

Press Release

The future of the returnable bottle: Vetropack at BrauBeviale 2023

Bülach / Nuremberg, 20 September 2023 – The [Vetropack Group](#), one of Europe's leading glass packaging manufacturers, will be demonstrating how a revolutionary idea became a practical and environmentally friendly solution from 28 till 30 November at BrauBeviale. In Austria, the company is working on a pool system for returnables together with other stakeholders. The specially designed 0.33l bottles are robust and durable thanks to Vetropack's [Echovai technology](#) – and yet as light as a disposable bottle. Visitors to BrauBeviale can also see the company's service portfolio and design expertise at booth 319 in hall 4A.

This year, BrauBeviale is attracting guests and exhibitors from the industry to Nuremberg with the motto "We unite variety". In keeping with the exhibition's motto, visitors to the Vetropack booth will find a diverse range of products and services. The focus is on Echovai, the lightweight glass technology developed by the Swiss company itself. Ina Graggaber, Sales Director Vetropack Austria, thinks Echovai has what it takes to revolutionise the beverage packing industry: "From a health perspective, glass bottles are the best packaging choice anyway. They are non-permeable, neutral in odour and taste and do not chemically interact with other substances. They are also 100 per cent recyclable." Only weight and robustness were previously considered weak points, especially in returnable systems. "Our Echovai reusable bottles have improved upon these very aspects – they are proven to be significantly more robust than standard bottles and at the same time 30 per cent lighter. This means we achieve up to 20 per cent more loops per bottle and save weight during transport. We save raw materials and CO₂ emissions, even on two counts - perfect for returnable bottles in particular."

Echovai in a returnable pool system for Austria's breweries

In Austria, Vetropack is using these qualities to help meet the mandatory reusable quota from 2024. Together with relevant stakeholders such as Brau Union, Logistikverbund Mehrweg, the brewers' association and their members, Vetropack has developed a new 0.33l returnable bottle made of Echovai lightweight glass that will be made available to the entire Austrian brewing industry in the form of a pool solution. A change with far-reaching positive consequences, the participants are sure: pool solutions for returnable glass packaging are considered extremely environmentally friendly anyway, because the universal usability of the standardised bottles reduces logistics efforts and shortens transport. The low weight and long service life of the Echovai returnable bottles further improve the eco-balance of the system.

In this way, Vetropack's technology makes an important contribution to the sustainability of beverage packaging. Interest in Echovai is strong beyond Austria's borders as well: in June, the jury of the Swiss Packaging Awards recognised the potential of the technology developed by Vetropack and awarded the glass manufacturer first place in the Technology category and the Special Jury Prize. The win also qualifies Echovai for participation in the WorldStar Award of the World Packaging Organisation. In Germany, Echovai is nominated for the Bundespreis Ecodesign, the highest federal award for ecological design.

Comprehensive services

Visitors to the Vetropack booth at BrauBeviale can also find out more about the company's comprehensive service portfolio. For example, Vetropack supports customers who want to examine their production in a targeted manner for potential problems with a special sensor solution. Embedded in an individually manufactured replica that corresponds exactly to the customer's bottle or glass, a sensor measures the forces and loads acting on the container during transport or in the filling line with the utmost precision. Based on the data collected, customers can optimise their lines only where necessary and without unnecessary effort and costs. The Swiss glass manufacturer also designs individually customised glass packaging on request. The designs become tangible even before they go into series production, thanks to 3D-printed prototypes from the in-house laboratory. "This conveys the look and feel of the planned bottles or jars much more vividly – and makes it easier for our customers to decide on the best possible design," explains Ina Graggaber.

Assessing sustainability

Vetropack also offers customers comprehensive life cycle assessments that map the entire life cycle of glass packaging and go beyond the glass itself. To achieve this, Vetropack works not only with real-time data from its own plants but considers the entire value chain: primary and secondary materials, closures, labels, transport packaging and finally filling and transport. The resulting balance sheet provides information about the carbon footprint of the packaging – and about potential for optimisation. Thus, Vetropack supports customers in achieving their sustainability goals. "The demand for this service is increasing internationally. And we are proud to contribute to reducing the environmental impact of glass production with technical innovations such as Echovai and methods such as life cycle assessments," concludes Graggaber.

Images:



Image 1: The 0.33l returnable pool bottles made of Echovai lightweight glass will be made available to the entire Austrian brewing industry.



Image 2: Vetropack uses sensors embedded in plastic replicas to check whether jars and bottles in a customer's filling line are subject to excessive loads and impacts.



Image 3: Ina Graggaber, Sales Director
Vetropack Austria

About Vetropack Group

At Vetropack, we enable people to enjoy food and beverages as safely as possible by providing solutions that combine optimum elegance with maximum responsibility. We view glass as the most sustainable packaging solution – and the perfect material to ensure that food is packaged safely. Our holistic Service plus+ approach helps our customers to optimise their value chains and guarantee consumers' safety. Close, long-lasting relationships are the hallmarks of our collaboration with partners. Guided by our understanding of environmental responsibility and cost efficiency, we aim to minimise our carbon footprint throughout the supply chain, and we are committed to recycling as the key to optimising product life-cycles.

Vetropack Group is one of Europe's leading manufacturers of glass packaging for the food and beverage industry with around 4,000 employees and net revenues of CHF 899.4 million in 2022. Vetropack has state-of-the-art production facilities as well as sales and distribution offices in Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Italy, the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

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