European Tube Production
GROWTH OF A GOOD ONE PERCENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2019

The European Tube Manufacturers Association, etma, is continuing to expand and has welcomed three tube manufacturers as new members in 2019, one each from Bulgaria, Turkey and the Ukraine. It means that the association now has 46 member companies. This development in itself would give etma’s secretary general Gregor Spengler every reason to be pleased but the development of the European tube market is also very satisfactory.

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TUBE OF THE YEAR 2019
SUSTAINABLE CONCEPTS AND EXCITING DESIGNS

The winners of the renowned Tube of the Year competition, which is held annually by the European Tube Manufacturers Association (etma), were awarded at this year’s World Tube Congress in Hamburg. A jury comprising representatives of etma member companies and international brand manufacturers chose the winners of the coveted awards in the categories Aluminium Tube, Plastic Tube, Laminate Tube and Prototype. For the first time there was also an award in the Sustainability category this year.

According to Gregor Spengler, etma’s secretary general, the etma member companies decided unanimously to create the new category because the topics of sustainability, recyclability and resource efficiency had rapidly gained in importance in discussions with customers.

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“Despite the increasingly more difficult economic situation, etma members produced 5.9 billion tubes in the first half of 2019,” he says. “Adjusted for the production from our new members, this represents growth of a good one per cent compared with the corresponding period last year. The European tube industry was thus able to buck the general trend. It helps, of course, that the markets of the fast-moving consumer goods sector that are important for the tube react less sensitively to economic fluctuations than other branches of industry.”

Cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and dental care, the tube markets that dominate in terms of volume, were particularly stable. Regarding the different tube materials, laminate tubes achieved solid growth, while aluminium and plastic tubes suffered slight declines.

Despite the increasing number of economic warning signs, the tube industry is nevertheless cautiously optimistic about developments in the second half of the year. According to etma’s president, Oliver Höll, an important reason for this is the tube’s continued high level of acceptance by consumers, who value it as a functional, modern and sustainable form of packaging.

“Consumers regard the tube as a very user- and eco-friendly form of packaging that offers a whole range of real benefits,” he explains. “It is easy to open and has good resealability so it is simple and convenient to handle. Its excellent product protection and high hygiene standards guarantee that the contents and the product have a long shelf life, thus preventing valuable resources being wasted. The tube is light and unbreakable and can therefore be transported particularly efficiently and in an environmentally friendly manner. Innovative materials and even more material savings during production will further improve the tube’s environmental balance and sustainability rating.

These are all reasons that make me very confident about the further development of the tube.”
The winner of the Aluminium Tube category was the ‘Cation-active Hair Color’ tube from Russian luxury brand Estell´er, which was produced by Tubex Russia. The exclusive hair dye uses colours with holographic modulations to produce unusual tinting. The design of the tube is equally sophisticated: the dark violet colour with its pearl-like shimmer conveys a special perceived value. This fascinating look is achieved by the use of halftone printing with the addition of a pearlescent pigment to the transparent enamel. The large cap across the entire diameter of the tube is not only consumer-friendly, but also emphasises the tube’s elegant design line. And a pigment with a mother-of-pearl effect is also used to colour the cap and perfect the tube’s appearance.

In the Plastic Tube category, the jury awarded first prize to a tube manufactured by the Albéa Group for Eau thermale Jonzac Sublimactive Sérum Ferméte. This tube for Lea Nature’s Jonzac brand uses a so-called TearDrop design for an anti-aging cell-firming serum, which fills and tightens the skin to give it a dense and smoothing texture and thus minimise wrinkles. The consumer can use the dispenser system to control the exact dosage of the product onto the skin. With its fantastic transparency, the material looks like glass but it is much lighter and more stable than comparable dropper packaging. This makes this tube the ideal packaging for on-the-go and matches the exclusive lifestyle of the target group perfectly. With its elegantly simple design in offset colours, the tube’s artwork blends harmoniously into the rest of the premium brand’s luxurious product line.
The winning tube in the Laminate Tube category came from Italian manufacturer Global Tube and is produced for Beer Cream from the Italian luxury cosmetic brand LR Wonder Company. The tanning cream is part of a sophisticated range of beauty products and is currently fully in line with international trends. The appearance of the tube is stylish and embodies the fascinating world of fashion and glamour.

The gently merging and flexo-printed colour gradation across the entire tube body from the bottom to the shiny closure coupled with the perfect use of 360° Decoseam technology is impressive. The tube’s graphic elements produced using gold-coloured cold foil technology add a special accent to the tube’s design. It creates a very special premium look, draws attention to the logo and underlines the perceived value of the product. The metallised gold flip-top closure rounds off the tube’s luxurious appeal and adds another highlight to what is already a successful look.

