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LOOKS LIKE GLASS, BUT IT'S PET!

Sidel launches innovative new PET bottle for beer



PET liquid packaging solutions specialist Sidel has launched the world's first-ever pasteurisable lightweight PET bottle for beer with a non-petaloid base. The innovative bottle also supports a crown cap, which together with the non-petaloid base gives the bottle the appearance of glass, but with all the advantages of PET. This includes the lightweight and increased mechanical properties of PET. Most notably, the new bottle weighs only 28 grams, which is up to 86% less than an average equivalent glass bottle, according to Sidel data.

Around five billion PET packaging units of beer are currently sold a year, about 2% of the global market, with glass and can being the most widely used materials. This was also the case in the past with many other food and beverage products that have since increasingly made the switch to PET from other packaging materials, including juices, water, carbonated soft drinks, olive oil and sauces etc. This is not surprising considering the safety, strength, flexibility, lighter weight, recyclability, design flexibility and greater convenience that PET offers. Now, to help beer producers and consumers alike make the same switch more easily, Sidel has created a PET bottle that utilises a 'champagne' base that is more traditionally found on glass beer bottles. The bottle also supports a crown closure that again mirrors those more typically found on premium beer products. It looks like glass, but it's PET.

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To prove the benefits of its technology, Sidel has blown a 330 millilitre version that can achieve a six-month shelf life (with less than 1 parts-per-million (ppm) of oxygen ingress and less than 17% of carbon dioxide loss). The company can also provide versions up to 600 millilitres and is developing sizes even bigger. When packaging beer it is critical to prevent oxygen entering and carbon dioxide escaping the package. The new bottle design can achieve this with different solutions, such as single-layer material blends and Sidel's proprietary Actis™ gas-barrier technology. As a result, the beer bottle can protect beer qualities for up to a six-month shelf life.

The bottle can be used for flash or tunnel pasteurised beer, and also micro-filtrated beer. For tunnel-pasteurised beer a PET bottle usually requires a petaloid base, but Sidel's new bottle has a unique base and other design technologies that mean it can resist the pressures produced by the prolonged high temperatures during this production process, while still retaining the appearance of a more traditional glass bottle. The bottle can withstand pressures of 20 pasteurisation units (PU) in the tunnel, which is standard for lagers, and retains a stable base after pasteurisation. Furthermore, the bottle design can be used on existing tunnel pasteurisers that currently serve glass bottles.

“We want to help beer producers take advantage of the flexibility, lighter weight, sustainability and lower costs offered by PET, by producing a bottle that was more attractive to the next generation of beer consumers who want their drinks packaging to be more sustainable, convenient and user-friendly,” explains Christophe Bunel, Head of Packaging Care at Sidel. “For many consumers a petaloid base is associated with other product categories, such as carbonated soft drinks or sparkling water, and therefore when it appears on a beer bottle it can negatively affect the brand perception. But increasingly consumers are becoming more aware of the benefits of PET, because they experience it as the preferred packaging material of choice in other food and beverage areas in their life. So to help producers and consumers alike make the transition we wanted a bottle that looked like glass, but has all the benefits of PET.”

For many years there have been misperceptions around beer in PET. For example, some mistakenly think beer in PET gets warmer quicker. In fact, in Sidel's studies, its beer bottle kept beer cold for the same time duration as an equivalent sized glass bottle, with much less wall thickness and hence much less material weight. Taste is also another misperception, with some consumers falsely believing beer tastes better, for example, in cans instead of PET bottles. As the world's leading specialist in PET liquid packaging solutions, Sidel wants to help change these misperceptions and bring the great benefits of PET to beer as well.

To achieve this the company ran its advanced packaging optimisation and qualification tests on the bottle, including finite element analysis and feasibility testing to evaluate bottle stability, liquid quality protection and rigidity. Finally it ran full industrial production tests to

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prove the bottle's performance, both during production and across simulated supply chains.

Sidel has been helping producers package their beer products for over 40 years. The company is currently in conversations with some of the world's leading, and most well-known, beer producers on how to bring the benefits of PET to beer using its new bottle design and packaging technology. The new bottle itself can be produced using all suitable Sidel PET packaging solutions for beer, including its beer fillers and the new range of Sidel Matrix™ blowers and labellers.

To find out more visit sidel.com.





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About Sidel

Sidel is the leading global provider of PET solutions for liquid packaging. We are committed to being the most innovative, responsive and reliable partner, providing sustainable solutions for the beverage industry.

Headquartered in Switzerland, we have production sites in 13 countries and 30,000 machines installed in more than 190 nations worldwide. With over 5,500 employees worldwide, we provide optimal PET packaging solutions for water, soft drinks, milk, sensitive products, edible oils and alcoholic beverages including beer.

We aim to create value for our customers by giving them A Better Match. This is the tailored solution that caters for their needs exactly. We do this by offering flexible and reliable production systems that are easily adaptable to market developments and future technology, supported by value-added services.

We are Sidel. We are **A Better Match**.

Find out more at www.sidel.com

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