

PRESS ARTICLE

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Charbonneaux-Brabant leverages white vinegar craze with a complete PET line from Sidel



The rising demand for white vinegar has led Charbonneaux-Brabant, a key player in the packaging of condiments and seasonings, to install a Sidel complete PET line in their new production plant in Vauvert, in the South of France. There, they now bottle white vinegar in 1L and 1.5L formats, managing a high level of flexibility requested by their supply chain and distribution network.

During the last few years, a boom of white vinegar usage in France and across Europe could be witnessed: this trend has especially been growing because the product is more and more used as a natural and effective cleaning product instead of just for food preparation, confirming the wider adoption of natural household products overall.¹ Among these natural cleaning products like baking soda or rubbing alcohol, white vinegar remains a very affordable choice in a highly competitive market.

Charbonneaux-Brabant, a family-owned company since Charbonneaux' founding in Reims in 1797, is a historical player in the production of natural vinegar and cleaning products. More recently, they have moved into the packaging and distribution of alcohol-free products, solvents and chemicals. In the past, Charbonneaux-Brabant's production capacity was supported by three factories in France: their headquarters and historical site based in Reims (Eastern France), and two other plants located in Carvin (Northern France) and in Nantes (Western France). "All of those sites were nearly saturated and not capable to cope with the growing demand of white vinegar without a potential risk of production shortages", explains Loïc Dionis, Industrial Director at Charbonneaux-Brabant.

¹ <https://www.planetoscope.com/hygiene-beaute/1999-la-consommation-de-vinaigre-blanc-en-france.html>

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PRESS ARTICLE

High level of flexibility required

Assessing the situation in the three existing factories, Charbonneaux-Brabant wanted to release the capacity pressure they were experiencing while also continuing to build their network in a market in which distribution costs represent a significant constraint and producing locally is key for success. Loïc explains, “We have decided to enlarge our site in Vauvert (Southern France), where we were only producing vinegar in kegs before.”

When establishing the new packing hall, Charbonneaux-Brabant carefully took their peculiar market position into consideration: the company stands at a crossroad of several industry needs, challenges and sources of inspiration. On the one hand, vinegar as food remains an edible product, leveraging PET packaging processes that are very similar to those for edible oils, sauces, and dressings; on the other hand, white vinegar as a home care product has a high acidity that affects equipment structure and partially even the process.

Loïc Leon, Sidel Key Account Manager, explains, “Charbonneaux-Brabant wanted to be one of the first to apply the methodology and approach from the edible oil and water sectors, where inline PET bottle blowing and turnkey solutions are key elements to deliver performance thanks to a fully automatic, high speed, flexible line to the production of vinegar.”

The key player in the packaging of condiments and seasonings had to tackle an additional challenge: setting up a flexible production while synchronising in parallel the delivery and installation of a brand new complete PET line on top of the factory construction itself, which was happening at the same time. Loïc Dionis highlights the flexibility and agility needs that had to be addressed, “Our products – sold in two different formats of bottles, 1L and 1.5L – are distributed under our own label but also under various supermarket brands and private labels. Additionally, our bottles are grouped into packs of six, nine or twelve, either in complete wrap-around blanks or in shrink-wrapped film. Lastly, we needed ten different palletizing configurations with four pallet patterns”. Therefore, two factors were absolutely critical for this line: the capacity to cope with the range of combinations processed, plus the related changeover speed as well as the repeatability of this process.

New complete PET line running at 23,000 bph

To meet the customer’s requirements, Sidel supplied a complete PET line benefiting from their tremendous experience in the edible oil and water businesses, while at the same time applying their comprehensive know-how from the home care industry. The line, which is running at 23,000 bottles per hour² with 90% efficiency today, features a Sidel Matrix™ Combi, which helps reduce the

² 30,000 bph with overspeed

PRESS ARTICLE

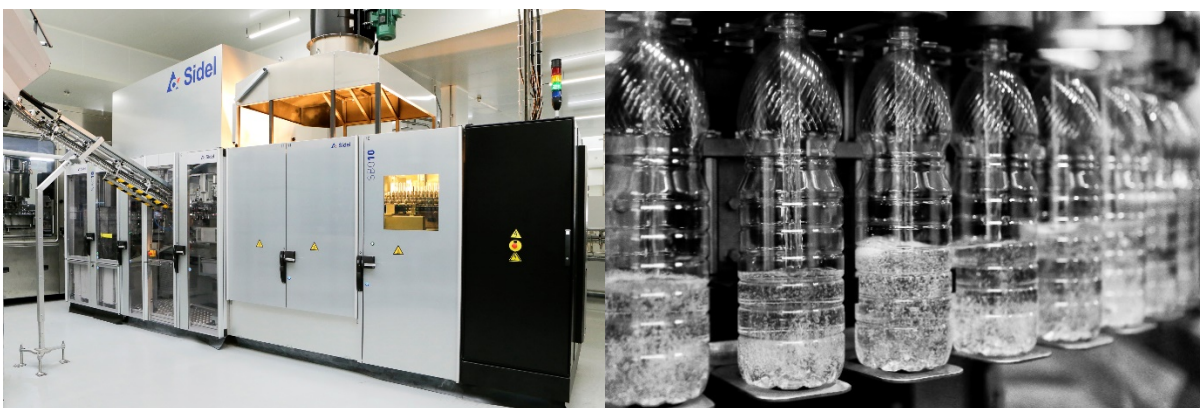
footprint and operational costs. Equipped with a vacuum system on top of the filler, it is capable to suck in acid steam to avoid the development of corrosion on the blowing part.

Further answering Charbonneaux' needs for a highly flexible production, Sidel was able to supply a cold glue labeller, efficiently managing the large number of labels. To support the customer's secondary packaging needs, Sidel supplied an overwrapping solution including two machines working in parallel: a continuous packer for complete wrap-around blanks running at 37.5 case/min and a shrink-wrapper, delivering the bottles in shrink-film packs. For the end-of-line, a layer-by-layer palletizer, equipped with a reliable and safe electronic spacing infeed system, has been installed to fully respect the pack integrity. Lastly, the line also includes dry-lube conveyors and the whole operation control and traceability system with marking, check weighting, case printing, as well as pack & pallet labelling.

Ready for the future

“Overall, we are very satisfied with the ease of operations, reliability and flexibility offered by the solution. We enjoyed very smooth pre-contracting, project management and aftersales steps, always dealing with one single interface per phase. This allowed us to focus more on the building construction, which was happening at the same time. I felt really confident about Sidel's capacity to meet our expectations and deadlines and I need to say that their on-site support during and after commissioning was absolutely great”, concludes Loïc Dionis.

The new complete PET line can welcome the capacity increase needed to handle the positive projections around white vinegar sales, thus enabling Charbonneaux to deliver on their ambitious plans.



PRESS ARTICLE



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PRESS ARTICLE

Sidel is a leading provider of equipment and services solutions for packaging beverage, food, home and personal care products in PET, can, glass and other materials.

With over 40,000 machines installed in more than 190 countries, we have nearly 170 years of proven experience, with a strong focus on the factory of tomorrow with advanced systems, line engineering and innovation. Our 5,500+ employees worldwide are passionate about providing solutions that fulfil customer needs and boost the **performance** of their lines, products and businesses.

Delivering this level of performance requires that we stay flexible. We continuously ensure we **understand** our customers' changing challenges and commit to meeting their unique performance and sustainability goals. We do this through dialogue and by understanding the needs of their markets, production and value chains. In turn, we apply our solid technical knowledge and smart data analytics to ensure lifetime productivity reaches its full potential.

We call it **Performance through Understanding**.

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