

Carib Glassworks doubles capacity to meet client needs

Carib Glassworks has a dominant market share in its native Trinidad and as the only glass container plant in the Caribbean, the company focuses the balance of production on satisfying the demands of the region, as Technical Director Cyril Coomansingh explained exclusively to *Glass Worldwide*.

Having commenced operations in 1955, Carib Glassworks Ltd has undergone a significant transformation since its inception. Part of the ANSA McAL Group of companies, it was originally established to provide bottles for the group's brewery, which is located on the same compound on the outskirts of Port of Spain. The glassworks supplies customers throughout the Caribbean and has been the subject of significant investment and expansion in recent months. Approximately 45% of production is currently exported.

Employing 6000 people, the parent ANSA McAL Group is one of the Caribbean's most influential industrial players, with key activities in brewing, manufacturing, chemicals, retail, media, the automotive sector and distribution. The group's business interests span the region, including operations in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, Guyana, Grenada and the USA. ANSA McAL is listed on the Trinidad and Tobago Stock Exchange.

\$30 MILLION INVESTMENT

To accommodate the growing needs of regional customers, approximately \$30 million has been spent on expansions at Carib Glassworks this year, involving the batch plant, a second furnace, three IS machines, lehrs, inspection machines and packaging equipment. Technical Director Cyril Coomansingh has worked for the glassworks for 23 years and was responsible for the project's feasibility and justification, overseeing the entire project and managing the budget. Other key members of the project execution team were Don Basraj, Engineering Manager, Hamish Knox, Engineering Consultant and Dave Rampersad, Senior Mechanical Engineer, together with

several in-house engineers. According to Cyril Coomansingh, this investment was the single largest undertaken at the company, allowing a team of local engineers the opportunity to work with some of the leading suppliers of glass technology equipment.

One of the world's leading suppliers of glass container production technology, Heye International GmbH has been closely involved with the factory's design and construction. In addition to project management responsibilities, Heye has engineered the hot end installation, supplying three IS machines, as well as the cold end, which features HiSHIELD SmartLine inspection machines.

Furthermore, a technical assistance agreement was signed with Heye earlier this year, illustrating the importance placed by the Carib Glassworks management team on staff training and development, as well as identifying different packaging solutions to meet the needs of

customers. "Employees have benefited significantly from training at a glassworks in Mexico and supplier facilities in France and Germany" Cyril Coomansingh confirms, "especially as the glassworks develops its focus on NNPB technology."

PRODUCTION CAPACITY DOUBLED

Carib Glassworks produces both standard and custom-made containers in flint, emerald green and amber for customers in the soft drinks, beer, food, alcohol and juice sectors. This April, the glassworks has doubled production capacity by 160 tonnes/day via the commissioning of a second melting furnace and three production lines.

The upgraded batch systems were supplied by Germany's ZIPPE Industrieanlagen GmbH, while the recently commissioned furnace features three SORG type 340S forehearth and an STW distributor. "When Carib Glassworks started >



The senior project management team at Carib Glassworks Ltd, from left to right: Cyril Coomansingh (Technical Director), Don Basraj (Engineering Manager), Dave Rampersad (Senior Mechanical Engineer) and Hamish Knox (Engineering Consultant).



Sharing a light moment just before heat-up, from left to right: Conrad Chang (Project Engineer), Cyril Coomansingh (Technical Director), Norbert Hufen (Project Manager at Heye International) and Shazim Mohammed (Project Engineer).



Production on one of the Heye IS machine commenced with Coca-Cola bottles.



View across the forehearth platform.

talking to SORG, they made it obvious that they wanted to up their game and produce world class quality” commented a SORG spokesperson. “The customer had previously implemented Emhart Glass 340 forehearths from SORG but the 340S forehearths are a further development, representing the state-of-the-art in glass conditioning.”

SORG worked together with Carib Glassworks to engineer the equipment to reflect their production mix and to allow for maximum flexibility. To achieve the highest thermal homogeneity possible with coloured glasses, the glassmaker also elected to implement electrical boosting in the equalising sections.

Other international equipment suppliers involved in the project include E W Bowman Inc (annealing lehrs), IRIS Inspection machines (camera-based cold end inspection equipment) and the MSK Covertech Group (packaging systems). “Selecting the main equipment was a natural choice” says Cyril Coomansingh. “MSK, SORG and Bowman equipment is already installed in the other plant and their performance levels have been good.”

And supporting Carib Glassworks to achieve the highest quality production and avoid cost-increasing disturbances is the Heye PlantPilot information management system. This innovative technology matches together all relevant production information in real-time. As a result, the system gives a complete overview of production performance. The data collected includes such sources as the laboratory, the article counter, inspection machines, the IS machines and input added by the operator.

According to Heye International,

this combination of advanced technology is helping Carib Glassworks to double its manufacturing output and satisfy the high quality expectations of a growing list of customers.

MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS

Already with the capability to offer products with capacities from 118ml to 1.0 litre, the latest equipment installed is expected to increase possible sizes to 1.75 litres. The glassworks is keen to build on its reputation for providing quality products with timely delivery. “As the region’s only supplier, we offer customers logistical advantages, as well as fast response times” Mr Coomansingh confirms. “We pride ourselves on good service... the closer you are to your customer, the better service you can provide.”

The plant itself is also viewed as an important asset for the local community. Carib Glassworks operates a major recycling programme locally and is working with regional entities to increase the programme’s coverage.

The Caribbean’s only glass container producer is looking forward to the future with confidence, with plans to announce another furnace upgrade within 18 months. ■



Engineering Manager, Don Basraj (right) demonstrates the EMSY from MSK to Shahzad Hosein, Production Manager.

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