



Success Story Cockta

Cockta, the legendary soft drink is soaring to new heights – with support from Vetropack

70 years on the market – and still going strong!

A unique recipe, natural ingredients – and, not least, exceptional packaging: the Cockta brand is back on track for success since its facelift in 2018. Guests at restaurants, hotels and other outlets can savour Cockta Original, Cockta Free (no sugar) and Cockta Blondie from the high-quality Vetropack glass bottle that is also a key factor in the brand image of this creative soft drink from the Balkans.



The year: 1952. Emerik Zelinka, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Ljubljana, is developing the recipe for a special type of cola. Just one year later comes the market launch of Cockta – which goes on to become the national beverage of the young Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For decades since then, Cockta has refreshed and delighted generation after generation with a unique secret recipe that includes a cocktail of eleven herbs and caramel, water from a mineral spring, and other natural ingredients.

Cockta, which contains neither caffeine nor orthophosphoric acid, has been produced and marketed by Atlantic Grupa for over a decade. Atlantic Grupa one of South-East Europe's leading food and beverage manufacturers. Headquartered

in Zagreb, with over 5,500 employees, locations across eight countries and six business units, Atlantic posted sales revenue of EUR 850 million in 2022 – representing year-on-year growth of a handsome 12 percent. Alongside beverages, the portfolio includes savoury spreads (such as Argeta, the pâté brand that has achieved success throughout Europe), coffee, snacks, and confectionery – with oat based products as part of the new growth business.

New design and a unique bottle are keys to renewed success

Laura Bortas, Senior Brand Development Manager at Atlantic, shares responsibility for the Cockta brand with her team. She reports: "In the years after 2010, Cockta increasingly be-



Goran Vurnek
Sales Representative
Vetropack

Laura Bortas
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Atlantic Grupa

came a 'nostalgia drink', and there were too many short-lived innovations that came at the expense of the brand core and sales. That's why we embarked on a repositioning in 2018 – to freshen up the brand and deliberately target the younger generation as well. Vetropack played a decisive part here."

"We're very glad that our development partner Vetropack has supported us throughout the process as we've worked together to make this unique bottle possible."

Laura Bortas

The new 275-ml lightweight glass bottle weighing 180 grams is manufactured using the 'narrow neck press and blow' process. Intended for the HoReCa (Hotels, Restaurants, Café) channel, it features a distinctive design with some unique elements. For example: the neck of this slender bottle is inspired by rose hip, one of the ingredients in Cockta; smooth areas of the surface alternate with others that resemble orange peel; and the year when Cockta was born is embossed on the bottle. Last but not least, both the unusual label (now restored to the original 1953 colours of yellow and blue) and the special area to accommodate it require specific know-how – not only for the production of the bottles but also for the downstream labelling process. Bortas continues: "We're very glad that our development partner Vetropack has supported us throughout the process as we've worked together to make this unique bottle possible. Far from slowing us down with this venture, Vetropack has actually helped us to fly!" In 2023, Vetropack – as the exclusive supplier of glass packaging for Cockta – is set to deliver around 22 million glass containers to Atlantic. The HoReCa sector accounts for 28 percent of total Cockta sales; the beverage is distributed far beyond the Balkan region to 24 markets across the globe, including the UK and the USA.



Refreshingly different – and a hit with the young generation

Atlantic has been able to boost its sales of Cockta by 42 percent from 2018 to 2022. What's more, the group has succeeded in achieving one of its most important objectives: to appeal to the younger generation. "Vetropack's unique bottle – with its premium look and feel – isn't only important for HoReCa, where first impressions matter most and consumer habits are shaped. It's also a key driver for marketing – you could say it's part of the visual brand core," Bortas points out.



The two companies share a long tradition, because their predecessor organisations began working together back in 1953 – long before Atlantic Grupa and Vetropack Straža even existed in Croatia. The beginnings of glass production in the Slovenian-Croatian border region date back even further. Goran Vurnek, Sales Representative at Vetropack Straža, takes up the story: “Even in the 19th century, the mineral-rich water containing natural CO₂ from the springs near Rogaška Slatina was already being exported to Vienna and other European

destinations; the first bottles for it were produced in Hum na Sutli, where our Vetropack plant is located today.”

Strengthening and cautiously expanding the brand core – thanks to Vetropack

Since 2018, when Cockta made such a splash with its new look (“Cockta Original”), two more offshoots have been added to the range: 2019 saw the introduction of the on-trend “Cockta Free” variant (no sugar), followed in 2021 by “Blondie”, also known as the other side of orange. The refreshingly different orange-flavoured drink (orangeade) with the unmistakable cocktail of herbs. Both products were launched successfully and, of course, both of them are also available in the iconic glass bottle. This has provided Atlantic with an additional mainstay outside of the cola segment in the CSD (carbonated soft drinks) market, which is continuing to grow.

Closing words from Laura Bortas: “We intend to continue building on this strong basis. Our close partnership with Vetropack is very helpful for us here. For instance, our companies’ development departments are already in direct contact during the concept phase, so we can clarify what’s possible (and what isn’t) at an early stage of the design process. So this shared success story is set to continue – expect the unexpected!”

