

PRESS ARTICLE

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Birra Peroni, Italy's iconic brand, expands glass bottling flexibility with Sidel



A growing domestic market and a trend towards premium beer in the UK and the US recently led Birra Peroni, part of Asahi Group Holdings Ltd., to upgrade their glass bottling capacity. Increased productivity, coupled with flexibility and sustainability, were an absolute must-have for the leading Italian brewery. With a new complete glass line from their long-term partner Sidel, featuring the latest innovations EvoFILL Glass filler and EvoDECO Cold Glue labeller, these goals became achievable. The line is installed at the company's factory in Bari and is intended to handle two product references in their portfolio: Peroni, both as returnable and one-way glass bottles, and Peroni Nastro Azzurro.

With 198 billion litres per year, beer is by far the largest category within alcoholic drinks worldwide, accounting for around 78% of the global alcoholic market. In the last few years, a handful of megatrends have shaped this industry: premiumisation, for example, is expected to remain relevant while consumers are also migrating more and more towards artisanal craftsmanship with long heritages in the brewing business.¹ US consumers, for instance, have been showing consistent interest in premium beers with many choosing imported lagers, often over the more affordable domestic options.² Drinking less but better has been the source of value growth in many mature markets with ethical living making its mark on the beer industry.³

¹ Euromonitor International 2019, "Alcoholic Drinks Global Industry Overview"

² Euromonitor International 2019, "Beer in the US"

³ Euromonitor International 2019, "Alcoholic Drinks Global Industry Overview"

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The category posted a 1.3% global total volume growth in 2018, with Italy presenting an even 'greener' trajectory (total volume growth of 2%) and reaching 1.7 billion litres. Domestic player Peroni, for example, launched a new special Nastro Azzurro lager in May 2018, intended to offer a drinking experience that goes well with food and could replace wine during meals. The product appeals ideally to Italians, who are mainly looking for original taste. Peroni Nastro Azzurro and the domestic brand Peroni combined for more than 20% of the market last year, thus sitting among the three most popular beer brands in Italy.⁴ This success, both in their home country and as an export good to the US and UK, paired with the fact that the drink they sell knows no seasonality, has prompted the need for increased production capacity at their Bari factory in Southern Italy. This one is the only site where they process both returnable and one-way glass bottles.

Premium lager beer in returnable and one-way glass bottles

In 1846, Francesco Peroni established his first brewery in Vigevano, near Milan. He called his beer *Birra Peroni* and it still bears his name today. Since then, the brand has welcomed growing demand, embodying Italian values of quality and craftsmanship throughout its history.⁵ With production sites in Rome, Padova and Bari, the company has been part of Asahi Group Holdings Ltd. since 2016.⁶ While Birra Peroni is especially popular in the Southern part of Italy, Nastro Azzurro is renowned around the globe with the most part of production intended for export. Since its launch in 2005, Peroni Nastro Azzurro has been synonymous with style. Last year, the brewery refreshed the bottle's look and feel, giving it a clean, elegant and curved shape with a hexagonal logo.⁷ Peroni's site in Bari now produces this high-quality premium lager in the redesigned bottle, next to the domestic brand Peroni.

"We have our production running at full capacity for most of the year – from January to November," says Michele Cason, Plant Manager at Birra Peroni. "Faced with the need to expand our capacity, we used it as an opportunity for rationalising the handling of returnable glass bottles (RGB), applied to the Peroni brand. Therefore, we enlarged the RGB production in our Bari plant," he adds. Given the various formats that are produced there (20 cl, 33 cl, 50 cl, 66 cl and 75 cl), part of them as both RGB and one-way bottles (OW), versatility and reduced resource consumption were absolutely vital for the Italian brewery, who opted for a new glass bottling line, able to combine the two processes.

