



Success Story Kotányi

**Kotányi's innovative herb and spice mill:
a story of constant evolution – in partnership
with Vetropack**

The perennial favourite on the herb and spice shelf

Austrian herb and spice manufacturer Kotányi tapped into the spirit of the times by introducing its ergonomically shaped herb and spice mill with an integrated grinder. The grinding mechanism has been improved over the years and – thanks to glass packaging manufacturer Vetropack – the weight of the mill itself has also been steadily reduced to make it more sustainable.



More or less everyone in Austria is familiar with Kotányi's iconic herb and spice mill. Thanks to its distinctive shape – reminiscent of an hourglass – and its built-in grinder, it is a perfect match for 21st-century cooking habits: a mill that makes herbs and spices (whether everyday or exotic) accessible in a special way. The mills are produced by Kotányi, an Austrian company that can look back on a long tradition; and the glass containers for them have been supplied by the Swiss Vetropack group of companies since 2003. But the beginnings of the family-owned Kotányi enterprise date back much further: originally founded

in 1881 as a paprika factory at Szeged (Hungary), the company soon expanded to Vienna.

CEO Erwin Kotányi joined the company exactly 100 years later, in 1981, at the age of 24. He has been running Kotányi in the 4th generation for more than 40 years and recalls: He recalls: "The acquisition of a fellow market player placed us in a very good position to expand internationally in the mid-1980s. Then, the fall of the Iron Curtain opened up another window of opportunity for us: driven by our pioneering



Erwin Kotányi
CEO Kotányi

spirit and innovative mindset, we were soon able to gain a foothold – especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, regions where we still maintain high market shares to this day.”

Tradition combined with diversity and sustainability

With 450 seasoning mixes, over 5,000 products (including country-specific lines) and more than 650 employees, Kotányi is a brand that now enjoys worldwide renown. Production takes place exclusively at Wolkersdorf near Vienna, but Kotányi currently supplies its products to 32 countries across the globe. “Even after 20 years, the herb and spice mill is still proving to be a door-opener into new markets – which is what's happening right now in Brazil, for instance,” Erwin Kotányi continues. “We view ourselves as an innovation leader, and we invest continuously in products and technologies. Most recently, in 2022, we invested EUR 11 million to expand our production in Wolkersdorf so we can achieve higher quantities.” Of course, he adds, changes in cooking and eating habits also need to be considered: these include health-conscious nutrition or meat-free diets, as well as more spicy foods and other trends such as smoky flavours. Kotányi has responded by including a wide range of chili variations in its range; snacks such as apple chips with mint or cinnamon flavours have also been added recently.

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The herb and spice mill is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2023. It is available with over 70 product variants at present, ranging from “Himalayan Salt” to “Chipotle Smoked Chili”. The offering varies from country to country, according to local tradition and taste; in Poland, for example, pimento (allspice) is very prominent, although it actually originates from Central America. Elisabeth Eckmayr, Product Manager at

Vetropack Austria, joined the company over 20 years ago. She recalls: “I still have clear memories of the development of the mill in September 2002. Its distinctive shape is not the only feature that makes it so special – it's also extremely practical: you can use it for cooking, of course, and also for seasoning food on the table – and even for refining your coffee.” Since the start of production in 2003, volumes have multiplied to such an extent that a dedicated spice mill production line has been set up at Vetropack's glassworks in Pöchlarn (Austria).

More capacity – but the packaging weighs less

Initially, the container had a capacity of 97 ml and the glass weighed 127 g. Over the years, the product's weight has been continuously reduced while its capacity has increased. “We review our packaging about once every six to eight years. This is important for two reasons: first, to maintain our edge over competitors on the shelf and in the catering industry. And then – equally important – there's an increasing focus on



Alexander Eidelpes,
Head of Packaging Purchasing Kotányi



sustainability: each gram of reduced weight means more energy saved and fewer emissions across the entire value chain,” Erwin Kotányi emphasises. The way the mill functions has also continued to evolve: “The mouth was adapted in 2011 and then in 2012, we collaborated with Kotányi on the changeover to a dual grinder with coarse or fine options,” Eckmayr explains. “The mill now holds 101 ml and still weighs 108 grams at present, but this will be reduced to 106 grams in the future. That will correspond to a weight reduction of 16.5 percent over the last 20 years.”

Vetropack and Kotányi have enjoyed a long and fruitful business relationship which really gained momentum in 2002 with the development of the mill. Vetropack also supplies Kotányi with two other spice jars, each with capacity of 110 ml and weight of 95 g. “We regard Vetropack as a valuable partner not only because of their proximity to us, the reliability of their deliveries and their flexibility when quantities fluctuate – but above all, because of their innovative strength and their professional field service,” according to Alexander Eidelpes, Head of Packaging Purchasing at Kotányi. “Going forward, we intend to work even more closely together to optimise our

joint processes, including aspects such as CO2 reduction, energy sourcing and sustainability communication – especially as regards disposal of the glass containers. Also, of course, innovations in packaging are possible at any time. When it comes to product variety and innovation, we can always count on Vetropack.”

The herb and spice mill is also set to play a crucial role for Kotányi in the future: the company is currently in talks with distributors to prepare for the market launch in the UK. Final words from Erwin Kotányi: “The mill is very successful all over the world – and it often achieves that success without much marketing effort. It stands out on the shelf, and it combines appealing design with high quality and functionality. Vetropack plays a major part in this.”