The winner in the newly announced Sustainability category was French manufacturer Albéa Group with the tubes for a shower gel range from Caudalie of Paris. The tubes have the lowest ecological footprint of all the tubes used in this product category: the low-profile caps reduce the weight by 50 per cent compared with conventional caps. Reducing the wall thickness of the extruded PE tubes from 500 µm to only 350 µm has made the tubes a third lighter. The brand message of a pronounced environmental awareness is conveyed haptically in an impressive and credible way via the flexible tube, which is extremely stable despite its thinner wall thickness, and the material savings do not compromise the consumer experience. This is also well matched by the successful artwork of the tubes. The use of silkscreen printing produces an extraordinary visual effect. The unique surface structure creates a haptic experience that sticks in the consumer’s memory and strengthens brand loyalty.
A tube from CTL Packaging topped the Prototype category. The French manufacturer won over the jury with its Green ESTube, which stands for 'easy supply tube'. The aim of this technology is to simplify the recycling process. Up to now, most popular tubes have been made of different plastic materials, usually PE for the tube body and shoulder and PP for the cap. In the innovative ESTubes, the body, shoulder and closure are all now made completely of PP and are therefore completely recyclable. And that’s not all: the tubes are printed using digital offset printing, a process that is much cleaner and more eco-friendly than conventional printing techniques. In addition, the Eco Low Profile tube closure achieves material savings of 20 per cent. At the same time, the closure gives the tube an interesting and unusual look. And there is even an added benefit for the consumer: thanks to the particularly flat shoulders and a special edge, water can no longer collect in the cap.

The Panthenol extra shiny tubes from Medisei were manufactured by Greek tube producer Argo. The impressive appearance of the polyethylene monolayer tubes is achieved in just one machine pass using a combination of a shiny foil and a sparkling flexographic ink. The use of varnish was deliberately avoided to give special emphasis to the impact of the foil and allow the mirror effect to come into its own. The core ingredient of each product is achieved using gold for the strawflower (helichrysum) and silver for the white pearl. Flexographic inks add value to the bright side of the final product. It means there is nothing standing in the way of a glamorous appearance with premium appeal at the point of sale.

Unilever has decided to use laminate tubes produced by Essel Germany for its Dove hand cream in future. By switching the tube range from plastic to laminate and using a print on a flat surface, the complex decoration has been transferred from a label to direct surface printing on the tube. Unilever took advantage of the possibility to combine several refinements, such as in-line overprinting of the metallic elements on a silver, cold foil base during Essel’s flexographic printing process. Logos and text on the front have been created using white silk screen on top for the finish. Unilever’s aim was to achieve a wider range of refinements to woo customers at the point of sale and remove the label on the top of the tube.
In keeping with the trend among luxury brands towards the use of more noble, recyclable and environmentally friendly materials, famous supplier Coty is relying on aluminium tubes for the market launch of Mr. Burberry, a new line of cosmetics for men. The tubes are manufactured by global tube-maker Alltub. Thanks to their perfect combination of deep black and the impact of aluminium, the black and glossy 75-ml aluminium tubes with matching flip-top caps achieve exactly the masculine touch that the customer wanted for the two cream compositions in its new Men’s line, namely a moisturiser and an after-shave balm. The principal challenges for this tube with its perfect luxury finish were obtaining the depth and glossiness of the black. The brand name and the text are printed in white reverse. This elegant and restrained attitude reinforces the premium appearance of the product and the brand.

Turkish tubemaker Perfektüp manufactures the laminate tubes for Nesli's Dream body lotion, which is produced for the Turkish market. The 200-ml tubes have a diameter of 50 mm and are produced using a silk-screen technique. Their unusual design catches the eye. Em-bossed patterns stand proud of a golden background. This accentuates the flowers and leaves on the tube, which are already detailed and colourfully designed, and gives the complete design an added dimension and a haptic effect. The tube is reminiscent of the creative energy of painting and the dynamism on an artist’s palette, and its fascinating appearance attracts a great deal of attention at the point of sale.

The aluminium tubes for Erayba's Equilibrium hair colour cream are produced by Spanish manufacturer Witte y Solá. Their sophisticated design impresses at first sight. The complexity of the tube’s design lies in the fact that two gradients are mixed, one of which corresponds to the metallic ink. Direct colours are applied using a roller technique to achieve the perfect gradients of the individual colours. Printing the text was particularly difficult here, but this was also solved brilliantly.

Unedited.co is a lifestyle cosmetics company dedicated to protecting the environment and obtaining its products and ingredients from sustainable and renewable sources. The tubes for the company's Tattoo moisturising cream, which is made from organic coconut oil, are supplied by Swiss tubemaker Neopac, whose PICEATM wood tube is appropriate packaging that matches Unedited.co’s philosophy perfectly. The tube consists mainly of a sugar-based plastic matrix developed especially for Neopac combined with wood waste from spruce trees. It means that more than 95 per cent of the tube is made from renewable materials. The coloured flip-top cap matches the tube body and is decorated with black offset printing. A puristic and pleasantly unobtrusive design that also conveys the demands of the product and the company visually. The PICEATM wood tube is certified by ECOCERT and COSMOS. To achieve an optimal result, several printing techniques were applied to ensure the text was legible and was retained throughout the manufacturing process. The effort was worthwhile: the elegance of the design combined with the material's impact give both brand and product an extremely valuable look.
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