⁴ Euromonitor International 2019, "Beer in Italy"

⁵ www.peroniitaly.com

⁶ Euromonitor International 2019, "Alcoholic Drinks: Asahi Group Holdings Ltd – Beer"

⁷ <http://www.peroniitaly.com/news/design/reinventing-icon-new-bottle-and-glass>

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To solve this, Peroni turned to their long-standing partner Sidel: “Since the 1980s, we have installed various bottling lines from Sidel and this choice has paid back many times,” Michele explains. Luca Ianelli, Sidel Sales Manager for Southern Europe, explains the winning cooperation between the two companies, “Our partnership approach is grounded in our comprehensive set of capabilities. From customised solutions, which materialised Peroni’s requirements, up to 360° support all along the line lifecycle, we exploited our four complementary areas of expertise: engineering, line design, integration and equipment manufacturing.”

Boosted flexibility with Sidel’s latest solutions

Beyond the proven partnership, Peroni was especially interested in gaining benefits from two of Sidel’s latest innovations: on the one hand, EvoFILL Glass with its cutting-edge filling technology and hygienic, no-base design. Its level probe electronic filling valves ensure a very high accuracy while managing a wide range of filling set points without any adjustment or replacement of parts. This was particularly important for Peroni, as they are handling five different formats in Bari; three of them as returnable glass as well as one-way bottles (33 cl, 66 cl and 50 cl), while two formats are managed as one-way bottle (75 cl) and RGB only (20 cl).

On the other hand, the brewer was intrigued by the new EvoDECO Cold Glue labeller. Launched in 2018, the solution ensures fast changeover times, through its easy-to-operate station with quick-release tool-less label pallets, combined with an automatic label magazine loading system. “Equipped with three stations, EvoDECO Cold Glue ensures a high-precision application of the pre-cut paper labels on our embossed glass bottles,” emphasises Luigi De Liddo, Packaging Engineering Manager at Peroni. To control the label positioning according to the bottle’s embossing, a custom feature was integrated within the labeller. It came together with a vision system and a solution able to correctly orient the bottle at the infeed for a perfect label application.

A complete glass line solution tailored to Peroni’s needs

The turnkey glass line in Bari is running at 50,000 bottles per hour and has been designed according to an arena layout, offering full ergonomics and enabling it to be managed by only four operators. “Since we are processing also returnable glass bottles here onsite, we had to design a smart crate circuit regulation. Sidel stepped in and helped us manage crate accumulations during empty crate palletisation: this approach has led to a seamlessly running line and maximum uptime,” highlights Luigi. As an expert in complete solutions with a long history in beer lines, Sidel provided equipment from A to Z, complementing EvoFILL Glass and the EvoDECO labeller with a (de-)crater, a (de-)palletiser, bottle and crate washers, a pasteuriser, a cap feeder, bottle dryers, a packer as well as conveying systems for bottles, crates and packs.

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For increased product quality and sustainability benefits, Peroni installed SWING®, a proven pasteurisation system that cuts energy consumption by 25%. This energy saving is achieved thanks to two units: a water spray deviation system in central areas ensures that only the thermal energy required by the entire pasteurisation process is used to heat or cool the product. Secondly, SWING contains one ring circuit with water flowing inside it at a constant temperature thanks to a single heat exchanger (for all pasteurisation areas). Water is then distributed to different zones as required, thus saving both water and energy. To date, 77.6 billion containers have been pasteurised on SWING equipment, which has saved an impressive 2,135 Olympic swimming pools of water and energy of up to 60,000 kcal, compared to other pasteurisers.

The overall performance of the bottling line is also realised via EvoFlex®, Sidel's high-speed single column de-palletiser for returnable bottles in crates. "We also installed our well renowned EIT™ (Efficiency Improvement Tool), a strategic asset that helps any layer of the organisation, from the CEO to the line operators, to be aware about the status of the line and events occurring in real time, thereby improving production efficiency – a key feature for Peroni," says Luca.

Antonio Martalò, Packaging Manager at Birra Peroni, sums it all up, "By choosing Sidel as our partner we realised productivity gains and massive flexibility improvements. Not less important, we can now scale our production set-up according to the market needs. The project execution was absolutely smooth thanks to the continuous support offered by their team and their expertise in turnkey solutions for the beer industry."





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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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