgrade. They asked Sidel to design and create a stylish new bottle in a way that can rival the aesthetics of glass water bottles and carafes, yet manufactured in PET to hold 75cl of water.

Additionally, SEAB gave Sidel a strict set of parameters to work within: The new bottle had to be triangular in shape to stand out from other brands. It had to be simple in appearance to convey the concepts of quality and purity. And it had to apply minimalist aesthetics, particularly in light of the need to overcome restaurants' age-old preference for serving only glass bottles at the table.

**AND A TRIANGLE IS BORN!**

Sidel delivered a bottle that's both appealing and minimally simple, as well as, very importantly, easy to handle, despite its unusual shape. The triangular

shape was not the easiest to produce; the proportion of the bottle's height to its base turned out to be the main technical challenge.

The bottom is extremely small compared to its body. So Sidel had to find the right solution to stabilise the bottle on this confined area. "Today, based on the early feedback we've received from our restaurant-chain partners, it appears that we've made the right choices, as the new bottle is considered stylish and eye-catching, but also practical and functional," confirmed Germaneau.

The bottle's instantly recognisable shape is an advantage not only in marketing but also because of how easy it is to identify in the warehouse. And thanks to its convenient recloseable screw cap and sturdy design, it's also ideal for consumption on the go. Which is a good thing, because many customers have been taking the bottles with them when leaving the restaurant.

Although SEAB's new bottle has only been out for a short time, it's already generating quite a buzz. It was nominated for its distinctive packaging design at the SIAL Innovation Awards in Paris.

“**WE NEEDED TO BRING DIFFERENT AND INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS TO CONSUMERS WITHIN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR.**”



Promotional activity and consumer advertising began in January 2013. And to add an extra boost of excitement, SEAB have signed a sponsorship agreement with record-holding international sprinter Christophe Lemaitre.

**FUTURE-FOCUSED EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE**

Through their expertise and close collaboration with SEAB, Sidel were able to convert the whole existing production line without having to modify any of the installed equipment, simply adapting certain customer-specific parts to accommodate the new shapes and sizes. The line is now able to blow-mould, fill and cap the bottles all in a single integrated system, which can easily change-over between two completely different products: the traditional store-sold mineral water in multiple sizes, and the new 75cl triangular bottle for the premium catering sector.

"We really appreciate Sidel's strong commitment and interest right from the start of talks we had over a year ago," Germaneau exclaims. "Their packaging design and process expertise was vital for us to produce such a successful end-product."

The new size, shape and design of the PET bottle is the first step towards an increase in SEAB's output. In the future, the group, which generated €11 million in turnover last year, intends to expand its activities, concentrating on the catering sector and focusing on their foreign business in Asia and South America. With their impressive, high-performance production facility, SEAB are well prepared to meet the demand.

Germaneau continues, "I am optimistic that our new bottle design, along with our strategic partnership with local sprinting star Christophe Lemaitre, will help us reach our goal of extending our international market position. Our experience, knowledge and the latest in machinery give us the possibility for highly efficient and sustainable production." ■



**QUALITY WATER, MADE IN FRANCE**

Located in Grésy-sur-Aix, a commune in the Savoy department in the Rhône-Alpes region, SEAB collect water drawn from the natural environment of two springs, deep in the rocks of Aix-les-Bains, at the foot of the Alps in south-eastern France, where premium spring and natural mineral water is produced.

The mineral water was used for the first time as far back as 1848. It gained official recognition as natural mineral water in 1906, but industrial production started only in 1986 when the Société des Eaux d'Aix-les-Bains was officially founded.

During the infamous heat wave in 2003, French consumers turned to cheaper water and, as a result, SEAB's turnover took a significant hit. This convinced them to start developing a spring water source via underground pipeline. After getting approval in July 2009, they were already distributing their first bottles by September of that same year.

Today, SEAB water products are sold at retail companies and supermarket chains all over France. They're also supplied to the catering sector through wholesalers, and to cosmetic companies for skincare products. Since 2012, SEAB have been a key supplier to the French military as well.

